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## TENNESSEE ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS (TOSS) REFUTES HILLSDALE COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- The Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents Board of Directors met on July 7, 2022 and voted unanimously to provide this public statement refuting the disparaging statements about public educators made by the President of Hillsdale College, Larry Arnn in Franklin, Tennessee released late last week. Tennessee Superintendents/Directors recognize the profound value of Tennessee teachers and celebrate their indispensable role in creating a brighter future for Tennesseans.

The following statements made by Mr. Arnn demonstrate the disdain he obviously holds for Tennessee educators.

- “The teachers are trained in the dumbest parts of the dumbest colleges in the country.”
- “They are taught that they are going to go and do something *to* these kids.”
- “Do they ever talk about anything except what they are going to do *to* these kids?”
- “You will see how education destroys generations of people. It’s devastating. It’s like the plague.”
- “Here’s a key thing that we’re going to try to do. We are going to try to demonstrate that you don’t have to be an expert to educate a child because basically anybody can do it.”

In a speech at the Sorbonne in Paris on April 23, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt said the following:

“It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually **in the arena**, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.”

Tennessee teachers are “in the arena” every day, and the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents has supported and will continue to support public educators.

Tennessee public school students, past and present, practice the benefits they receive from teachers in public classrooms. They do research in world-class scientific institutions. They build automobiles. They grow the food that feeds the nation and, indeed, the world. They dispense justice and defend the defenseless. They heal the sick. They fuel commerce through entrepreneurship. They minister to congregations. And, yes, teachers prepare children in classrooms for all of these, and countless other professions.



Public schools and teachers in Tennessee accept every child regardless of ability, background, or disability. The goal is to make every student an educated, productive citizen. Teachers do far more than provide quality instruction to their students. They also provide food, clothing, counseling, tutoring, protection from abuse, medical assistance, and assurances of safety. Special educators, in particular, provide exceptional services for every imaginable disability, including children ranging from the exceedingly gifted to those with profound disabilities.

Unfortunately for Mr. Arnn, a public school critic, a public school education also confers the ability to listen, analyze, discern, and comprehend. It is clear that the motive for Mr. Arnn's criticism of public schools and public school teachers is driven by his desire to expand his charter school empire into Tennessee. And from all indications, he has the assistance he seeks in this endeavor.

The value of public education and public school teachers cannot be adequately stated in any single writing. Rather, the value of public schools and public school teachers is demonstrated in the daily lives of Tennesseans who worship, work, give of their time and resources, assist their neighbors, and vote. The Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents gives its profound thanks to all of those in public education who strive daily to make this state a better place to live for all of its residents.

Rest assured, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents will work diligently to resist the efforts of misguided critics who are not "in the arena" and whose supercilious opinions are worthy only of collective disdain.

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