**Statement of John Affeldt, Public Advocates Inc.
CQE Counsel, on the California Supreme Court’s Denial of Review
In *Campaign for Quality Education v. California* & *Robles-Wong v. California***

August 22, 2016

Today, in a 4-3 decision, the California Supreme Court let stand a lower court ruling that found there is no right to an education of any quality under our state constitution. The lower court’s decision renders hollow the constitutional right to an education in our state, and we are extremely disappointed the Supreme Court has declined to review that holding.

As the dissents of Justices Goodwin Liu and Tino Cuellar point out, California is near last nationally in school spending, the number of staff in its schools, and academic performance. Our public education system is failing far too many of its students and the state as a whole, yet the Supreme Court today has chosen to let this travesty continue without allowing a trial to proceed that would emphatically demonstrate the state’s widespread inadequate educational opportunities. The Court’s action conflicts with a majority of the decisions of the more than 30 high court rulings in other states addressing their constitution’s education right. In those cases, most high courts have chosen to act and have found that there does exist a right to a meaningfully adequate education.

We are somewhat heartened by Justice Liu’s reminder that today’s failure to act by the high court, only puts off to a future day the possibility that the same issue will arise again before the Supreme Court. Should the state’s education system continue to stagnate or worsen—as is likely the case given the state’s paltry investment in its education system, we will continue to press this issue. The plaintiff community organizations in the case—including the Campaign for Quality Education, the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, Californians for Justice, and PICO California—as well as Public Advocates, are committed to ensuring the right to an education in California is one that meaningfully prepares students for college, career and civic participation.