

Former Teachers Union President Kicks Off Campaign For May 2010 Election, Affirms PACT

Stakes in TU Vote Higher Than Ever

For Immediate Release

CHICAGO/EWORLDWIRE/Oct. 23, 2009 --- Former Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) President Deborah Lynch and the leadership of her union political party, ProActive Chicago Teachers and School Employees (PACT), today announced that they will challenge current CTU President Marilyn Stewart in this May's union election. Lynch, former CTU president (2001-2004), teacher at Gage Park High School, and PACT Chair, said that "the stakes in this particular union election couldn't be higher. The CTU has lost over 5,000 union jobs in the last five years alone under Stewart and 100 schools will be closed by next year. Over 80,000 students will have gone to charter schools. There has also been an egregious misappropriation of over \$8 million in union funds by Stewart and her team."

"The teacher pension fund is in danger and there has been no vision or leadership coming from the union on such vital and pressing issues as saving our pensions, or on school violence, school turnarounds and member working conditions," said Tanner Elementary School teacher Josephine Perry, PACT's candidate for vice president. Lynch and Perry spoke at the PACT Campaign Kick-off event Friday at the Mayfield Banquet Hall, 5900 S. Archer, to a crowd of over 200 Chicago Public School teachers and staff supporters, union members who want to see change at the CTU .

The PACT team won the top CTU leadership spots in an upset victory in 2001, when it defeated the union political party, the United Progressive Caucus (UPC)in power at CTU for over 30 years. In 2004, in a contentious election which involved charges of vote fraud in the Stewart team's schools, that party returned to power. The national union, the American Federation of Teachers, also of the same political party as Stewart, resolved that election dispute in favor of Stewart.

According to PACT, Stewart has presided over the dismantling of the Chicago Public Schools and the erosion of the power of the once very powerful CTU . "No Chicago union has lost 5,000 members in the last five years. Stewart's team has. Stewart gave up CTU members' hourly wage for overtime pay, agreed to higher health care costs, and supported legislation permitting 45 new charter schools, and she has sold new teachers out by not enforcing the union contract," Lynch continued.

"Now more than ever, we need the experience, integrity, strength and strong outspoken leadership of the Lynch PACT team back at the helm of CTU ," said Perry. "Right now there is no one speaking for the dedicated teachers and staff in our schools, no one countering the attacks on our traditional neighborhood public schools, no one advocating for the working conditions to keep the best and the brightest in our traditional Chicago neighborhood schools. PACT can do those things and will."

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