

NEA Discovers Parents' Rights! Resolution urges opting students out of tests

LOS ANGELES, CA — At its annual convention in July, the NEA amended the language of Resolution B-56, "Standardized Testing of Students," to include: "The Association believes that students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests."

This is the same NEA that has been highly critical of parents who seek to remove their children from explicit sex education programs, offensive reading assignments, or bilingual education. A *Wall Street Journal* (7-19-01) editorial observed that "NEA support for parental control depends on whether the program in question figures into the NEA's politi-

cal agenda, as the union's opposition to school choice shows."

The *Journal* pointed out that "the average African-American or Hispanic 12th grader reads and does math as well as the average white 8th grader." The editorial added that "the sponsor of the resolution told the assembled delegates that 'poor kids, working class kids, are going to do poorly' on standardized tests, thus absolving her colleagues of responsibility for education outcomes."

The NEA has long opposed the use of standardized tests as "the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding" or "when results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states." (See Resolution B-56, page 4).



NEA Convention Briefs

New Business Items Approved

◆ Convention delegates approved **NBI A**, which establishes "an historic partnership agreement with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)." Titled the "NEAFT" partnership, the agreement is billed as "providing a framework for regular and focused cooperation between the two unions by creating a joint council composed of 15 representatives of each organization." Some observers expressed fear that this "partnership" merges education and labor — the AFT is affiliated with the AFL/CIO — and will further encourage the incorporation of Goals 2000 and School-to-Work in the public schools.

◆ **NBI 10** opposes President Bush's plan to deploy a National Missile Defense system. It states that the union "will use its offices and publications to educate NEA members on this issue," and that "NEA shall recommend that funding for the Missile Defense Shield be diverted to a fund to uplift low-performing public schools and close the achievement gap."

◆ **NBI 18** directs the NEA Office of the General Counsel to file legal documents in support of Affirmative Action "where Affirmative Action programs consistent with NEA's principles are under threat." This NBI also directs that the NEA publicize such actions and "inform members of how they can further support Affirmative Action as court cases or other opportunities arise."

◆ In what many parents view as a positive move, NEA delegates approved **NBI 20**, which opposes "exclusive marketing and vending contracts that commercialize public schools and target students and/or compromise student health and nutrition." NBI 20 notes that "companies are being allowed to market their products (junk food, soda, 'juice' drinks) to an impressionable captive audience, thereby contributing to obesity, osteoporosis, cavities, [and] diabetes."

Amendment to Give NEA Members Control of Their Union Dues Fails

Bylaw Amendment 4, which would have allowed NEA members "to apply in writing to receive a refund of the portion of their union dues allocated for 'political activity,'" was submitted by Educators for Life Caucus Chair Christine Nowak. This amendment — voted down by nearly 80% of convention delegates — would have assured members who disagree with the political agenda of the NEA leadership that their dues money would not be used to fund candidates and causes with which they disagree.

Fleeing for the Fund

Prior to the start of the convention, organizers began promoting the "2001 Giveaway and Race" (an annual NEA event) to raise money for the "NEA Fund for Children and Public Education." This fund is the brainchild of the NEAPAC.

A pre-convention letter from NEA President Bob Chase urged delegates to "begin collecting" from fellow union members in their school districts for both events. The letter pointed out that the 2002 elections are at stake, including "38 gubernatorial races," a "50-50 split in the Senate," and a "closely divided U.S. House of Representatives." Chase asked each delegate to contribute a minimum of \$110 to this "voluntary" PAC and promised that "special prizes" would be offered to delegates "who perform beyond the call of duty." Prize winners were announced during the convention.

When the goal of raising more than \$1,037,000 was not reached by the final day of the convention, President Chase ordered union stewards to approach each delegate for a contribution of \$20 or more. NEA Executive Board members raced to the podium to donate \$100 bills to motivate the audience. When the goal was met, delegates waved pom-poms, tossed beach balls and danced to loud beat music.

NEA's Lobbying Goals Include Universal Preschool

The NEA's legislative goals for the 107th Congress include recommending that the federal government "partner" with the states to "make substantial, targeted new investments to ensure that every child enters school ready to learn." This means universal preschool and full funding for Head Start and the new Early Learning Opportunities Act.

Lobbying priorities for FY 2002 also include spending increases for Title I, class size reduction, and before- and after-school programs; full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and increased funding for moderniz-

ing school facilities.

The NEA noted as a "significant bipartisan victory" the "historic" \$6.5 billion (18%) increase in education funding for FY 2001, and expressed support for "an overall increase of \$14 billion for education and related programs for 2002." The union rejoiced over the rejection of voucher provisions to the ESEA reauthorization bill (H.R. 1) and called for passage of gun-control and hate crimes legislation.

