

Jewish Labor Committee

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Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee Reaction to SRC

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The Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee joins with parents, teachers, students, our brothers and sisters in the labor movement, and all Philadelphians of conscience in rejecting the School Reform Commission's (SRC) unilateral attack on the teachers' collective bargaining agreement.

The School Reform Commission's decision to revoke a contract negotiated in good faith and agreed to by all parties is a shocking development in an already grim record of heavy-handed tactics. Politicians created the problems in the Philadelphia public schools, and the School Reform Commission has decided denying educators the right to bargain is the answer. An already undemocratic institution, the SRC has now stripped public school teachers of their legal right to collective bargaining, including the right to have the union of their choice negotiate on their behalf.

While the details of this particular assault are egregious on their own merits, the precedent is frightening for all workers. The SRC was created by special legislation (applicable only to Philadelphia) and claims for itself the right to dictate terms of employment to teachers who have for many years been represented by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. The SRC has failed to negotiate with the teachers, having not sat with teachers' representatives since July. This latest move comes after teachers have worked without a contract for 21 months, working to ensure that their students receive a good education even when their careers were precariously put on hold. The SRC's success will pave the way for a further assault on workers' freedom and labor rights.

The Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee was heartened by the decision of the Philadelphia Common Pleas Court to block this unilateral action of the SRC. But a court injunction is not a solution, and does nothing to repair the harm done to our teachers, and our communities.

Philadelphia's public school problem starts in Harrisburg. Governor-elect Wolf will be responsible for ensuring that all children in Pennsylvania have the opportunity to receive a quality public education. His predecessor's actions against Philadelphia were undemocratic and unjustifiable. We look forward to Governor-elect Wolf fulfilling his promises to protect workers' rights and fight for Pennsylvania schools

We are proud to count among our members many current and former teachers. As a labor community, we recognize that education is vital to advancement. As a Jewish community, we work to cultivate a society of knowledge and learning as both functional necessity and spiritual practice. As Philadelphians, we need the youth of our city to receive the best education possible, regardless of background and family circumstances.



We call on members of the Jewish Community and The Labor movement to work together to support our public school teachers, and ensure a full, fair, and equitable funding plan. We call on the SRC to respect teacher's rights to collective bargaining.

Signed,

The Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee:

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