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SECRET DEAL SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED

PHILADELPHIA – September 7, 2011 – The Committee of Seventy reacted to today’s news that public dollars were used to fund the entire buyout of former School District Superintendent Arlene Ackerman’s contract. After Seventy and others criticized keeping secret the identities of private donors to the buyout, most of them pulled out, according to the School Reform Commission. The remaining non-public funds were returned to the still unknown contributors.

“It’s good that the public doesn’t have to worry who is anonymously underwriting this deal and why,” said Zack Stalberg, Seventy’s President and CEO. “But Philadelphia has been tarnished by a controversy that stems from a secret deal that should never have been attempted in the first place.”

Stalberg urged the School Reform Commission to publicly explain why it chose not to pursue the possibility that Ackerman violated the terms of her settlement agreement by making disparaging remarks about the District’s Chief Financial Officer, Michael Masch. “Especially since the public is now footing the bill for the buyout, the taxpayers deserve to know why no effort is being made to void the agreement altogether,” he said.

The Committee of Seventy is a non-partisan organization fighting for clean and effective government, fair elections and informed citizens in Philadelphia and throughout the region. For more information about Seventy, see www.seventy.org.

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