



**STATEMENT BY STEPHANIE WINKLER, FOURTH-GRADE TEACHER FROM MADISON COUNTY,
CURRENTLY SERVING AS PRESIDENT OF THE KENTUCKY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

What has occurred over the last 24 hours is nothing short of a bomb that has exploded on public service.

The process that led to the late passage of SB 151, HCS 1 last night showed blatant disrespect for the law and for democracy. The civics lessons that we teach our students certainly don't reflect the political games that have been played among legislators and the Governor during this legislative session. What kind of example are these people setting for the youth of the Commonwealth?

For months now KEA has been proactive in educating our members and the public about the impact of the lack of funding on public education and our 8 public pension systems. With such heightened awareness about these issues, the legislators who voted for SB151 show contempt and shameless disregard for constituents and public service workers who have tried to be a part of the solution and not the problem.

No one, except key leadership in both chambers, was privy to the nearly 300 page bill that was secretly switched from a waste water bill to a pension reform bill. Thousands of educators have packed committee rooms, lined the tunnel and the halls, and have called legislators every single day during this session. There was ample and repeated opportunity to discuss the specifics of this bill with KEA leadership and individual member stakeholders. That was never done.

These political shenanigans are unacceptable. I cannot believe the audacity of these elected officials, pulling this kind of corruption out in full view of constituents. The only thing that was certain after last night was that anyone that voted YES for this bill will need to start packing up their legislative office.

Based on the reaction of educators and the public today, no matter what the language of the bill says that they have created an overall environment of deception and mistrust. The angst, anxiety and anger among educators is strong. We will be watching. We will be having a statewide rally in Frankfort on Monday. We will be here watching every move legislators make. If this budget is not in the best interest of public education students and public service then we will react. We will not be silent.

The actions by legislators over the last 24 hours have let us know what you think about educators and public employees. Now, show us what you think about public school students.

The budget is still before you. Redeem yourselves IF YOU CAN! The next biennial budget will show the Commonwealth what your values truly are.