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NAACP Thanks Dr. McCormick for Appropriate Distribution of CARES Act Funds, Calls for Funds to Be Used to Address Achievement Gaps

INDIANAPOLIS — June 8, 2020 — As people all over America and the world are exercising our rights to speak out and protest for equal justice under the law, NAACP leaders in Indiana want to draw attention to the intersectionality of all civil rights issues, including the right to quality education and concerted efforts to eliminate the achievement gaps that hold back children of color.

The Indiana State Conference of the NAACP and its Greater Indianapolis Branch #3053 have sent [this letter](#) to Indiana Superintendent of Public Education Dr. Jennifer McCormick, thanking her for distributing school relief funds under the federal CARES Act to public schools as traditionally required by federal law, and not using the flawed guidance issued by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

“Secretary DeVos’ guidance contradicts the clear requirement of the CARES Act,” said Victor Goode, National NAACP Assistant General Counsel. “Her guidance is a switcheroo. A game of three-card monte. It is part of her continuing efforts to use hard-earned taxpayer funds for her privatization agenda while public school districts continue to be underfunded. I commend the State Superintendent for just saying no. Education policy and implementation is not independent of elections. So, as we together fight for fair and safe elections, register, vote, and get others to do likewise in the coming local, state, and national elections.”

As we note in the letter, to implement the Indiana Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Indiana has set a goal to reduce by 50% the existing and persistent achievement gap for specified student groups by the year 2023. We believe CARES Act funds should be used to help close these gaps for identified students. Therefore, it would have been improper and unjust for the State of Indiana to have used those funds for any other purpose than its original intent, according to the Title I guidelines and its predetermined formulas.

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While we agree with Dr. McCormick's decision, the NAACP is also quite concerned that the funds should be equitably distributed among all eligible schools, and that those funds should be used by schools to close the persistent and appalling academic achievement gap. These COVID dollars are a welcomed source of revenue, but they do not replace what the state must continue to do to close any of its students' existing and further widening gaps. The NAACP will monitor the equitable distribution, transparency, and appropriate use of CARES Act funding and all other federal and state funding in the days ahead.

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About NAACP: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized civil rights organization. Our mission is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights for all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.