

October 8, 2003

Letters to the editor
Springfield Republican
P. O. Box 2350
Springfield, MA 01102-2350

Dear Editor:

I was disappointed in the lack of coverage on the part of the *Springfield Republican* concerning the recent demonstration at the School Committee meeting of October 2, 2003.

Over the last two years, the Springfield Public Schools have lost at least 190 teaching positions and the student enrollment has continued to grow. Teachers are into their second year without a contract and no raises. During this same time, federal, state and local regulations have required more and more from teachers, and teachers have answered the call for the children of this city.

Last June, the School Committee and the Mayor extended the Superintendent's contract. The School Committee and the Mayor also extended the administrators (Unit B) contract (which expired the same time as the teachers' contract) until a new settlement is reached. Springfield teachers have a bargained and signed *Letter of Agreement* from the School Committee to extend their contract but the Mayor and the School Committee have refused to vote to honor this *Letter of Agreement*.

Springfield teachers deserve to be treated with the same respect that the Mayor and the School Committee have shown the Superintendent and the Unit B administrators. The Mayor and School Committee have a responsibility to honor the commitment that they made at the bargaining table. The extension of the teachers' contract is a no cost issue for the city in terms of dollars. The failure of the Mayor and the School Committee to extend the teachers' contract will have a major cost in terms of teachers' morale and labor harmony in this city.

I urge all Springfield citizens to tell their elected officials to honor the commitments they have made--extend the teachers' contract and bargain in good faith. To continue to do otherwise denies the hardworking teachers of the city their dignity and the respect they deserve.

Sincerely,

Timothy T. Collins
President