



The Phyllis Schlafly Report



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The NEA Proves Itself Extremist Again

The people who control America's public schools gathered in Minneapolis over the Fourth of July weekend and set off their own brand of fireworks. Some 8,544 delegates to the National Education Association's annual Convention approved the usual list of extremist resolutions presented by the professionals who run this very political union.

At least five resolutions manifest the NEA's impassioned hostility to parents who make private school or homeschool choices. The NEA attacks homeschooling, claiming that it is tolerable only if parents are licensed by the state and use a curriculum approved by the state education department. The NEA even opposes renting or selling abandoned public schools to a private school.

The NEA passed a strong resolution against what it calls "deleterious programs." Want to guess what that means? No, it's not violence on television or in the movies. The "deleterious programs" are "privatization, performance contracting, tax credits, vouchers, and evaluations of public schools by private groups."

The NEA is obsequious in catering to its own very visible NEA Gay and Lesbian Caucus. The Convention passed at least 15 resolutions addressing the sexual orientation issue.

The NEA demands "awareness" instruction about diverse sexual orientation "whenever sexuality and/or tolerance of diversity is taught." This means the NEA wants teaching about homosexuality always to be part of sex education, and uses "diversity" as a code word for gay-lesbian teaching.

The NEA supports "ongoing training programs" to identify and eliminate "sexual orientation stereotyping." The NEA demands a "Lesbian and Gay History Month as a means of acknowledging the contributions of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals throughout history."

The NEA demands that gay-lesbian teaching be part of Family Life education, sex education, and AIDS education. The NEA supports the right of teachers who have tested positive for HIV or have been diagnosed as having AIDS to be retained in the classroom and not

transferred.

The NEA even wants public school training of pre-kindergartners to include "diversity-based curricula" with "bias-free screening devices." Pre-kindergartners in school? Yes, the NEA wants the taxpayers to take on baby-sitting "in the public schools for children from birth through age eight," culminating in "mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance."

Several resolutions reiterate that the NEA believes that "every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs, services and care." "Every" means "beginning at the prekindergarten level." "Direct" means in the classroom. "Confidential" means confidential between the school and the child, not between the parent and child.

"Comprehensive" means complete with non-judgmental teaching and explicit training in alternate lifestyles, incest, AIDS, suicide, and contraceptives. "Psychological" means counseling by school personnel who are not licensed psychologists (of course, without parental knowledge or consent).

The NEA demands "school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling" to children. That means contraceptive distribution and referrals to abortion providers.

The NEA endorses the entire feminist agenda, calling for the elimination of "sexism" from the curriculum, abortion (of course, funded by the taxpayers), "comparable worth," federally funded and regulated daycare, and "gender-free career awareness" (a code slogan for role reversals and censoring out pictures of fulltime homemakers).

This year, the NEA rechristened "global education" with the new name "multicultural education," which it defines as teaching children the "cultural diversity of U.S. citizenry" and "interdependency in sharing the world's resources." "Global" and "interdependent" are code words for teaching children not to be patriotic. "Multicultural" means Western Civilization is bad. "Sharing the world's resources" means U.S. taxpayers

should finance the rest of the world.

The NEA is enthusiastic about Environmental Education, which is easier to insert into the curriculum than Global or Multicultural. Environmental Ed is a vehicle to promote the ideology of overpopulation, the scarcity of “the earth’s finite resources,” the problem of endangered species, and interdependence.

The NEA supports socialized medicine (which recognizes “domestic partners” as dependents), statehood for the District of Columbia, gun control, taxpayer benefits to illegal aliens, a national holiday honoring Cesar Chavez, ratification of the UN Treaty on the Rights of the Child, and a “substantial increase” in federal spending on public schools. The NEA deplores current efforts to make English our official language and to cut off taxpayer grants to persons who produce vulgar “art.”

In a new resolution called “Freedom of Religion,” the NEA opposes schools’ scheduling a moment of silence. The NEA even wants the purpose of Thanksgiving to be changed from thanking God to a celebration of “diversity.”

Given this agenda, it’s not surprising that the NEA opposes standardized testing that compares students, teachers, schools or districts with one another. The NEA even opposes “competency testing” for the hiring, evaluation, placement, or promotion of teachers.

The Republicans’ Most Urgent Task

Are the new Republican majorities in Congress and in state legislatures really serious about reducing the size and spending power of Big Government? That question will be answered in large part by what actions Republicans take to cut the power of the teachers’ unions, specifically the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

While those two powerful organizations (estimated annual revenue \$1 billion) have some personnel differences, they walk in lockstep in support of high taxes, Big Government, and total control of education policies. The NEA and the AFT support the same Democratic candidates, and they manifest the same hostility to all market-oriented reforms of the public school system, such as parental choice, contract schools, and homeschooling.

