



BRAD SHERMAN
UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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Dear Educator:

I am not an expert in administering schools or evaluating educational institutions. If you are reading this letter you probably have far more expertise in these matters than I do. If it is part of your mission to evaluate the Magnolia Public Schools, you should do so in the manner you think best.

However, this letter addresses one very peculiar situation of which you may be unaware. As the second most senior Democrat on the United States House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, having served on the committee for 20 years, I feel equipped to advise you on this issue as it involves American foreign policy.

The law firm of Amsterdam & Partners of Washington DC is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act because it has a contract to receive \$600,000 per year from the government of Turkish President Recep Erdogan. Apparently, they are receiving the \$600,000 per year principally to disparage Magnolia Public Schools. Amsterdam & Partners, acting as a paid foreign agent of the Erdogan government, has subcontracted with other law and public relations firms, again principally to disparage Magnolia Schools.

President Erdogan is a repudiation of everything that good American schools stand for. He has personally done tremendous damage to democracy in the Republic of Turkey.

A good academic institution teaches its students to analyze issues from all perspectives. In Erdogan's Turkey, engaging in this type of critical inquiry is punished, sometimes with severe prison sentences. For example, section 51220 (b) (2) of the California Education Code directs that students be taught about human rights issues, including the Armenian genocide. President Erdogan would make sure that anyone following that law in Turkey would go to prison for a long time.

At various times, President Erdogan's government has assisted ISIS. The pattern of Erdogan's ever stronger attacks on important freedoms and interference with the rule of law is unmistakable. When environmentalists demonstrated to protect Istanbul's Gezi Park and others throughout Turkey joined to protest against Erdogan's policies in May-June 2013, his heavy-handed crackdown, including arresting over 5,500 people, showed his approach to dissent: try to squash it. When his own corruption was investigated, President Erdogan fired the investigators. He has closed down Twitter and YouTube. Last month, Erdogan struck another blow at independent sources of information and opinion by taking control of *Zaman*, Turkey's largest newspaper.

Accordingly, I cannot think of a worse source of information about American education than President Erdogan and his paid agents.

I have nothing to say about Magnolia Schools, its educational approach, teacher quality, or facilities. But as you can see from the above, I have plenty to say about President Erdogan and his paid agents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Sherman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress