

I never planned on being a politician. As an assistant professor at UNLV, I was happy educating the next generation of civic leaders. But then I was downsized - a victim of the same ruthless cuts to education funding that plague so many schools throughout our country. I was angry, but I was also determined to do something about the injustice I saw as an educator. The injustice of bright, young students struggling to afford the exploding costs of college; of a society that fails to invest in education while giving tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires; and of millions of DREAMers, as American as I am, unable to take advantage of in-state tuition and so many other benefits they are rightfully entitled to.

For generations, we have been told that the American Dream is obtainable. That if you get a good education and work hard, you too can make a decent wage, buy a home, and build a secure retirement. The sad truth is, for many that dream is broken. The top 1% in this country amass extraordinary wealth while everyday people work long hours and struggle to put food on the table. Education, once the path to the middle class, has become an albatross around young people's necks – miring them in student debt for years to come.

I ran for the Nevada Assembly to fight for that dream. In my time in office, I have worked hard to increase funding for K-12 and expand access to college grants, but I have also seen firsthand how the well-funded and well-connected game the system. I truly understand how important it is to elect a president that will ensure a fair and just future for all Americans.

Bernie Sanders will be that president. He has the right combination of vision and experience to lead our country. He will make all public colleges and universities tuition free, give DREAMers the same opportunities their classmates receive, and increase education funding to make us globally competitive. He will make sure that every child in America will have the opportunity to live up to their full potential.

Throughout my career, I have always held true to my values, even when the fight was tough. I am not interested in doing what is politically expedient or following the establishment. Neither is Bernie Sanders. He stands up for what he believes in and has a lifetime record of fighting for the little guy. He may not have the billionaires behind him, but he has thousands and thousands of people like you or me on his side.

Our choice in Nevada will have an impact beyond our state borders. We have the chance - the first in a long time - to really make a difference in a process that for too long has been rigged in the favor of the wealthy and powerful. Please join me on February 20th and help elect Bernie Sanders for President. Together, we can renew the American Dream.

-Heidi Swank  
Assemblywoman, District 16