They are the single most powerful force in the Democratic Party. At the 1992 Democratic National Convention, one delegate out of eight was an NEA or AFT member. That’s more delegates than New York Governor Mario Cuomo could command. The NEA was an early and enthusiastic endorser of Bill Clinton in his campaign for the Presidency. The NEA contributes heavily in cash and “in-kind” to Democratic candidates. The NEA’s idea of “bipartisanship” was shown in the 1992 campaign when it endorsed 38 Democratic Senators and gave one small contribution in the primary only to one Republican Senator.

According to Dr. Myron Lieberman in a policy paper published by the Claremont Institute, there is plenty the Republicans can do about this. His recommendations are good public policy as well as good advice to conservatives. Most of these ideas involve eliminating the enormous taxpayer subsidies that the teachers’ unions now receive, a scandal largely hidden from the American people.

Congress should eliminate the plush tax exemption enjoyed by the NEA’s building in Washington, D.C. Currently assessed at \$64.8 million, the NEA should pay property taxes of \$1.4 million, an amount equivalent to the national dues of 14,000 members. The NEA enjoys this tax exemption because of a fluke — it was chartered by Congress in 1907 when it was a small, voluntary education association, not the union it has since become. It is unfair and discriminatory for the NEA to continue to own this valuable preference when no other union gets similar treatment. Other organizations chartered by Congress are educational or charitable, such as the Red Cross and the Boy Scouts, while the primary activity of the NEA is influencing legislation and public opinion.

State Legislatures should make it illegal for the NEA and the AFT to enjoy the enormously valuable privilege of having school districts (*i.e.*, the government) make payroll deductions of union dues and Political Action Committee (PAC) funds from teachers’ salaries and transmit such funds to the unions. NEA/AFT revenues would plummet if this preferential treatment were stopped, because volunteer contributions are only a small part of union revenues.

How easy it is for the teachers’ unions to raise political money can be seen by the way they raised funds to defeat the California School Choice initiative in 1993: the California Teachers Association merely assessed its 200,000 members \$19 each for three years. By contrast, those who oppose teachers’ union policies and candidates must spend one-third to one-half of their money and energies on fundraising.

The typical teachers’ union contract not only requires this checkoff of salaries for dues and PAC funds, but gives the union a veto over other deductions that might be made. Wouldn’t it be nice if a Republican or Conservative PAC could raise its political funds by a checkoff of teachers’ salaries?

This is not only a conservative-liberal issue, and not only a public policy issue, but also a constitutional issue. Should the government (*i.e.*, a school district) be permitted to participate in fund-raising for political candidates supported by one special-interest group?

Those who support less government, lower taxes, and more reliance on markets and incentives should realize that public-sector unions, such as the NEA and AFT, are the major obstacles to these goals. Every conservative objective would be helped by removing taxpayer subsidies from the NEA and AFT.

1995 NEA Resolutions

A-8. Public School Buildings. The Association believes 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.

A-27. Deleterious Programs. The National Education Association believes that the following programs and practices are detrimental to public education and 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.

A-29. Tuition Tax Credits. The Association believes that all federal and state legislation designed to establish or implement plans for prekindergarten through grade 12 tuition tax credits is detrimental to the public interest and urges its affiliates to work for the defeat of such legislation.

A-30. Voucher Plans. The Association believes that legislation or ballot initiatives/referenda designed to establish or implement prekindergarten through grade 12 voucher plans are detrimental to the public interest and calls upon its affiliates to work for the defeat of such actions.

B-1. Early Childhood Education. The National Education Association supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. The Association supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. The Association further believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents and children, including child care, child development, developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula, special education, and appropriate bias-free screening devices. The Association believes that federal legislation should be enacted to assist in organizing the implementation of fully funded early childhood education programs offered through the public schools. These programs should be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance.

B-8. Sexual Orientation Education. The National Education Association recognizes the importance of raising the awareness and increasing the sensitivity of staff, students, parents, and the community to sexual orientation in our society. The Association therefore supports the development of positive plans that lead to effective ongoing training programs for education employees for the purpose of identifying and eliminating sexual orientation stereotyping in the educational setting. Such programs should attend to but not be limited to —

- a.* Accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people throughout history, with acknowledgement of their sexual orientation,

- b.* The acceptance of diverse sexual orientation and the awareness of sexual stereotyping whenever sexuality and/or tolerance of diversity is taught,
- c.* Elimination of sexual orientation name-calling and jokes in the classroom.
- d.* Support for the celebration of a Lesbian and Gay History Month as a means of acknowledging the contributions of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals throughout history.

