

# EDUCATION REPORTER

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## Channel One Still Plays to Captive Audiences

*But some schools are stopping the music*

WASHINGTON, DC — America's classrooms continue to provide a captive audience for the highly questionable programming of Channel One, the so-called "news" network. According to a report by the Family Research Council (FRC), eight million 12- to 18-year-olds, or 40% of American teenagers, are exposed to Channel One's controversial broadcasts, commercials and music selections five days a week.

Citizens groups, such as the Birmingham, AL-based Obligation Inc., have been working to raise awareness of Channel One's presence in the public schools. The primary concern of these groups is that most parents don't even know that their children are watching commercials and "politically correct" news during class time. These efforts are beginning to bear fruit. In some states, schools are pulling the plug on Channel One:

◆ In Alabama, the Shelby County school board approved a decision last month to terminate Channel One immediately, while the Jefferson County board ordered its schools to turn off the daily 12-minute broadcasts temporarily. A third Alabama district, Blount County, has pledged to end its contractual agreement with Channel One.

◆ Georgia and Utah have mandated that Channel One's programming cannot be counted as classroom time.

◆ The Texas State Senate Education Committee has vowed to find out which schools have contracts with Channel One and expose the content of the programming to parents.

◆ The State of New York claims to have saved millions of dollars by refusing to allow the network into its public schools. Channel One is permitted only in private schools that choose to air it.

◆ Parents in a number of states have filed lawsuits against local school districts for requiring Channel One while prohibiting more wholesome activities such as Bible studies.

### Cultural 'Heroes'?

Channel One's musical programming includes the likes of shock rocker Marilyn Manson, whose CD entitled *Anti-Christ Superstar* is well known among young people, as is his pseudo-philosophy that

devalues all moral decency. As one 13-year-old girl put it: "He's everywhere — on the radio, on TV, in commercials."

The FRC report notes: "Channel One's exposure of Manson did not stop with its television broadcasts, but was included on its website, which is advertised during the classroom broadcasts and receives more than one million hits per day." The website's *Playlist* also features the rap group Bone Thugs and Harmony, who sing about sex, rape and gun violence. It was the "music" of this group that, according to court testimony, obsessed the 13-year-old killer Mitchell Johnson prior to the Jonesboro, AR, school massacre.

### Advertising and Commercialism

A public outcry forced the removal of Manson from Channel One's website, but according to the FRC, "the question remains whether the motivation behind the network's initial promotion of Manson has changed." Manson has been labeled "one of the most potent commercial forces of the late 1990s."

A similar assessment could be made of many of Channel One's advertisers, which include such heavyweights as Nike, Reebok, Pepsico, Nintendo, and Taco Bell. Ads bombard captive teens with fast-paced music and "intoxicating imagery" — all offering high-energy, pie-in-the-sky pictures of an adolescent lifestyle that is likely unattainable, even with the purchase of the advertised products.

The FRC report cites Channel One's own promotional research to demonstrate the network's commitment to attracting ad revenues. A single 30-second spot costs \$200,000, which is comparable to the cost of prime-time ads on regular network television. In selling the spots, Channel One points out its ability to deliver the "hardest to reach" teen viewer — kids who, for a variety of reasons, don't watch much television at home. The network's contracts with schools (except those in California) require that students be present during the broadcasts, which are often shown during home room periods.

In addition to big-name product advertising, the FRC report charges Channel

(See Channel One, page 4)



## Pro-family Candidates Win SBOE Elections

Seats on state boards of education were up for grabs in last month's elections, and pro-family forces in Ohio, Texas, and Nebraska have reason to celebrate. Ohio SBOE member Diana Fessler was reelected after being targeted for defeat for her stand against School-to-Work (STW). Last June, she was prevented from attending a taxpayer-funded STW conference (See *Education Reporter*, Oct. 1998). When the ballots were counted, Fessler received nearly double the number of votes, or 49%, as her nearest opponent, who received 27%, in the three-way race. The third candidate garnered 23% of the vote.

Observers claim that one of Fessler's opponents "waged a smear campaign" against her, and that the press was similarly biased. An editorial in the *Dayton Daily News* characterized her as "too narrow minded towards academics only and against School-to-Work." Ohio voters gave Mrs. Fessler the green light to continue standing tall for traditional education in their state.

