

Central New York Common Core Listening Session  
Onondaga Community College, Storer Auditorium  
November 10, 2015, 7-9 PM  
Testimony of Gerald K. Masters, Geneva, NY

**A little over four score and 7 years ago**, our fathers brought forth to this nation a new public school system, conceived in local control, and dedicated to the proposition that all students are entitled to a public education.

**Now we are engaged in a great civil argument**, testing whether our state, or any state, so conceived and so dedicated can long endure, free and strong. We are met here in a great forum to test those arguments. We have come here to petition our government and redress the grievances to teaching and learning that the Common Core has accelerated. It is altogether fitting and proper that we do this.

**But, in a larger sense, we cannot petition** -- we cannot redress -- we cannot undo the harm that we've done to schoolchildren who have been casually cheated by men in blue suits ever since our abdication of the local control of teaching and learning. The sacrifices of those children and their parents, who have endured our misguided reaction to the 1983 report "A Nation at Risk," will remain permanent testimony to our unforgivable failure--since *No Child Left Behind*---to petition, redress, and undo the harm of the test-and-punish educationists' reform agenda.

**The world may little note**, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what we have done to New York's students and parents. It is for us who work in public education classrooms, rather, to be dedicated here to the great task remaining before us---**That** from students we've cheated, and parents we've lied to about testing-rather-than-teaching, we take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave time and treasure---**That** we here highly resolve that those stakeholders shall not have sacrificed authentic learning in vain---**That** this state, guided by teachers and parents---shall return to the forgotten conditions of teaching and learning---and---**That** public education---of the people, by the people and for the people---shall not---beyond next year's test refusals---be sacrificed on the altar of the Common Core.