

# PRESS RELEASE

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State Representative Rachel Storch

State Capitol – Room 105i  
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## **Rep. Storch calls for resignation of Education Committee Chair Jane Cunningham**

*Says unethical application for position makes her unfit to lead committee*

JEFFERSON CITY – Rep. Rachel Storch led a group of House Democrats in calling for Jane Cunningham (R-Chesterfield) to resign her position as the chair of the House’s Education Committee in response to Cunningham’s questionable application for reappointment to the position. Storch also announced that she will be filing legislation to toughen Missouri’s ethical restrictions on what she calls “the sale of committee chairmanships.”

“Jane Cunningham was very clear—in writing—that she should continue to chair the Education Committee because of her ability to raise money for Republican candidates,” said Storch. “I am appalled that Rep. Cunningham would ask her fellow members to sell control of one of our most important committees to the member who was most indebted to special interests.”

In a letter that began circulating around the Capitol shortly before Cunningham was announced as the committee’s chair, she argued that her ability to raise money from a pro- education voucher group called All Children Matter (ACM) should ensure her the top spot. At one point, Cunningham wrote:

**“I was able to attract the ... generous PAC money ... because of my chairmanship of the Missouri House Education Committee. Remaining in that leadership position will help secure the continuation of these benefits to our caucus.”**

Attached to that letter were two pages detailing campaign contributions raised by Cunningham on behalf of Republicans at all levels, including nearly \$200,000 in donations and independent expenditures for Matt Blunt’s campaign for Governor and \$81,954 for the House Republican Campaign Committee and individual Republican House members.

Cunningham also wrote, “I am assured ACM’s involvement will be enhanced in future campaigns. I ask that you treat this information with appropriate confidence,” raising questions about promises made to ACM, and showing her reluctance to have such improprieties brought to light.

In her announcement, Storch said that she feels that this application to the Republican leadership demonstrates Cunningham’s inability to responsibly serve the people of Missouri as the Education Committee Chair. She called into question Cunningham’s opinion that such information was vital to be considered for a chair position. She also said she was disturbed by the influence ACM seemed to have on Cunningham’s positions in the House and her stances on key issues.

“The legislature is preparing to revise Missouri’s foundation formula, which allocates funding to our public schools,” Storch commented. “At this critical juncture, is it really appropriate for the Chair of our Education Committee to be in bed with a voucher support group? I am concerned that her allegiance to ACM puts her allegiance to Missouri’s public school students in question.”

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Storch said she feels deep respect for many of her colleagues on the other side of the aisle and that there are numerous choices from which Speaker Rod Jetton (R-Marble Hill) could appoint a replacement for Cunningham—members who, she said, “would make Missouri’s school children their top priority.”

Storch went on to announce that she was filing legislation this week that would toughen Missouri’s laws concerning the influence of special interest money on a legislator’s actions or votes. Her proposal would make it explicitly illegal for a member to connect his or her “qualifications” for a committee chairmanship to the acquisition of campaign donations. Missouri law already provides punishments for those who vote a certain way as a result of gifts or campaign donations made to them or on their behalf.

“I believe that it already goes without saying that such *quid pro quo* is inappropriate and unethical, but apparently, we need further clarification to ensure that this scenario never arises again,” said Storch. “I ask Governor Blunt, as someone who benefited from Rep. Cunningham’s ‘Campaign for Chair’, to support this legislation and encourage Rep. Cunningham to step aside. We should be working together to protect the image of our House in the eyes of the people of Missouri. We need to correct the perception that the Missouri House—and our state government—are for sale to the special interests.”

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