In Texas, conservatives increased their strength on the SBOE by retaining two seats that were up for reelection and gaining another seat with the victory of pro-family candidate, Judy Strickland. She won a tough primary election in August, prevailing over an education bureaucrat who was widely reported to have the seat "sewn up." Strickland ran unopposed in the general election. Don McLeroy, a local board of education member from Bryan, Texas, won outgoing pro-family

SBOE member Randy Stephenson's seat, keeping it in the conservative column, and pro-family board member Richard Watson was reelected.

Throughout the Texas campaign,

pro-family candidates were portrayed by their opponents as "foes of public education," and voters were warned that they would "turn the board into a pulpit for ideological extremists." But as education re-

searcher Stephanie Cecil points out, Texas voters did not respond to the rhetoric as predicted. "The new board members will be strong supporters of academic-based reform, including phonics-based reading, academic curricula and testing, parents' rights, and they'll be good stewards of the \$18 billion permanent school fund that recently divested millions of dollars of Disney stock" (See *Education Reporter*, Sept. 1998).

Pro-family forces in Texas agree that the SBOE elections "produced a very big win." They note that conservatives are gaining ground on the state board and becoming more experienced at governing. They say the new members "will not rubber-stamp the plans of the bureaucracy."

(See SBOE, page 2)

## NEA Report Labeled 'Fund Raising' Ploy

WASHINGTON, DC — The National Education Association (NEA) has released a 144-page report attacking what it calls a concerted effort by a "Conservative Network" of "far right" organizations to carry out "a state-by-state assault on public education." The report is verbosely entitled "*The Real Story Behind Paycheck Protection, The Hidden Link Between Anti-Public Education Initiatives: An Anatomy of the Far Right.*"

It characterizes initiatives such as the failed Proposition 226 in California — which would have required unions to get members' permission to spend their mandatory dues for political purposes — as attempts to dismantle public education and "choke off the funding" of organized labor.

Observers have described the NEA booklet as "an attempt to rally the NEA's troops, not to persuade outsiders." Mark Wilson, a labor economist for the Heritage Foundation, commented in the Oct. 2 edition of the *Washington Times*: "It's a shame the NEA is spending their members' dollars this way rather than directly addressing the issues." He added that the report "looks more like a fund-raising attempt."

The NEA booklet implicates dozens of individuals and organizations as part of the "Conservative Network" (read "conspiracy"). Wal-Mart heir John Walton, Pittsburgh philanthropist Richard Mellon Scaife, retired insurance executive J. Patrick Rooney, Howard

(See NEA Report, page 4)

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

**The Williamson County (TN) Board of Education has adopted new guidelines for administering student surveys.** All surveys now require written approval by the Director of Schools. The new guidelines prohibit identifying students by name, social security number or other distinctive data. Surveys that ask students for private family information or sexual behavior are forbidden, but those pertaining to the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or lethal weapons may be allowed. Any survey that questions personal attitudes, beliefs or social behavior requires prior written notification and consent from students' parents.

**A recent study showed that one-fourth of sexually active, inner-city teenage girls are infected with chlamydia, a disease that can cause infertility but has no symptoms.** The study found the highest infection rate of 27.5% among 14-year-olds, with an overall positive test rate of 29.1%. While most of the children tested in this study were black, researchers have also found high rates of chlamydia infection among white teenage females in previous studies. The disease generally does not cause long-term complications in males.

**The U.S. Dept. of Education (DOE) celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.** It will cost U.S. taxpayers \$33.5 billion for fiscal year 1998. The legislation that created DOE passed by a slim margin of 210-206 in the House of Representatives. Key YES votes were provided by then-junior House members Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and Trent Lott (R-MS).

**A West Virginia high school valedictorian's right to speak at graduation was restored after his parents threatened legal action.** The student had refused the principal's demand that he remove portions of his speech criticizing schools that place a higher emphasis on athletics than academics. When the school canceled his presentation and those of two other graduates, his mother contacted the Rutherford Institute.

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## Why Bad Teachers Aren't Fired *Tenure makes this 'mission impossible'*

Teachers who drink alcohol before class, or even during class; teachers who deal drugs; teachers who can't read or do basic math — all are more commonplace than many parents realize, and their presence in America's classrooms is nothing new. So why can't these incompetent teachers be fired, as private-sector employees usually are if they drink on the job or prove unfit to perform required duties? The answer is tenure. About 80% of all public school teachers have tenure.

According to the Sept. 21 *Investors Business Daily*, estimates of the number of incompetent teachers range from a low of 5% to as many as 18% of the 2.6 million total, or between 135,000 and 468,000 bad teachers. Last spring, prospective teachers in Massachusetts made headlines when 59% failed a basic skills test (See *Education Reporter*, Sept. 1998). Teacher testing produced similar results in Nevada. Meanwhile, studies show that students subjected to such teachers in the early elementary grades can suffer long-term negative effects, even if they have good teachers later on.

Most new teachers face a probationary period of three to five years, after which they become tenured. All states and the District of Columbia have tenure laws that were negotiated by the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). While the unions insist that these laws are in place to protect good teachers by giving them due process rights, critics say that tenure and the unions are the problem.

Kansas state Rep. Kay O'Connor, who heads the Kansas City-based organization, Parents In Control, says tenure is an issue state legislatures don't want to touch. Quoted in *Investors Business Daily*, O'Connor says: "Tenure is a very hot issue. If a legislator brings it up, it's a battle royal. Unless you're molesting children or robbing banks, you can't be fired." She adds that allowing poor teachers to remain in the classroom means more remedial teachers will be needed, which puts more dues money in union coffers.

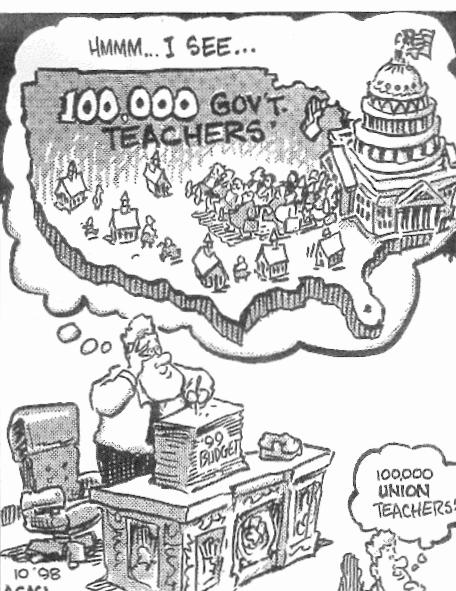
Rep. O'Connor notes that there are "more than 50 pro-union education lobbyists" at the Kansas Legislature. "The unions want as many teachers as possible, making as much money as possible. Their mission is teachers, not children."

New York state Assemblywoman

Debra Mazzarelli told *Investors Business Daily*: "Our tenure laws protect ineffective and unmotivated teachers and administrators. Removing a tenured employee from his or her position is so difficult, expensive and time-consuming that, for all intents, it is impossible."

How expensive is it? A 1994 study by the New York State School Boards Association found that dismissing a tenured teacher in that state takes an average of 455 days and costs \$177,000. If the teacher appeals, costs can approach twice that amount. Preparations for the required due process hearings take as long as six months, during which time suspended teachers in states such as Connecticut receive full salary. In addition, there are costs for substitute teachers and costs for the hearings. The process often ends with the school district either paying off or transferring the bad teacher.

Like the fox guarding the henhouse, the unions have taken over attempts to reform the tenure system. Their solution is an experimental "peer review" process that involves teachers evaluating teachers instead of principals evaluating teachers to determine who is incompetent. As education author and head of the Education Policy Institute, Myron Lieberman, observes: "Unions are aware of the charges that tenure protects bad teachers. So their attitude is, 'we'll take over the process.' If that happens, it'll make a worse disaster of the schools — if that's possible."



## SBOE (Continued from page 1)

In Nebraska, Kathy Wilmot was elected to the SBOE with 59% of the vote to her opponent's 41%. She reports that during the primary campaign, the Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA) contributed a total of \$17,000 in cash and in-kind services to three candidates who ran against her. When she won the primary in spite of this heavy opposition, the NSEA opposed her in the general election. They provided the bulk of her opponent's support, and ran a phone bank on his behalf throughout the 29 coun-

ties of her district (which encompasses most of western Nebraska).

