

# United States Senate

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May 4, 2010

Dear Friend,

During "Teacher Appreciation Week 2010," please accept my thanks and the thanks of a grateful nation for all you do every day for our children. There is no greater gift than to teach others, to share your skills and wisdom and, in so doing, enrich the lives of everyone in the community.

More than just the future of your students, the future of our great state and the country is in your hands. We rely on you, day-in and day-out to teach the next generation of Americans not only how to read and write, but to think and build a skill-set that will secure them a place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy as doctors, nurses, scientists, engineers, inventors, teachers, or entrepreneurs. Maybe one of them will someday create the next Microsoft or the next Google, or become a United States Senator.

That is why I have been fighting to pass legislation that would make critical investments in education. Most recently, I have joined Sen. Harkin's efforts to pass the Keep our Educators Working Act, which builds upon last year's Recovery Act investment in education by providing another \$23 billion, including approximately \$628 million for New Jersey alone. These funds will be used to keep teachers and support staff working, which will not only avoid massive layoffs in the short-term, but will also help our students learn and gain the skills needed to become successful and contribute to our economy in the long-term.

I grew up in a family that believed education was the key that would unlock the doors to opportunity, and I had teachers who challenged me to learn all I could. I never thought I would be the first in my family to go to college or have the opportunity to serve as a Mayor, a Congressman, and now as a Senator. I owe all my teachers a profound sense of gratitude for believing in me and perhaps more importantly, teaching me to believe in myself.

Every single day you are tasked with opening these same doors of opportunity for all of your students and guiding them to reach their potential. Every single day you are given the responsibility to affect a child's life decades into the future. As the American historian and grandson of John Quincy Adams, Henry Adams once said, "A teacher affects eternity, you can never tell where their influence stops."

I know that teachers, maybe more so than other professions, have good days and bad. Days when the students just aren't paying attention – days when you don't feel as appreciated as you should. On those days just remember why you entered this profession – not for wealth or fame – but rather to make a difference in the world one child at a time.

Again, please accept my sincere appreciation for everything that you do to make our country better. The world needs more people like you.

Happy Teacher Appreciation Week!

With warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob", with a stylized flourish at the end.

ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator