from Phyllis Schlafly

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What is the Big Teacher’s Union Up to This Year?

The National Education Association (NEA) held its annual convention July 3-8 in Washington, D.C. Its 81500 delegates passed scores of policy resolutions which empower its staff to spend its $164,347 t425 budget in support of its left-libera1 goals.

The NEA went firmly on record against choice in the matter of allowing parents to select their children's schools or curriculum, but just as firmly in favor of choice in the matter of abortion. Several resolutions reaffirmed and updated the NEA's contrary positions on “choice,” showing that it is meaningless to talk about choice unless it is clearly stated what is being chosen.

The NEA resolutions blasted as “deleterious” and “detrimental” all plans involving tax credits or vouchers to pay tuition to private or parochial schools, and the NEA called on its affiliates “to work for the defeat of such legislation.” The NEA resolutions confirm the union's aggressive leadership in the battle to oppose parental choice in education, both choice of schools and choice of curriculum.

The NEA resolutions endorse “mandatory kindergarten and compulsory attendance” as well as “early childhood programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight.” The NEA wants all sorts of regulations on homeschoolers.

The NEA demands a larger role for the public schools in determining the curriculum of sex education, and asserts the right of “every individual” to “live in an environment of freely available information” about sex, with “confidential access” to “health, social and psychological services.” This means that the NEA is asserting the right of the schools to teach anything they want to minor children without parental knowledge or consent.

On the other “choice” issue, several resolutions reaffirmed the NEA's position proclaiming total support for abortion. In addition, New Business Item 22 orders the NEA to “take a proactive stance” in favor of abortion and to “provide assistance to the state affiliates to defeat pro-life legislation.” New Business Item 29 orders the NEA to establish a $50,000 annual fund to make grants to state

affiliates working for abortion rights, and decrees that this NEA expenditure “shall continue until the Freedom of Choice Act is passed in Congress.”

Fifty New York delegates offered New Business Item 46, which states “that the NEA will advocate no position on the abortion issue including: pro-life, pro-choice, or pro-abortion,” arguing that "any position other than neutrality divides the NEA and diminishes its membership." Apparently the NEA high command could not tolerate such reasonableness and prevented this resolution from coming to a convention vote by ruling Item 46 out of order.

In another contradictory position, the NEA came out strongly against any “censorship” of classroom materials by parents or the public, but just as strongly in favor of censoring teaching materials to “eliminate” all the societal patterns and words in the English language that the feminists call “sexist.” The NEA demands “procedures and timetables for eliminating sexism in the curriculum.”

Two new resolutions put the NEA on the warpath against anyone who runs against NEA-endorsed candidates for loca1 school boards. New Business Item 5 complains that “conservatives” are trying to get elected to school boards, and therefore the NEA will provide “information and training” to NEA members to oppose candidates whom the NEA thinks “threaten intellectual and academic freedom.”

In addition to reaffirming last year's resolution on multiculturalism and global education, the NEA put itself solidly on track in favor of the trendy new dogmatism designed to enforce “diversity.” New business Item 94 orders the NEA to “disseminate and/or make available a How to Teach or Tips on Teaching Diversity Curriculum Guide for Elementary and Secondary Schools.” The guide is directed to include math and science, but doesn't say how “diversity” impacts math and science.

Not many resolutions are ever defeated at NEA conventions, but the scrubbing of New Business Item 56 provided a little levity in an otherwise somber gathering. If passed, this Item would have directed “the National Education Association, also known as the NEA, to use its influence through whichever office is appropriate to persuade the National Endowment for the Arts, also recently known as the NEA, to change its name and/or initials so as to avoid confusion with us.”

NEA Resolutions in 1991 and 1992 vigorously deplored “any efforts” to interfere with the judgement of the National Endowment for the Arts in awarding grants.

This year, however, some members of the nation's largest teachers union must have realized that the acronym “NEA” is now associated in the public mind with obscene and sacrilegious “art.”

No wonder the National Education Association enthusiastically endorsed Bill Clinton. They are soulmates.