Wilmot credits her win to God and to "dedicated grassroots individuals who are totally committed to our country and to preserving its foundations."

In addition to successes on state boards of education, pro-family candidates were also victorious in many local and county board races around the country. Lezlie Porter won a seat on the Washoe County Board of Education in Nevada.

## Book of the Month



**None Dare Call It Education**, John A. Stormer, 1998, \$21.95, 198 pps.

John Stormer's new book attempts to provide an answer to the question that is on the minds and lips of many Americans:

"What's happening in our schools?" His skillful use of actual case studies, government documents, surveys, anecdotes, and quotes, from a wide variety of sources, makes *None Dare* an easy and informative read.

The book succeeds partly because Stormer is a first-rate author (he has written four other books), but more because he has chosen bits of information that are at once shocking, infuriating, eye-opening, and sometimes poignant, from among the volumes available. The information is effectively organized to create a comprehensive yet compact overview of the situation that exists in today's classrooms.

*None Dare* describes what the schools are doing to our children academically through OBE, and morally by changing what he calls our "12 foundational concepts" to create a "new social order." Included in those concepts are the sanctity of marriage and of all life, and the fact that man's rights come not from government, but from God.

The book summarizes the hallmarks of OBE, including whole language, inventive spelling, "fuzzy" math, group learning, "recalibrated" test scores, and revised history. It discusses the moral revision being carried out through "diversity" or "anti-bias" training, sex education, and "death ed."

Stormer outlines the thinking of early "progressives," led by John Dewey, and uses their own words to expose their plans and goals for changing America's culture. He shows how textbooks have been used to destroy the foundations of our way of life, and describes the role of the teachers unions in helping to further humanist goals.

Stormer contends that the most significant changes in American education are still ahead. The implementation of the Goals 2000 and School-to-Work laws passed by Congress will "transform the schools of America and the nation's employment practices by 2001." The book advises awakened parents and citizens how to restore traditional academics and values to America's schools.

Send \$21.95 + \$3 shipping to Liberty Bell Press, P.O. Box 32, Florissant, MO 63032.

# FOCUS: Changing the Education Debate

A report on how education issues fared in the 105th Congress

By Sheila Moloney

The following describes the outcome of education legislation that pro-family groups worked on during the now-adjourned 105th Congress. The 106th Congress convenes at noon on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 1999.



## Dollars to the Classroom

The Dollars to the Classroom Act (H.R. 3248), sponsored by Rep. Joe Pitts (R-PA), passed the House 212-198 (with one member voting 'present') on September 18. This legislation would direct the federal Department of Education to send 95% of certain funds to be used in local classrooms. The proposal would actually increase the amount of money that individual schools and classrooms receive, but the National Education Association opposed the bill anyway.

Dollars to the Classroom would block-grant 31 programs to the states and require that they spend 95 cents of every dollar on classroom education expenses. Although many want to completely eliminate the federal government's role in education, this is the next best thing. For example, by block-granting School-to-Work, Goals 2000, and Whole School Reform, this bill would allow states to choose between funding these programs or spending the money on other education priorities. The teachers unions and education bureaucrats oppose the bill because it would reduce their ability to micromanage public school education at the federal level and through the state departments of education.

## National Testing

Last year, pro-family forces won a huge victory when a provision was added to the FY1998 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill denying funds for development or implementation of federal education tests. Mandating a national test would mandate a national curriculum. For the second year in a row, President Clinton was stopped from implementing new federal tests for all fourth and eighth graders. The Omnibus-spending bill includes language prohibiting the use of federal funds to implement any new national tests not explicitly authorized by Congress.

In addition to the testing prohibition, the Omnibus-spending bill contains the following provisions: (1) limited development and modification of test items by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) (same as permitted in FY1998 will be allowed in FY1999; (2)

NAGB is required to determine and report to Congress and the White House on the purpose(s) of the proposed tests; (3) NAGB is required to determine and report to Congress and the White House on the meaning of "voluntary" in the context of national tests ("voluntary" as to the student, the school, the school district, or the state); (4) NAGB is required to report to Congress and the White House on its response to the recent National Academy of Sciences Study which stated that the achievement levels (basic, proficient, advanced) — which are intended to be used for the national tests — are fundamentally flawed; and (5) the National Academy of Sciences is required to conduct a study of the feasibility, validity and reliability of imbedding test items from NAEP or other tests and assessments for the purpose of providing a common measure of individual student performance.

