Massachusetts Teachers Association

Max Page, President
Deb McCarthy, Vice President
Mike Fadel, Executive Director-Treasurer

August 6, 2024

To MA House and Senate Republican Caucus Members,

The Honorable F. Jay Barrows
The Honorable Donald Berthiaume
The Honorable Nicholas Boldyga
The Honorable David DeCoste
The Honorable Angelo D'Emilia
The Honorable Kimberly Ferguson
The Honorable Paul Frost
The Honorable Susan Williams Gifford
The Honorable Steven Howitt
The Honorable Bradley Jones
The Honorable Hannah Kane
The Honorable Marc Lombardo
The Honorable John Marsi
The Honorable Joseph McKenna
The Honorable David Muradian
The Honorable Mathew Muratore
The Honorable Norman Orrall
The Honorable Kelly Pease
The Honorable Todd Smola
The Honorable Michael Soter
The Honorable Alyson Sullivan-Almeida
The Honorable Marcus Vaughn
The Honorable David Vieira
The Honorable Donald Wong
The Honorable Steven Xiarhos
The Honorable Peter Durant
The Honorable Ryan Fattman

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We are writing in response to your reprehensible July 24th letter attacking MTA's Board of Directors and its staff. We have not publicly replied to some of the critiques of our union's response to the terrible attacks of October 7 and the terrible war in Gaza in part because we did not want to give further oxygen to misinformation and outright lies.

But your unfounded and uninformed public attack against our organization and against one of our highly respected staff members requires a clear response, especially since a series of rhetorical attacks, similar in tone and distortion to your statement, have encouraged unprovoked threats against our staff and our public schools and have forced us to report the most serious threats to the FBI and the Massachusetts Attorney General.

Here are the facts.

- We are a democratic union. That means MTA's policy decisions are made by our elected Executive Committee and elected Board of Directors. Our Executive Committee and our Board have each called for a ceasefire, joining our parent union, the National Education Association, and the majority of Americans in doing the same.

- Being a democratic union also means we promote open learning and discussion among our members on a wide range of controversial topics. We have held workshops on antisemitism and on the Palestinian struggle. As befits a union of educators, a broad range of presenters are represented in these workshops and forums. Holding such forums does not suggest MTA endorsement of each and every idea presented. Rather, it models the highest democratic value and exchange of diverse and at times competing ideas that is a hallmark of our labor union.

- MTA does not develop curriculum. MTA does provide research and resources for our members to critically review and utilize as they see fit in their professional development.

- Ricardo Rosa, MTA's Director of Training and Professional Learning, has been reprehensibly attacked for simply performing his job at the MTA. Dr. Rosa is a respected scholar and, along with our staff and members, oversees the development of hundreds of workshops and forums every year on topics of professional interest for educators. We are proud and privileged to have him on our staff. We are closely examining your statements, as well as other uninformed attacks, against Dr. Rosa, and our organization and will not hesitate to take legal action if warranted.

Lastly, as a labor union of educators we are dedicated to growth in learning and critical thinking for our students (preK through higher ed) and our communities. This includes actively opposing all types of oppression including antisemitism and anti-Arab racism. We will continue to defend academic freedom while protecting our classrooms, schools, and campuses against such threats and harm.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Teachers Association Board of Directors
(unanimously)

cc: The remaining MA House and Senate Legislators