NEA Fights to Maintain School Monopoly

July 26, 2000

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

The federal antitrust lawsuit against Microsoft has illustrated the evil of monopolies and the tactics that monopolists use to maintain their power. But the biggest monopoly in our midst, the public school system guarded by the teachers unions, seems so far untouchable.

At its annual convention over the Fourth of July weekend, the National Education Association flung down the gauntlet in its war against school competition, a.k.a. school choice. Meeting at McCormick Place in Chicago, the delegates voted to impose a $5 a year increase in each member's dues in order to raise $6 million to combat vouchers and related ballot initiatives.

The NEA delegates approved numerous resolutions and a legislative lobbying program to back up this very political decision. In Resolution A-29, the NEA declares that it "opposes all attempts to establish and/or implement" voucher plans or tuition tax credits because they "undermine public education" and "reduce the support needed to adequately fund public education."

The NEA knows how to sling the semantics. Resolution A-27 describes all the following as "Deleterious Programs" that must be eliminated: "privatization, performance contracting, tax credits for tuition to private and parochial schools, voucher plans (or funding formulas that have the same effect as vouchers), planned program budgeting systems (PPBS), and evaluations by private, profit-making groups."

The NEA gives us a case study in how a monopoly freezes out its competition. NEA Resolution A-10 states that "closed public school buildings should be sold or leased only to those organizations that do not provide direct educational services to students and/or are not in direct competition with public schools."

The NEA is also trying to restrict competition by having NEA bureaucrats impose regulations on private schools. Resolution A-2 states that "all schools must be accredited under uniform standards established by the appropriate agencies in collaboration with the NEA and its affiliates."

Of course, the reason parents remove their children from free government schools and take on the burden

of paying for private schooling is to get out from under the phony "standards" set by "appropriate" union-controlled government agencies.

The NEA feels particularly threatened by homeschooling, possibly because of the way homeschoolers have outperformed public school students on national tests. The long tentacles of the public school monopoly are trying to erect barriers to keep homeschool competition excluded from the market.

Resolution B-67 seeks regulations to forbid parents from teaching their children unless they are "licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency" and use "a curriculum approved by the state department of education." The NEA even wants to forbid homeschooled students from participating in any extra-curricular activities in the public schools and wants to give the public schools sole authority to determine credits earned toward graduation for students entering or re- entering public schools.

The NEA fully realizes the importance of capturing its customers at the youngest age possible. Resolution B-1 demands "mandatory Kindergarten with compulsory attendance."

Resolution B-1 also states that "The National Education Association supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight." That's not a misprint; it does say "from birth."

The NEA's monopoly extends not merely to funding and "customers" but also to curriculum. The NEA wants no interference from parents when it comes to teaching children about sex.

Resolution B-38 states that the NEA believes "it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality." The information, which the NEA demands be "freely available" to every child at every age, is specified to include birth control, "family planning," diversity of sexual orientation, incest, and sexual harassment.

NEA resolutions endorse a wide range of leftwing policies. New Business Item B requires NEA members to distribute "a petition calling for meaningful gun control, specifically licensure, registration, bullet imprinting, child safety locks, mandatory background checks including waiting periods."

New Business Item 21 endorses another petition campaign demanding that the University of California

Regents reverse the ban on affirmative action in the UC system.

In an effort to help the Democrats take back the House, the NEA decided to spend most of its NEA-PAC money, estimated to be $8 million, on 25 hotly contested congressional races. It's no surprise that 89 percent of the NEA delegates endorsed Al Gore for president.