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AND CONSUMER CREDIT

April 24, 2014

Dear Macalester College Adjunct Faculty:

I was pleased to be a part of "Contingent Faculty Appreciation Week," which was organized by your students this week in recognition of the work you do for them and for Macalester College. Thank you for inviting me to speak at your event.

It is no secret that our nation's system of higher education is becoming more and more reliant on the work of adjunct and contingent faculty. Over two-thirds of all college and university faculty are now off the "tenure track." So while your credentials, dedication to your students and passion for your fields of study are second to none, your pay, benefits and job security do not reach parity with those of your tenured and tenure-track colleagues.

American families now bear over \$1 trillion in student debt. Like many of your students, you likely have significant student debt yourselves. But how can you pay your bills, prepare for class, find time for research and writing, and still have time for your friends and family, when you are not afforded a liveable wage or the security to know where you will be teaching next year?

I understand that you may pursue organizing a union. I trust that the process will be collegial and free of any undue influence from the administration. The administration can and should take the "higher ground" by committing to a position of neutrality and non-interference with your decision to organize, and to vote your conscience when the election comes. Further, I hope that the administration will commit to not use any funds from tuition or other sources on trying to discourage or dissuade those who are organizing together for progress through a union.

Thank you for all you do for your students and for our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Ellison".

Rep. Keith Ellison  
United States Congress