

GOVERNOR MIKE HUCKABEE

June 3, 2013

Dear Oklahoma Lawmakers:

As a conservative who served as governor for a state that shares the values of the very Oklahomans you represent, I'm writing to encourage you to resist any attempt to delay implementation of the improved standards adopted by your State Board of Education in 2010. Many of you voted in favor of these standards in 2010. You were right to stand for these improved standards then and you are right to stand for these improved standards still today.

These standards, known as Common Core State Standards, have been near and dear to my heart since I served as Governor of your neighboring state of Arkansas. And it's disturbing to me there have been criticisms of these standards directed by other conservatives including the RNC. The truth of the matter is, these criticisms are short-sighted.

Like many of you, I've heard the argument these standards "threaten local control" of what's being taught in Oklahoma classrooms. Speaking from one conservative to another, let me assure you this simply is not true. States and local school districts will determine how they want to teach kids, what curriculum to use, and which textbooks to use.

These Common Core State Standards evolved as governors and state leaders were talking about what we could do together to raise standards--not a Washington solution, but a voluntary effort on the part of the leaders of the states. In fact conversations about these standards began long before President Obama occupied the White House.

Common Core State Standards are a state driven solution to address the large number of high school graduates who have to take remedial courses in college. In your state of Oklahoma, six out of every ten students who go to college need remedial courses. That's a lot of money being thrown out of the window by families who've worked hard to be able to send their child to college. Imagine finding out your child's ACT test score wasn't high enough to get her into college, or that she if she did get in, ended up taking two semesters worth of classes that don't count toward her college degree. That means you're paying university prices for what your child was supposed to learn for free in high school.

From an economic and workforce development perspective, these standards are critical. Innovation driving the successful companies in Oklahoma requires them to have the best people. That means having an education system that consistently delivers a quality education so that every child graduates high school prepared for college and career. These standards ensure Oklahoma remains competitive in the race to attract companies with the highest paying jobs for Oklahomans that deserve nothing less. Not only do these standards help the Oklahoma economy, they also help the families serving our country. Children of military families will not fall behind when their parents, who've chosen to defend our freedom, are asked to move from Fort Benning, Georgia to Fort Sill in Lawton or Vance Air force base in Enid.

I hope you'll join me and other conservatives, including many Oklahoma parents, educators and business leaders, in making it known these standards are valuable for our future. They're not something to be afraid of; indeed they are something to embrace.

Best

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Huckabee", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Governor Mike Huckabee