



October 6, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I appreciate your time and consideration. As the Montana State Superintendent of Public Instruction, it is my highest calling to always put the students and families of our great state first. In our frontier state of Montana, we support individual rights and the voices throughout our communities. Our citizens and families are free spirited and independent. Our government serves and advocates for Montana families.

It is the duty of elected officials to acknowledge citizen voices and afford them the dignity and respect enshrined in the United States Constitution. We Montanans have an inherent respect for our First Amendment right to protest, assemble, and voice grievances to our leaders. I unquestionably stand with our communities and their voices and educational needs. It seems necessary to reiterate the respect demanded for the parents of our state, the dignity afforded our citizens, and their right to peaceably protest in the public square without censure or threat.

**As a constitutionally elected official and a fourth generation Montanan, I am deeply disturbed by your Justice Department's directive to the FBI that labels concerned parents as "domestic terrorists."** Our Montana parents will not be regarded as domestic terrorists. Our school system in Montana has a long history of local control and support from local communities. We respect the right of Montana parents in demanding their freedom to choose what is best for themselves and their children. They understand that no level of government owns their children.

We must all honor the role of the first teachers of our children: parents. I continue to urge respect between parents, administrators, and trustees. Parents throughout our state and nation play an active and vital role in the education of our children. I ask you to now respect the parents of Montana and their decisions to actively participate in their children's education. As the Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction, I urge you to reconsider the divisive wedge that your declaration has driven into an already polarized and stressed educational system.

Sincerely,

Elsie Arntzen  
Montana State Superintendent

cc: Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, Governor Greg Gianforte, Senator Steve Daines, Senator Jon Tester, Representative Matt Rosendale, Attorney General Austin Knudsen

