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***Statement by CTU President Marilyn Stewart, on comments made  
by Senator/Rev. James Meeks***

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**CHICAGO** – CTU President Marilyn Stewart released the following statement today in response to recent comments made by State Senator/Reverend James Meeks at a meeting at Rainbow Push headquarters.

“The Chicago Teachers Union has long supported Sen. James Meeks’ efforts and the efforts of others, to change the way Illinois pre K-12 public schools are funded. We also supported his fight for fair and equitable educational opportunities for all Illinois students irrespective of where they reside.

“We cannot, however, accept his irresponsible and inflammatory rhetoric when it comes to talking about our 32,000 members. As an educator, I believe my job is to educate those who are misinformed. It is clear from the statements made by Reverend Meeks and based on the phone conversation we had, that he was led astray.

“The members of our Union understand the challenges our children face in and outside our public schools which is why our members work tirelessly to assist students and their families. We have advocated for more financial resources to address the social and emotional needs our students face in an effort to curb violence.

“We have also pushed for a moratorium on school closings, consolidations, turnarounds, phase outs and other methods implemented by the Board of Education that create instability and remove highly qualified, 100% certified veteran teachers.

“I have asked for a face-to-face meeting with Sen/Rev. Meeks to address his inexcusable remarks. Further, I will address any misunderstandings he may have about the quality of our union professionals who work every day in our public schools.

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*The Chicago Teachers Union represents 32,000 teachers and educational support personnel working in the Chicago Public Schools. CTU, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers and the Illinois Federation of Teachers, is the third largest union in the country and the largest local union in Illinois.*

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