NEA Gears Up To Elect Democrats

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Tropical Storm Bill roared into New Orleans this summer carrying in its tailwind 10,000 convention delegates who purport to represent 2.7 million members of the National Education Association. They call themselves "the world's largest democratic, deliberative body," but the NEA's version of democracy is: majority rules, and the minority have no rights.
The NEA accords no rights to the 30 percent of NEA members who are Republicans. Since 1976 when the NEA became a big player in national politics by supporting Jimmy Carter, the NEA has endorsed a Democrat for President in every election.

This year, NEA federal policy manager Randall J. Moody announced plans to target 16 states he thinks the NEA can carry for a "pro- education" Democratic President against George W. Bush in 2004, and 40 to 45 House races where they can recruit "moderate" candidates. The NEA plans to raise funds for candidates, provide direct-mail services, and "turn out the vote."

Another significant minority was rebuffed when it urged NEA delegates to "stick to education issues and not promote abortion." The majority remained adamant in retaining the NEA's pro-abortion position, rejecting all pleas to be consistent with other NEA resolutions calling for tolerance, diversity, and respect for religious views of all peoples.

For many years, NEA resolutions have endorsed "early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight," specifically including "diversity-based curricula," and "bias-free screening devices." The NEA has repeatedly resolved that "kindergarten attendance should be mandatory" and "full-day," and the NEA now plans to provide model legislation and "legal, technical, and other support services" to help state legislatures enact such legislation.

What's new this year is that the NEA delegates resolved to make an all-out push for the establishment "in every state" of two years of "universal," taxpayer-funded, "full-day -- as opposed to half-day" pre-kindergarten "for all three- and four-year-old children." The NEA claims this is the fulfillment of the national education goal that "all children in America will start school ready to learn."

The pre-kindergarten demand is based on the NEA's false assumption that "there is no longer any serious doubt about the value of pre- kindergarten." In fact, what there is no longer any serious doubt about (as shown by the authoritative study just released by the National Institutes of Health) is that the more hours children spend in daycare, a.k.a. pre-kindergarten, the higher the incidence and severity of problem behaviors, such as disobedience, over-aggressiveness, and stress.

The NEA's pettiness and vindictiveness against homeschoolers was manifested by the contentious debate on Resolution B-69 which originally read: "The Association also believes that unfunded home- schooled students should not participate in any extracurricular activities in the public schools."

The word "unfunded" got into the proposed resolution because a handful of public schools provide funding for homeschoolers to participate in after-school activities. NEA delegates voted to delete the word "unfunded" because they oppose allowing homeschoolers, funded or unfunded, to associate with public school students who are "with us all day."

Two years ago, the NEA received damaging national publicity when word leaked out that the convention was going to adopt an in-your-face resolution demanding that the gay rights agenda be incorporated into everything from school curricula to teacher hiring. Revolt in the ranks caused it to be withdrawn.

But that was all smoke and mirrors; that convention quietly adopted at least ten separate resolutions that added up to the same objectives as the one withdrawn, and this year's convention re-adopted the same resolutions.

NEA President Reg Weaver's keynote address spelled out the NEA's opposition to the No Child Left Behind Act, calling it "a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde ... a wolf in sheep's clothing ... rhetoric not reform." The NEA didn't oppose NCLB in Congress because it is the biggest spending education bill ever passed, but now NEA politicos see it as a useful tool to hammer at George W. Bush and elect a "pro-education President" who, of course, is defined as a Democrat.

The NEA's Standing Committee on Women's Issues demanded continuing NEA support for Title IX quota policies, the University of Michigan's position on affirmative action, the Equal Rights Amendment, and the United Nations treaties on Discrimination against Women and the Rights of the Child. The NEA Standing committee on Sexual Orientation/Gender Identification reported enthusiastic NEA support for "comprehensive sexual health education in schools," which of course means the positive presentation of homosexuality.

The 2003 convention proves again that the NEA is always about coopting more taxpayers' money, creating more jobs for NEA members, getting tighter control over children from the earliest possible age, and preserving the teachers union monopoly in the public schools.