Teachers Unions Stay the Course

August 12, 1998

Google Ads are provided by Google and are not selected or endorsed by Eagle Forum

The good news is, we were saved from the threat of a mega-union running the public schools when delegates to the National Education Association (NEA) convention this summer repudiated their own leadership by voting down a merger with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). The bad news is that the NEA convention delegates then approved all the resolutions that empower the NEA's highly-paid staff to lobby for radical causes at Congress and the state legislatures.

The NEA supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for "children from birth through age eight." NEA members must be living on another planet if they think the American people are willing to put their babies in public schools starting at birth.

The NEA wants schools to take on the responsibility for providing daycare for preschoolers, which is primarily a jobs program for the union. The NEA supports ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which would put supervision over the raising of children in the hands of a committee of UN "experts."

A dozen or more of the NEA resolutions demand "diversity," the code word for the gay rights agenda. NEA resolutions demand diversity in sex education, classroom curricula, school activities, and teacher training and hiring.

The NEA wants homeschooling to be tolerated only if the parents are "licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency" and use "a curriculum approved by the state department of education." The NEA would even forbid homeschooled students to participate in any extracurricular activities in public schools.

Numerous NEA resolutions oppose parental option plans, tuition tax credits, and vouchers. The NEA is paranoid about any competition for public schools.

Speaking of paranoia, NEA publications warn darkly that there are at least 2,000 organizations "at the state, local and national levels that attack public school textbooks, courses, and teaching methods." The NEA conducts an extensive program of "monitoring and researching" so-called right-wing organizations because the NEA regards academic freedom as a right of teachers, not parents.

NEA materials provide their members with full instructions and guidance on counterattacking against parents who dare to criticize public schools, their curriculum, methodology, or failure. NEA members are warned to be on guard against parents who question public school use of values clarification, life/death decision exercises, Whole Language, stories that include negative attitudes toward parents or patriotism, witchcraft, the occult, or privacy-invading exercises.

The NEA position about sex education is explicit. The school must be the ultimate authority and must assert its right to put children of any age "in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality," including birth control, incest, AIDS, and "diversity of sexual orientation."

Anything But Phonics would be a good way to describe the NEA resolutions about curriculum. The NEA is more interested in filling up the classroom day with bilingual education (the NEA opposes English as our official language), multicultural and global ed (which is an attack on patriotism and the American culture), environmental ed (which is usually propaganda for the re-distribution of U.S. wealth to Third World regimes), suicide ed, and "guidance and counseling" integrated into all subjects.

NEA resolutions support the entire feminist agenda, including Comparable Worth (defined as rejecting "market value" as the basis for salaries), abortion without any restriction or regulation, gender-free (i.e., non-traditional) career awareness, revising textbooks with "nonsexist" language, and ratification of the United Nations Convention on Discrimination Against Women.

The NEA resolutions endorse a wide variety of leftwing causes unrelated to education. These include passage of the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA), affirmative action (especially for sexual orientation), nationalized health care, statehood for the District of Columbia, banning capital punishment, providing schooling and other taxpayer benefits to illegal aliens, allowing the National Endowment for the Arts full freedom to award taxpayers' money to indecent "art," opposition to a moment of silence in public schools, support of the International Criminal Court, more money for the United Nations, and a national holiday honoring Cesar Chavez.

NEA convention speakers boasted about the defeat of the Paycheck Protection initiative in California in June, which would have required written consent from state employees before their salaries would be

subject to a union checkoff for political purposes. One speaker called the NEA victory "a political miracle," but the real explanation is that the unions spent $30 million to defeat the proposition.

There's no denying the NEA's political clout. The NEA-PAC ranks among the top ten of 4,000 political action committees in receipts and expenditures.

And what about the second biggest teachers union? When Bill Clinton spoke to the AFT convention in July, AFT President Sandra Feldman announced to the delegates: "He is America's No. 1 teacher . . . we are all his students."