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## QuickPoint! – *Waiting for Superman*

By Steve Buckstein

The movie *Waiting for “Superman”* is this year’s *An Inconvenient Truth*. Produced by the same man, it lets Americans come face-to-face with students condemned to a terrible public education unless they are lucky enough to literally win a charter school seat in a public lottery.

On its own, the movie will create devastatingly negative publicity for failing public schools. However, it is accompanied by the recent announcement that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg will donate \$100 million to help improve the notoriously bad Newark, New Jersey public school system. Zuckerberg says he’s giving the money because he believes in Newark Mayor Cory Booker and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie.

This Democrat-Republican pair are not afraid to take on the once all-powerful teachers unions. They support school choice and merit pay for teachers.

Newark schools cost an astonishing \$22,000 per student. Eight years ago, Cory Booker came to Portland at the invitation of Cascade Policy Institute. He said Newark schools then cost \$17,000 per student. He asked if Portlanders would wait until our costs were that high before we realized money isn’t the answer to improving schools.

Zuckerberg may not be the Superman that public school students are waiting for. His money won’t make the difference by itself. But, coupled with the ideas of Cory Booker and Chris Christie, Newark may be the straw that finally breaks the teachers union camel’s back. It can’t come too soon.

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*Steve Buckstein is founder and Senior Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.*

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