



S I M O N & S C H U S T E R

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Elisa M. Rivlin
Executive Vice President
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August 10, 2011

By Email: dblasband@mclaughlinstern.com
Confirmation Copy by Regular Mail

David Blasband, Esq.
McLaughlin & Stern, LLP
260 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Re: Dr. Diane Ravitch – *Class Warfare* by Steven Brill

Dear Mr. Blasband:

Your letter to Carolyn Reidy has been referred to me for response.

Your letter mischaracterizes Steven Brill's reporting concerning your client, Dr. Diane Ravitch in his book *Class Warfare*. Mr. Brill does provide a critical assessment of Dr. Ravitch's book *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*. And he does, based on fully disclosed facts, raise questions, not about the motivation behind her change of views, but about the propriety of her appearing in the media as a seemingly disinterested academician when she had accepted undisclosed speaking fees in connection with her speeches to groups on what he characterizes as the "anti-reform" side of the present education debate. Again, he nowhere suggests that the positions that she put forward in her book were motivated by her desire to obtain such fees, or are in any respect not honestly held. In fact, later on in the book (page 423) he quotes an aspect of those views casting no aspersion on their sincerity. Your letter confirms that Dr. Ravitch did in fact receive payments for speaking engagements to partisan audiences. You maintain that she did not receive as much money as Mr. Brill posited. Mr. Brill made clear the exact basis for his postulation. Moreover, he repeatedly gave your client the opportunity to comment about the issue he was raising, and asked her specifically how much she had received from whom; and her comments are fully reported in his book.

Notably, Dr. Ravitch did not deny that she accepted speaking fees from partisan audiences or suggest that she felt that the suggestion that she did was defamatory. She declined to quantify how much she was paid, or how many of the appearances were paid. The further point she chose to make was that she was very wealthy and money didn't matter to her – which Mr. Brill also reported in his book. She did express her willingness to speak for free or for a reduced fee for a group "if that's all they can pay." And

following their conversation, Dr. Ravitch e-mailed Mr. Brill to say that she would be donating speaking fees to charity. Again, all of this information was provided to Mr. Brill's readers.

This said, Mr. Brill will of course consider any further information Dr. Ravitch now chooses to share concerning the specifics of her speaking engagements for inclusion in any future printings and editions of *Class Warfare* (just as he would have been happy to include it when he tried to obtain that information from Dr. Ravitch prior to going to press). Certainly, we are happy to note in such printings that Dr. Ravitch has subsequently told Mr. Brill that she only charged for 8 of 23 lectures to teachers' unions and their supporters during the period from February 2010 through March 2011 and to report what she tells Mr. Brill was the total amount of those fees so that his readers have more precise information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'EL M R L', is written in a cursive style.

Elisa M. Rivlin

cc: Steven Brill