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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **AQE PRESENTS “BAD APPLE” AWARDS TO GOVERNOR PATAKI, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER JOSEPH BRUNO AND ASSEMBLYMEMBERS JEFF BROWN, MICHAEL FITZPATRICK AND BILL REILICH**

#### **AWARDS GIVEN FOR EXTREME OPPOSITION TO PROVIDING A QUALITY EDUCATION TO EVERY CHILD IN NEW YORK STATE.**

(Albany, NY) The Alliance for Quality Education presented “Bad Apple” awards to Governor George Pataki, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno (R-Saratoga), Assemblyman Michael Fitzpatrick (R-Smithtown), Assemblyman Bill Reilich (R-Rochester) and Assemblyman Jeff Brown (R-North Syracuse) today for their extreme records of failing to support policies to improve New York schools and providing a quality education to every child in New York state.

The recipients of the “Bad Apple” award are those who have an extreme record of voting against support for public education and have demonstrated overwhelming opposition on a consistent basis to providing a quality education to every school child in New York state.

Governor George Pataki, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, Assemblyman Michael Fitzpatrick, Assemblyman Bill Reilich (R-Rochester) and Assemblyman Jeff Brown were given “Bad Apple” awards this year for their extreme hostility toward public education and the future of New York’s school children.

Each of the Assembly award winners have extreme records of voting against support for public education, and are among only a tiny handful of state assembly members to do so. Even among members of their own party, they stand apart for their extreme opposition toward efforts to provide a quality education to all children in New York state.

“In the State Assembly, Jeff Brown, Michael Fitzpatrick and Bill Reilich make up a lonely club of three anti-education extremists who have consistently voted against improving our schools,” said AQE Executive Director Billy Easton.

A review of the record in the Assembly shows a remarkable consistency. On five of the seven bills that were voted on, 10 members or less voted against the bills. Out of eight opportunities to support increased school funding and other reforms to improve schools only three members failed to support such reforms on more than four of eight opportunities. These three members were Jeff Brown, Michael Fitzpatrick & Bill Reilich.

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A further evaluation of these legislators' records in the 2003-04 Session shows anti-education records in the prior session that is consistent with their records in the current session. In fact over the four year time period, no other legislator voted against or failed to sponsor more than four of the pieces of legislation, yet Assemblymen Fitzpatrick and Reilich opposed seven of these bills.

Assemblyman Brown stood apart from all other "Bad Apple Award" winners by opposing eight of eleven education bills—more than any of the one hundred and fifty members of the State Assembly.

"Their shameful record of opposing even the basic needs of schools across the state and our kids demonstrates their total lack of commitment to education in New York state," said Easton.

Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno received a "Bad Apple Award" for his consistent opposition to a resolution of the CFE court case and his refusal to fully fund public schools across New York state. Despite a two year old court order and a multi billion dollar budget surplus, Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno refused to pass a budget that would fully fund schools across New York state.

Under Joseph Bruno's leadership, the state senate blocked legislation that would have resolved CFE on a statewide basis and addressed the graduation crisis in New York state.

"Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno continues to be a major barrier to fundamental reform," said Easton. "Instead of putting our kids' education needs first, the Senate Majority Leader insisted on more tax cuts for the wealthy."

Governor Pataki received a "Bad Apple Award" for his continued appeal of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity court case and for his ongoing decision to prioritize tax cuts for the wealthy over fully funding public education in New York state. Despite being under an order from New York's highest court in the CFE case, Governor Pataki failed to propose a plan that would have funded schools at the level necessary to provide the constitutionally-mandated "meaningful high school education."

"Governor Pataki continued to put his national ambitions ahead of the current needs of New York's school children cementing his legacy as the governor who allowed an entire generation of school children to attend chronically under funded schools," said Easton.

The "Bad Apple Awards" are based on education votes that took place during the 2005 and 2006 legislative session as well as sponsorship of or opposition to pro-education legislation.

Lawmakers began both the 2005 and 2006 legislative sessions under a court order to reform public school funding in the state and with the understanding that there is a graduation crisis in New York state. However, the 2006 New York state legislative session came to a close in June the same way it did the previous year—without addressing the graduation crisis, adopting a statewide resolution to CFE lawsuit and making a commitment to fully fund public schools across the state. As a result, New York State continues to have a broken school aid system that denies millions of children their constitutional right to a "meaningful high school education."

Governor George Pataki, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, Assemblyman Jeff Brown, Assemblyman Michael Fitzpatrick and Assemblyman Bill Reilich all received "Bad Apple" awards for their extreme hostility toward public education and the future of New York's school children.

To see a detailed analysis of the education records of the "Bad Apple" award winners visit [www.aqeny.org](http://www.aqeny.org).