Chairman Bill Goodling (R-PA) in the House and Senator John Ashcroft (R-MO) in the Senate led the fight to extend the ban on national testing and should be thanked!

## K-12 School-To-Work

This summer, President Clinton signed H.R. 1385 into law (29 U.S.C. 2801(3)). This bill contains the adult job training, the youth dropout job training, and some after-school K-12 programs. This fall, Congress also passed and the President signed into law the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Amendments of 1998 (H.R. 1853). Thus, the two revised components of the original "Careers Bill" are now law.

H.R. 1853 deals with K-12 in-school vocational education, and supporters claim the bill combines wasteful and duplicative federal voc-ed programs. Opponents worry that the bill is a back door attempt to implement school-to-work and Clinton's education agenda.

The House-Senate conference on K-12 voc-ed had been stalled due to policy disagreements between the two legislative bodies. But on Oct. 8, the conference reported a compromise version that the Senate proceeded to adopt by unanimous consent. The following day the House approved the measure by voice vote and the President signed it into law on Oct. 31.

Included in this new law is a ban on database development, the Ashcroft ban on using these funds for the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (though the final and vague "unless" clause could provide an opening), and an explicit requirement that the services be voluntary. The following is the language included in the bill:

### Sec. 5. Privacy.

(b) Prohibition on development of national database — Nothing in this Act shall be construed to permit the development of a national database of personally identifiable information on individuals receiving services under this Act.

### Sec. 6. Limitation.

All of the funds made available under this Act shall be used in accordance with the requirements of this Act. None of the funds made available under this Act may be used to provide funding under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (20 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) or to carry out, through programs funded under this Act, activities that were funded under the School-To-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, unless the programs funded under this Act serve only those participants eligible to participate in the programs under this Act.

### Sec. 314. Voluntary Selection and Participation.

No funds made available under this Act shall be used:

- (1) to require any secondary school student to choose or pursue a specific career path or major; and
- (2) to mandate that any individual participate in a vocational and technical education program, including a vocational and technical education program that requires the attainment of a federally-funded skill level, standard, or certificate of mastery.

### Briefly Noted

◆ In late September, Rep. Bob Schaffer (R-CO) entered into the *Congressional Record* Marc Tucker's famous education letter to Hillary Clinton. Because of the length of the letter, Rep. Schaffer had to personally pay over \$7,000 to enter the text. His office reports receiving hundreds of phone calls after he made his statement on the House floor, carried live

by C-SPAN. Check the Eagle Forum website ([www.eagleforum.org](http://www.eagleforum.org)) for a link to the letter.

◆ Despite a last minute push from the President for its inclusion, the Omnibus-spending bill did not contain new federal funding for school construction, which currently is the responsibility of state and local governments.

◆ In 1997, Congress repealed, for one year, the special tax break enjoyed by the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the National Education Association, worth approximately \$1.1 million a year. The Omnibus-spending bill makes that repeal permanent. (Sect. 147 of D.C. Appropriations title, page 348.)

◆ The Omnibus-spending bill contains an additional \$3 billion in education spending, with some of that money coming out of the budget surplus. Included in this figure is \$1.2 billion in new funding to assist local school districts in reducing class size and to train, test, recruit and hire and test 30,000 new teachers (not 100,000, as reported). (The total cost of hiring 100,000 new teachers over seven years would be about \$12 billion, according to the administration.) Fifteen percent of this money can be used for training existing teachers or testing them for competency. Most of the money will go to poor districts, not to suburban neighborhoods.

◆ Goals 2000 money, despite being cut in half by the House, was restored to full funding in the final bill, even though its authorization expired this year.

◆ The Omnibus-spending bill contains an additional \$510 million over FY1998 funding levels for the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), the nation's special education law.

## WANTED: High School Students for Manufacturing Careers

SUGAR GROVE, IL — A School-To-Careers program in Illinois entitled "Dual Credit Manufacturing" is seeking high school students for factory work. The Oct. 9, 1998 *Superintendent's Bulletin*, issued by the Illinois State Board of Education, states that a "collaborative effort" among the board, a community college, and education and business "partnerships," will allow students to combine their senior year of high school with instruction in manufacturing processes, basic technical drafting, machine tooling, computer aided design, and basic technical math.

