



HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
Teaching Today for Hawaii's Tomorrow

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July 26, 2011

SENT VIA FAX – HARD COPY TO FOLLOW VIA U.S. POSTAL SERVICE CERTIFIED
MAIL NO. 7010 2780 0000 6646 3497

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie
Governor, State of Hawaii
Executive Chambers, State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Governor Abercrombie:

As a lifelong high school coach I am writing to appeal to your sense of fair play.

Your Administration's legal response to HSTA's defense of teacher rights contains an essential irony I hope you will consider.

In response to our assertions that threats were made by your representatives during the negotiations, your legal team's answers have a common theme.

Whether it was the repeated threats of a 10% wage cut, 800 teacher lay-offs or that "nasty things" would happen to our working conditions your response is that it would be the Legislature carrying out these threats, not you.

Governor, the Legislature would be powerless to impose these threats without your signature.

Yet when we voted to reject the threat of a last, best and final offer so negotiations would continue, you fault us by saying that not taking this threat seriously constitutes bad faith bargaining.

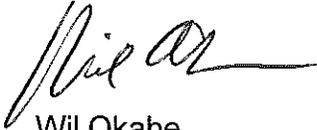
Your lawyers then assert that since I recommended the proposed contract and was later persuaded by a unanimous vote of the HSTA Board of Directors to return to the bargaining table that I personally acted in bad faith. You know that is unfair.

As Governor you "recommended" a budget to the Legislature and then you were persuaded to continue negotiations with them and ultimately signed a budget different from your recommended version. Was that bad faith? Of course not. Why is my behavior different from your own?

I am now appealing to you as Neil - a person who I know is better able to resolve this matter than those to whom you have delegated too much of your authority.

Please join me in bringing our teams together to resolve the remaining issues before the school year begins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Okabe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wil Okabe
President
Hawaii State Teachers Association

c: HSTA Board of Directors