

Official Statement from La Crosse County Democrats regarding statements b y La Crosse School Board Candidate Rob Abraham

While the La Crosse County Democratic party is not endorsing candidates in the La Crosse School Board race, our membership believes it is important to stand against some of the comments made by one of the candidates, Rob Abraham. The La Crosse School Board needs candidates who focu entirely on the health, well-being, and education of our students. Based on comments from before and during his candidacy, Abraham is not that candidate.

According to an article published by the La Crosse Tribune, an email written by Mr. Abraham suggests “the leadership should lay off or furlough staff” while schools were closed due to COVID. This comment shows a fundamental lack of respect for teaching as a profession, as well as a lack of understanding of the difficulty (and extra work) of teaching during COVID. School board members are required to make difficult decisions about the health and safety of students and teachers, and suggesting that “schools must continue” at the height of the pandemic shows how drastically Abraham underestimated the dangers of the virus and the serious threat open schools would represent to students and faculty.

In another email, Abraham states many people have praised the district for feeding children in need during the pandemic, but then adds that “from the parents who have feeding [sic] their children covered, we need help.” All students need assistance in this difficult time, but to insinuate that feeding children is not as important as his own children being engaged shows a questionable lack of priorities in regard to meeting the needs of all school children.

In response to the publication of the emails in the Tribune, Abraham does, to his credit, walk back his comments. However, this does not change the fact that, at a time of great uncertainty and real danger, Abraham chose to attack teachers rather than support them. Abraham failed a basic test of trusting teachers and school officials about how to best conduct teaching in a crisis.

Abraham’s candidacy centers around being upset at the removal of SROs (School Resource Officers) from schools. There is clear evidence that SROs do not enhance school safety based on testimony from La Crosse students who feel uncomfortable and endangered by the presence of these officers in school. Abraham refused to listen to their viewpoint and continued to push ahead with his agenda, regardless of the mental and physical distress the SROs have on some of La Crosse’s most disenfranchised students.

Additionally, his recent call on Facebook that voters ONLY vote for him, instead of the full three votes for school board citizens are entitled to, smacks of the kind of voter suppression tactics conservatives have been championing for years. Trying to game the system by asking citizens not to vote is undemocratic and should raise serious doubts about his candidacy.

https://lacrossetribune.com/news/emails-asst-police-chief-and-school-board-candidate-suggested-teacher-pay-cut-while-virtual/article_840346ff-a0b7-53e2-b579-b8bddb956521.html

https://lacrossetribune.com/opinion/letters/robert-abraham-as-a-concerned-parent-i-will-ask-tough-questions/article_d18027d0-3ef1-56ed-b692-6f88ff32fb25.html