Students successfully completing the program will receive 17 semester hours of college credit in addition to their high school credit. An "on-campus advisor" will serve as "coordinator" between the high schools and college, handling such matters as attendance, grading and field trips. The course work will also include job shadowing and internships.



Despite the assurances of education officials around the country that School-to-Work/Careers programs are "voluntary," and that the goal of business/education "partnerships" and unelected "workforce boards" is not to channel children into specific jobs to meet labor force needs, one of the admitted purposes of the Illinois program is to "address the shortage of qualified manufacturing employees."

Dual credit programs are compatible with Marc Tucker's vision of our education system, which he outlined in his 18-page letter to Hillary Clinton in 1992. Page 9 reads in part: "The system we are proposing will be managed so as to encourage the states to combine the last two years of high school and the first two years of community college into three-year programs leading to college degrees and certificates." (The Tucker letter is available at [www.eagleforum.org](http://www.eagleforum.org))



## NEA Report

(Continued from Page 1)

Ahmanson Jr., a founding director of the Rutherford Institute, and Texas businessman James Leininger receive prominent mention, as do the Heritage Foundation, the American Legislative Exchange Council, the Council for National Policy, the National Right to Work Foundation, the Alexis de Tocqueville Institute, and Americans for Tax Reform (ATR).

ATR President Grover Norquist told the *Washington Times* that "the only 'conspiracy' is that 65% of the American people support paycheck protection, and 65% of them also support school choice." The ATR has released its own report called *Unprotected Paychecks: The Truth*

*Behind Big Labor's Campaign Against Proposition 226.*

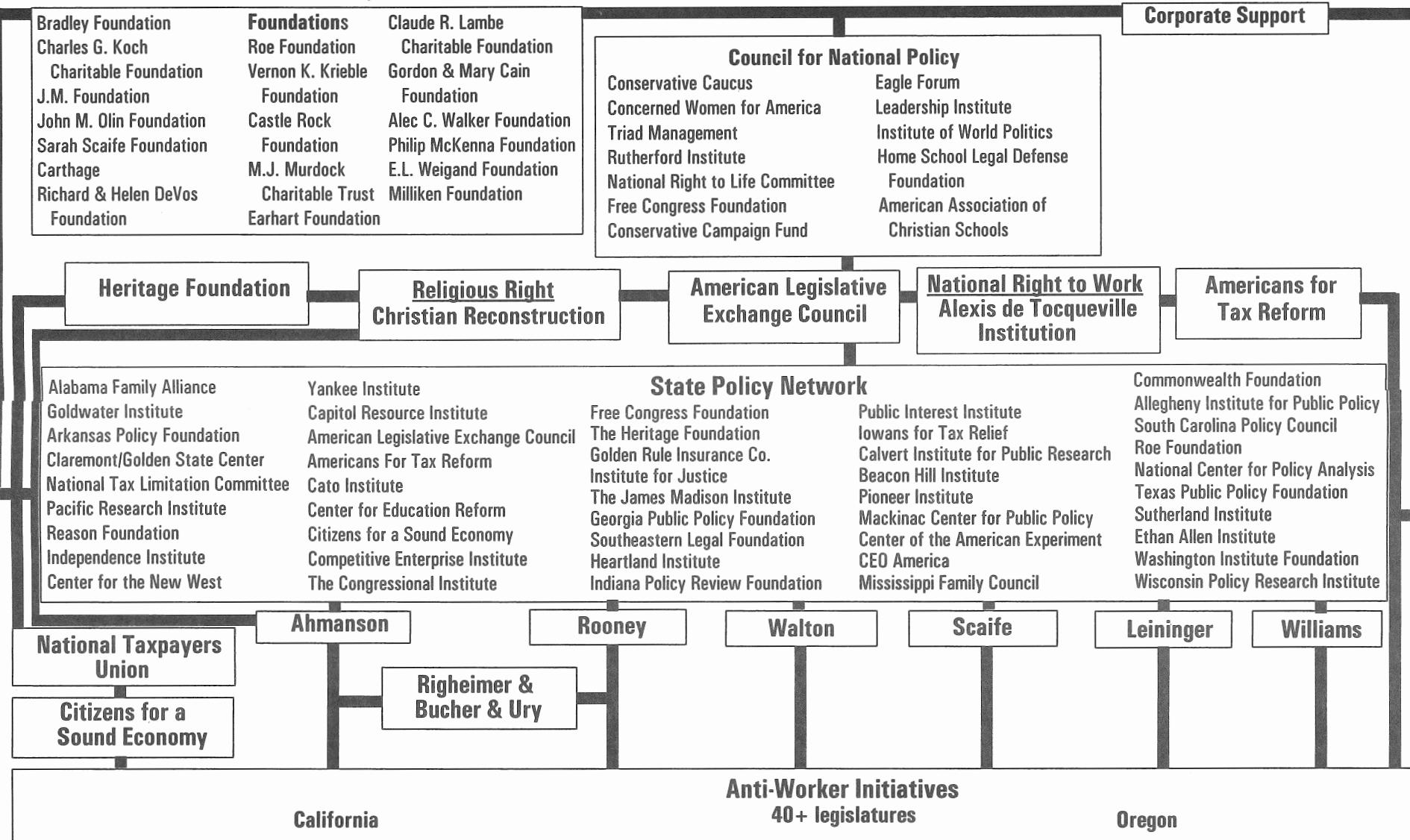
Apparently, the mainstream media recognized the booklet as merely NEA campaign and fundraising material because it was barely mentioned by the press. The Associated Press did cover the report's release. AP Reporter Robert Greene noted: "If there is evidence, other than by association, that supporters of dues restrictions are motivated by a desire to dismantle public schools, it was not clearly laid out in the NEA's booklet."

