

DEMOCRATS

for EDUCATION REFORM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Democrats for Education Reform Launches Illinois Branch; Appoints Rebeca Nieves Huffman as State Director

Huffman will spearhead DFER's advocacy and growth in the state

Chicago, IL, January 17, 2012 – Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) today announced a new state branch in Illinois as part of the organization's continued nationwide expansion. Longtime education advocate and Illinois native Rebeca Huffman will lead DFER's development in the Prairie State as state director.

"Rebeca has spent the last 10 years working tirelessly to improve public education for children across the nation," said Joe Williams, DFER's executive director. "Now, she'll bring the expertise and knowledge she honed at the national level to her home state of Illinois. Rebeca's vision, track record, and deep understanding of the many challenges facing Illinois' public education system make her the perfect choice for state director."

A first generation college graduate, Huffman has dedicated her professional life to ensuring that all children, regardless of background or socioeconomic status, have excellent educational opportunities. She has spent the bulk of her career working to expand access for historically underserved children and their families.

"I am thrilled to lead DFER's expansion into our state," said Huffman. "We have a lot of work to do, but we've clearly seen what bold ideas and determination can do in other states. This organization has achieved a great deal for children throughout the country, and we're going to continue that progress in Illinois."

Most recently Huffman was a vice president at the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) where she managed the communications and outreach efforts of the organization. Before joining NACSA, Huffman served for 5 years as president and CEO of the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options (Hispanic CREO), the national voice for the right of Latino parents to access all educational options.

Prior to CREO, Huffman was the associate director of recruitment and selection for the KIPP Foundation, a national network of high performing charter schools that are dedicated to

providing historically underserved students with the knowledge, skills, and character needed to succeed in top-quality high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond.

Huffman serves on the boards of Education Sector, Noble Network of Charter Schools, 50CAN, and City Year Chicago. She is also a proud alum of the Aspen Institute's Entrepreneurial Leadership for Public Education fellowship program, which identifies and strengthens the next generation of leaders within the K-12 education sector.

Led by Huffman, DFER's new Illinois branch will work to fundamentally reform and reinvent public education in the state.

About Democrats for Education Reform

Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) is a political action committee based in Washington, D.C., whose mission is to encourage a more productive dialogue within the Democratic Party on the need to fundamentally reform American public education. DFER operates at all levels of government to educate elected officials and support reform-minded candidates for public office.

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