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January 29, 2021

U.S. Senate
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

The 3.1 million members of the National Education Association are proud to enthusiastically support President Biden’s nominee for U.S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona, and we urge you to swiftly advance his nomination. As you know, our students, educators, schools, and campuses continue to face unprecedented challenges during the COVID pandemic, and it is essential for Dr. Cardona to begin his leadership of the Department of Education.

NEA members teach, support, mentor, and nurture students in public schools and on public college campuses across America. They know what it is like to look into a student’s eyes to determine who’s getting the lesson, and who’s getting left behind—and they know the challenge of devising *new* methods to reach and engage students in the context of remote learning. They understand the importance of being present for children who are coping with losses or struggling with adult-size burdens, or counseling students who must juggle classes, families, and full-time jobs. Dr. Cardona, a longtime teacher and elementary school principal who has also been an adjunct professor, knows this work intimately.

As an educator and as Connecticut’s education commissioner, Dr. Cardona would bring to the Education Department desperately needed firsthand experience. He would advance the department’s mission of “fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” because he has devoted his career to these goals. His commitment stems not only from professional expertise, but also from an understanding of the hardships students who are learning English face—hardships he dealt with as a child whose family moved to Connecticut from Puerto Rico. Those struggles helped him to become the dedicated, compassionate, and forceful advocate for students that he is today.

Dr. Cardona is known as a consensus builder and problem solver who listens to and actively collaborates with educators, families, and communities. Whether as a classroom teacher, principal, or state education leader, he has pressed for the resources students deserve. Additionally, he has worked with higher education leaders to secure and expand students’ opportunities for postsecondary education.

Given the many challenges our nation continues to face, we have confidence that Dr. Cardona will help us to provide the high-quality education, safe and welcoming public schools and campuses, and support that all students must have in order to thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca S. Pringle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Rebecca S. Pringle
President
National Education Association