

# THE ALLIANCE TO RECLAIM OUR SCHOOLS

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Contact: Keron Blair, AROS co-director  
202-285-2567

## ALLIANCE TO RECLAIM OUR SCHOOLS SUBMITS LETTER TO THE PUERTO RICO LEGISLATURE

**WASHINGTON**—A statement from the Alliance to Reclaim (AROS) Our Schools Co-director Keron Blair, on the Alliance’s submission of a letter to the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico in opposition to Senate Bill 825 and House Bill 14441, a bill that would privatize public education in Puerto Rico:

“Sadly, we have seen this playbook before. When disaster strikes, whether it’s Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans or Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, corporate education interests use their power and resources, not to help communities rebuild their schools, but to pave the way for private management through charter schooling. Let us be clear: this is not in the educational interests of the island’s students. It is a coordinated strategy to undermine organized labor, diminish public support for public schools and reduce the role of government in providing for the common good.

The predatory education industry, with the help of some misguided politicians, are swooping down on Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, with one goal in mind; destroying public education as we know it. With so much at stake for the students and families of Puerto Rico, one would think investing in public education would be the first priority, but sadly with these bills, Puerto Rico seems to be moving in the wrong direction.

These assaults on public education are artificially manufactured, and predatory in nature. Only communities of color are targeted—African American communities in New Orleans, Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore—Latinos in Puerto Rico. Where a natural disaster doesn’t open the door, schools in these communities are systematically stripped of resources while well-funded charter schools are opened nearby. Desperate parents flee for charters, leaving behind the most disadvantaged students and further stripping schools and districts of the ability to serve them. The inevitable failure of the traditional public schools then justifies their closure and replacement with more charters.

Today, we join with our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico in urging the Legistive Assembly of Puerto Rico to reject any attempt to privatize public education. Now is the time for lawmaker to hear the voices of parents, community and educators who are calling on them to rebuild and reopen their schools. Together, we have an opportunity ensure that every Puerto Rican student has access to a safe, welcoming and thriving public school.”

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