(The chart below is reprinted by permission of the *Washington Times*.)



### Anatomy of the Far Right?

The National Education Association's new report outlines a network of conservative groups the teachers union says is organizing "a state by state assault on public education."



## Channel One

(Continued from page 1)

One with "carrying ads for questionable movies and racy television programs" such as *Unhappily Every After* and *New York Undercover*. The report states that Channel One's website "has promoted R-rated moves like *Fargo*." One recent website review "lauds the film *In and Out*, more for its favorable and nonchalant portrayal of homosexuality than for any measurable standards of quality."

### Supporting Studies

In 1997, the results of two academic studies showed Channel One to be primarily an advertising tool, rather than an educational tool (See *Education Reporter*, March 1997).

Early this year, the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee conducted a study entitled "The Hidden Costs of Channel One," and found that the network costs

taxpayers \$1.8 billion per year in lost classroom time (See *Education Reporter*, June 1998).

### Politically Correct 'News'

One of the researchers who participated in the 1997 studies characterized Channel One's "news" stories as "getting us ready for the ads," noting that "the news cannot ever be permitted to detract in any way from the commercials." But the FRC cautions that Channel One's news "conveys a distinct cultural message" by including, for example, the use of sexual orientation in the list of prejudices that provide a basis for committing hate crimes.

Other topics Channel One finds newsworthy include HIV, AIDS, and shock jock Howard Stern. A quiz on Stern asked students whether they find him "offensive" or "funny," implying that all teens are familiar with the outrageous radio and TV personality whose topics of conversation include casual sex, lesbianism, drunkenness, and a variety of bizarre and vulgar subjects. An AIDS story on Channel One's website linked kids to web pages that provide instructions for condom use and offer graphic descriptions of sexual activities. One site, called "AIDS and Young People," dated July 17, 1998, advises: "AIDS has made sex more difficult. It is one more thing to think about. But AIDS is not something to be so frightened of that it puts you off from ever having sex."

Channel One's news has also included pro-United Nations propaganda, reports of natural disasters that promote radical environmentalism, and stories that stress

"global citizenship" and the "global community."

### Congress to Look at Channel One

When Channel One premiered in 1991, the U.S. Senate opened hearings to discuss the possible benefits and pitfalls of commercial television in the classroom, but concluded that such hearings were premature. Over the past seven years, the concerns of parents, citizens groups and legislators have grown.

Last April, Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL) asked his colleagues to again convene hearings on the increasingly questionable concept of commercial television in schools. Shelby views the hearings as "a lead-off point to educate parents and local school boards about the informational void surrounding Channel One."

