

My name is Zakiyah Ansari, I'm a mother of 8, a grandmother of 3 and a proud Brooklynite. Next month when my son graduates, all of my children will have all successfully graduated from the NYC public school system.

I've been in the fight for educational justice for almost 20 years and I'm here today to nominate Cynthia Nixon for Democratic candidate for the Governor of NY.

I've known Cynthia Nixon for over a decade. Everyone knows Cynthia is a champion for our public schools and I can tell you why. She fights for our public schools because she's a mother who not only cares for her children's education but about the children of NYS.

I have walked the halls of Albany with her many, many times as public-school parents lobbying our legislators when there were no cameras around. I know that like me, Cynthia believes that my children, and every child who lives in Central Brooklyn, the South Bronx, Brentwood and Buffalo has the same constitutional right to a quality education that wealthy white children have. We demand a fair shot for every child, not just for some and that is why I am proud to support Cynthia Nixon for Governor.

Cynthia's opponent, Andrew Cuomo, simply does not get it. He has ignored the stories of inequitable education that Black, brown and low-income parents, families and communities from across this state have shared year after year. By dismissing our stories, he has disrespected us. The sad thing is that our children have paid the price.

I've been the parent sharing the stories of how my children's schools could only provide students with art for half the year and music for half the year because Governor Cuomo refused to adequately fund our schools. I have been forced to come to Albany demanding more money of the legislature because our school could not afford a special education teacher. While Andrew Cuomo was ignoring us, Cynthia was there lending her name and her leadership to elevate our voices. She was the magnet that drew elected officials to hear our stories in Albany when they so often were looking to go the other way when they saw us coming.

Statewide our schools are owed \$4.2 billion as a result of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit. In 2007, a Democratic Governor, a Democratic Assembly and a Republican Senate passed a new school funding formula to make sure every child has the classroom resources he or she needs to succeed.

Andrew Cuomo says we spend too much. I know whose children he is talking about when he says we spend too much. It is children who look like my children. Black children. Brown children. Immigrant children. Low income white children.

He says we spend more money than we ever have before on education. That is a meaningless statistic because I spend more on a gallon of milk than I ever did before. It is called inflation. The reality is that under Andrew Cuomo when you factor in inflation school aid has only increased by 1.2% per year over the past 8 years. No wonder we have so many schools all over

the state with 26, 30 or even 35 students in a classroom. No wonder we have school counsellors serving as many as 700 students. No wonder some schools offer dozens of college level courses while many of our children are fortunate to have a few.

I am convinced that under this governor our children will never see the classroom resources they deserve. Whether the economy is doing well or doing poorly there is never enough money for educational equity. Governor Cuomo has so many excuses that I am reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King's words in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, "For years now I have heard the word "wait." It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "wait" has almost always meant "never." It has been a tranquilizing thalidomide, relieving the emotional stress for a moment, only to give birth to an ill-formed infant of frustration. We must come to see with the distinguished jurist of yesterday that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

Like me Cynthia Nixon is a proud public-school graduate and like me she is the proud mother of public school students. She knows what quality public education means. She knows what it takes to deliver that education for every child. She knows that our education system, like our society is facing tremendous challenges of racial and economic injustice. She knows that for far too long, from George Pataki to Andrew Cuomo, Albany has fed our children and families a long line of excuses and delays when it comes to equitable funding for our public schools.

Cynthia is honest. Cynthia is principled. Cynthia is determined. And she has the courage to lead on behalf of our children. She will make millionaires and corporations pay their fair share and she will fund our children's schools. She has vision for an equitable New York that serves all New Yorkers. No more excuses. No more delays.

Cynthia a great leader for New York because she leads with compassion, she leads with empathy, and she leads with justice. But she also leads with toughness and determination.

We can entrust the fate of our children to Cynthia Nixon. We can trust her to invest in and improve our schools. We can trust her to fix our infrastructure upstate and downstate. We can trust her to end the corruption in Albany. We can entrust her to make New York a True Blue Democratic State.

This campaign isn't just about Cynthia Nixon. It's about a Democratic Party that fights for its voters -- not just its corporate donors. It's about the communities who are tired of being beaten down and always put last. I'm ready to fight. We're all ready to fight back. Cynthia is ready to fight and Cynthia is ready to lead. She's got my vote, I am asking you to give her yours.