



## **Cincinnati anti-tax group makes records requests of every school district in search of Democratic ‘lies’**

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An anti-tax attorney in Cincinnati is alleging that “Democratic political operatives” are spreading lies about Gov. John Kasich’s school funding plan, so he is blanketing all of Ohio’s 614 public school districts with public records requests seeking all correspondence they’ve received from key Democratic Party leaders and groups considered to be pro-public education.

“As a general principle, Democrats have been spreading lies about Governor [John] Kasich, and we want to hold our public officials accountable as to those misrepresentations,” said Christopher P. Finney, a co-founder of the anti-tax group Coalition Opposed to Additional Spending and Taxes, in an interview with the Beacon Journal on Tuesday.

Once he has collected the correspondence from Democrats, he indicated that he “could pursue in the future” how the school officials themselves responded.

One of the letters from Finney to a school superintendent in Howard, Ohio, says: “It has come to my attention that Democratic political operatives have been engaging in efforts to disseminate information regarding Governor Kasich’s budget and school funding proposal to school districts throughout the state.”

He said he wants to know what they’re saying.

Finney said he has received responses from more than half of the state’s districts, but he would not disclose any results.

The request seeks all communications and correspondence from the Ohio Democratic Party; the party’s chairman Chris Redfern; the party’s communications director Jerid Kurtz; the chief executive of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Kirk Hamilton; public education advocacy groups Innovation Ohio and Progress Ohio, and former state Rep. Stephen Dyer, D-Green, who has been doing data analysis for the advocacy groups.

Libertarian blogger Mark Miller, treasurer and co-founder of the Cincinnati-based Coalition Opposed to Additional Spending and Taxes (COAST), is working with Finney.

Miller said he views the Democrats’ “incestuous relationship” with teacher unions as an ingredient for misuse of public tax dollars.

“That whole dynamic is just fertile grounds. When you’re hunting for ducks you have to go to the lake. You don’t go to a cave,” Miller said. He said COAST aims to promote “good government” by limiting and publicizing the misuse of power and public tax dollars.

Dyer, contacted Tuesday, said: “It’s not a surprise to me that they are trying to intimidate people who want to see education succeed,” and said Miller is actually limiting democracy through intimidation.

“That’s certainly not democratic nor is it good government,” Dyer said. “Any time you try to silence a voice, you might miss out on a good idea.”

The letter investigates Democratic ties, but Miller said COAST is “an equal opportunity offender.” He said Republicans tend to fly under the radar on education issues and typically push for lower taxes, which pleases the fiscally conservative group.

While they have not made the same request of charter schools, Miller was critical of those, too. He said of publicly funded, privately run charters: “A lot of those are good old-fashioned fraud. The state is the only customer, and they see that as a cash grab.”

Finney said the responses are flowing in at a rate of 10 to 15 each day. He will not release the results of the inquiry until his firm has received all responses, but he said with more than half of Ohio schools responding so far, it won’t be long.

**Original Article:**

<http://www.ohio.com/news/break-news/cincinnati-anti-tax-group-makes-records-requests-of-every-school-district-in-search-of-democratic-lies-1.386454?localLinksEnabled=false>