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Contact: **Zachary Stalberg**  
**President and CEO**  
**(215) 557-3600, ext. 106**  
**(267) 241-1628 (cell)**

## SEVENTY URGES CONTINUED INVESTIGATION OF MLK CHARTER AWARD PROCESS

**PHILADELPHIA – September 22, 2011** – The Committee of Seventy today urged an immediate investigation by the State Attorney General and Philadelphia District Attorney into findings that State Representative Dwight Evans, with the help of then-School Reform Commission Chairman Robert L. Archie, Jr., used his political power to steer a contract to a favored charter school operator. The findings were contained in a report written by Mayor Nutter’s Chief Integrity Officer, Joan Markman.

“Philadelphians should be appalled by the report’s picture of backroom dealings and political strong-arming,” said Zack Stalberg, Seventy’s President and CEO. “And we don’t know the complete story because Dwight Evans refused to cooperate with the investigation. The fact that he didn’t demands further inquiry by someone with subpoena power.”

Assuming the Markman report is accurate, Stalberg said that Robert Archie’s role in assisting Evans also deserves further investigation. Archie publicly recused himself from the charter award process because of a conflict of interest but, according to Markman, nonetheless inserted himself into the decision.

According to Stalberg, the revelations in the Markman report raise other troubling concerns:

- **Mayor Nutter’s delay of the Markman report until after Archie’s resignation.** “The mayor should have publicly demanded Archie’s resignation as soon as he learned about his Chief Integrity Officer’s findings, which reportedly was some time ago. Instead, he waited until Archie resigned on his own terms and then praised his service. This is not the way someone who calls himself the ‘Education Mayor’ should behave,” Stalberg said.

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- **Other SRC members remained silent.** Although the Markman report did not criticize other SRC members, Stalberg said they should not have permitted Evans to speak privately to them at an executive session, a possible violation of the Sunshine Act. “The SRC has an ethical obligation to ensure that contracts are awarded ethically and fairly. The fact that none of the members asked Evans to leave when they realized why he was there or spoke out later about the sudden withdrawal of the charter operator they chose over Evans’ choice is highly disappointing.”

Stalberg praised the Markman report but said it fell short by not offering any recommendations for sanctions. “It is not enough to say that people in highly influential positions of public trust acted improperly. If there are no consequences for their conduct, they and others in the public arena will continue to believe they can act with impunity.”

“The public’s confidence in the School District is already very fragile,” Stalberg said. “That confidence took another severe hit today.”

The Committee of Seventy is a non-partisan organization fighting for clean and effective government, fair elections and informed citizens in Philadelphia and throughout the region. For more information about Seventy, see [www.seventy.org](http://www.seventy.org).

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