B-34. Family Life Education. The Association recommends that programs be established for both students and parents and supported at all educational levels to promote —

- The development of self-esteem.
- Education in human growth and development.

The Association believes that education in these areas must be presented as part of an antibiased culturally sensitive program.

B-35. Sex Education. The Association recognizes that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. Teachers and health professionals must be qualified to teach in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. The Association urges its affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs, including information on sexual abstinence, birth control and family planning, diversity of culture, diversity of sexual orientation, parenting skills, prenatal care, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment. To facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information, knowledge, and wisdom about sexuality.

B-38. Environmental Education. The Association further urges the development and improvement of educational programs that will —

- a.* Promote the concept of the interdependence of humanity and nature.
- b.* Develop an awareness of the effects of past, present, and future population growth patterns on world civilization, human survival, and the environment.
- c.* Promote an understanding of the necessity to protect endangered, threatened, and rare species.
- d.* Promote an understanding of the necessity to protect the earth's finite resources.

The Association urges its affiliates to support environmental programs in school systems.

B-63. Home Schooling. The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. The Association believes that if parental preference home schooling study occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used. The Association

further believes that such home schooling programs should be limited to the children of immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents.

Second New B. Global Education. The National Education Association believes that global education increases respect and awareness of planet earth and its people. Global education imparts information about cultures and an appreciation of our interdependency in sharing the world's resources to meet mutual human needs.

C-7. Day Care. The National Education Association believes that all child care centers should be examined and monitored on a continuous basis, and additional legislation should be sought as necessary to maintain the highest quality child care. The Association encourages school districts and educational institutions to establish on-site child care for preschoolers, students, the children of students, and the children of staff members.

C-23. Comprehensive School Health Programs and Services. The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. The Association also believes that programs in the schools should provide a planned sequential, K-12 health education curriculum that integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, violence, universal precautions, and HIV education). The Association believes that services in the schools should include —

- ▶ Counseling programs that provide developmental guidance and broad-based interventions and referrals,
- ▶ Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics,
- ▶ If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use.

C-24. School Counseling Programs. The National Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, beginning at the prekindergarten level.

C-29. Student Sexual Orientation. The Association believes that every school district and educational institution should provide counseling and suicide prevention programs by trained personnel for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation.

C-30. Placement of Students with HIV/AIDS. The Association believes that students should not be refused admittance to school or subjected to any other adverse action solely because they have tested positive for HIV or have been diagnosed as having AIDS.

F-36. Employees with HIV/AIDS. The National Education Association believes that education employees shall not be fired, nonrenewed, suspended (with or without pay), transferred, or subjected to any other adverse employment action solely because they have tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) antibody or have been diagnosed as having HIV/AIDS.

H-6. National Health Care Policy. The Association supports the adoption of a single-payer health care plan for all residents of the United States, its territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

H-10. Statehood for the District of Columbia. The Association urges its affiliates to support efforts to achieve statehood for the District of Columbia.

New H. Celebration of Diversity in Thanksgiving. The National Education Association believes that Thanksgiving is the recognition of unity and the rich American diversity that was embodied in the settlement of America. The Association further believes that this national holiday must celebrate the coming together of peoples and the inclusion of all immigrants as a part of this great diverse country.

I-13. Family Planning. The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom. The Association further urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel.

I-18. Immigration. The Association opposes any policies that deny human rights, civil rights, or educational opportunities to immigrants and their children regardless of their immigration status.

I-22. Freedom of Creative Expression. The National Education Association supports freedom of expression in the creative arts and therefore deplores any efforts by government to suppress, directly or indirectly, such expression. The Association further supports the freedom of publicly funded agencies to exercise judgment in the awarding of grants to individuals and organizations.

I-28. Control of Guns. The National Education Association believes that stricter legislation is needed to control guns and other deadly weapons.

I-49. Equal Opportunity for Women. The Association supports the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Association urges its affiliates to support ratification of such an amendment. Personnel policies must include family leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, leave for adoption of a child, child-care leave, and professional leave. The Association believes that sexism and sex discrimination must be eliminated and endorses the use of nonsexist language.

New I. Freedom of Religion. the Association opposes federal or state legislation or other mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence. The Association particularly opposes a moment of silence as a condition for receiving federal, state, or other funds.

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