Source: *Advancing NEA's Legislative Program*, July 2001



New Complaint Against NEA Filed with IRS

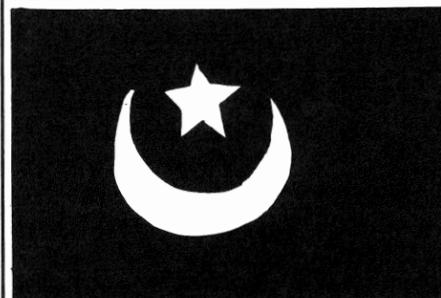
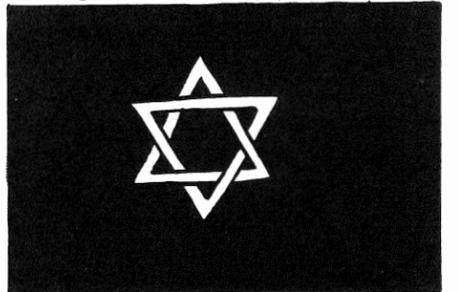
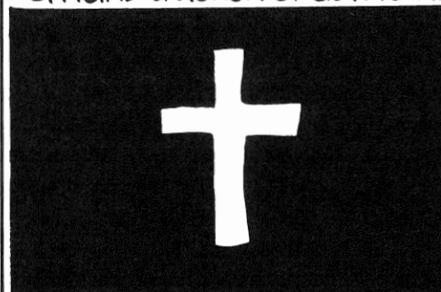
HERNDON, VA — The Landmark Legal Foundation on July 20 filed what is being described as "the most explosive tax complaint ever filed against the NEA." (*PR Newswire*, 7-27-01) The complaint provides extensive evidence of "thoroughly integrated political activities into the NEA's general operations" by union leadership. It alleges that these activities, kept secret from education employees, make "virtually impossible" the right of non-NEA teachers "who are forced to pay dues for the union's collective bargaining services to collect rebates for the portions of their fees that have been used for disallowed political activities."

The complaint includes evidence of the NEA's campaign coordination with the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and its formulation of campaign strategy as a member of a group called the "Coordinated Campaign Steering Com-

mittee," of which the 1996 Clinton-Gore Campaign, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the Democratic Leadership Campaign Committee, the AFL-CIO, and Emily's List, were also members.

"While the NEA has reported no political expenditures on its IRS form 990 tax returns for the last several years, the extent to which the NEA and its state affiliates have coordinated their political activities with the Democratic party, and have used millions of dollars in tax-exempt general revenues to support these activities, is truly breathtaking," Landmark stated. "The evidence demonstrates that the NEA has become an appendage of the Democratic party, complete with an ATM machine that dispenses tax-exempt membership dues to underwrite that party's political activities."

QUESTION: WHICH FAITH-BASED GROUP CURRENTLY HAS THE OFFICIAL SANCTION OF GOVERNMENT IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS?



Notable Quote

During a meeting of the Democratic Caucus, the NEA's Manager of Political Affairs, Jack Pacheco, told members that the union is now working on the 2002 elections, and will use what it learned in 2000 to improve its record of electing

Democratic candidates. He reminded his audience that there will be an open seat for Sen. Strom Thurmond and, in reference to contributions to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, added: "It's time to get Jesse Helms. You give us the money and we'll go after Jesse."

Some NEA Resolutions Passed at 2001 Convention in Los Angeles



A-10. Use of Closed Public School Buildings. The National Education 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-13. Financial Support of Public Education. The Association believes that funds must be provided for programs to alleviate race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination and to eliminate portrayal of race, gender, and sexual orientation stereotypes in the public schools. The Association opposes providing any public revenues to sectarian pre-K through 12 schools.

A-14. Federal Financial Support of Public Education. The Association believes that funding for federal programs should be substantially increased, not merely redistributed among states.

A-23. Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits. The National Education Association believes that voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other funding arrangements that use tax monies to subsidize pre-K through 12 private school education can undermine public education, reduce the support needed to fund public education adequately, weaken the wall of separation between church and state, and cause racial, economic, and social segregation of students. The Association opposes voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other such funding arrangements that pay for students to attend sectarian schools.

A-25. For-Profit Schools. The National Education Association believes that there is an inherent conflict between serving the needs of children and serving the needs of stockholders in an educational setting. The Association therefore opposes education for profit.

A-29. Charter and Nontraditional Public School Options. The Association believes that when concepts such as charter schools and other nontraditional school options are proposed, all affected public education employees must be directly involved in the design, implementation, and governance of these programs.

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 also believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents/guardians 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 must be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance.

B-6. Class Size. The National Education Association believes that excellence in the classroom can best be attained by small class size. The Association also believes in an optimum class size of fifteen students in regular programs and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs.

B-7. Diversity. The National Education Association believes that a diverse society enriches all individuals. Similarities and differences among races, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society. The Association also believes that education should foster the values of appreciation and acceptance of the various qualities that pertain to people as individuals and as members of diverse populations. The Association further believes in the importance of observances, programs and curricula that accurately portray and recognize the roles, contributions, cultures, and history of these diverse groups and individuals.

B-9. Racism, Sexism, and Sexual Orientation Discrimination. Discrimination and stereotyping based on such factors as race, gender, immigration status, physical disabilities, ethnicity, occupation, and sexual orientation must be eliminated. Plans, activities, and programs must —

- ♦ Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward individuals and groups in a diverse society composed of such groups as American Indians/Alaska natives, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people, and people with disabilities.
- ♦ Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.
- ♦ Integrate an accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of all groups throughout history across curricula, particularly groups who have been underrepresented historically
- ♦ Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, physical disabilities, or sexual orientation
- ♦ Encourage all members of the educational community to examine assumptions

and prejudices, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and homophobia, that might limit the opportunities and growth of students and education employees

- ♦ Offer positive and diverse role models in our society including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools.
- ♦ Coordinate with organizations and concerned agencies that promote the contributions, heritage, culture, history, and special health and care needs of diverse population groups
- ♦ Promote a safe and inclusive environment for all.

The Association encourages its affiliates to develop and implement training programs on these matters.

B-17. Education of Refugee Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants. The National Education Association believes that, regardless of the immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education in an environment free from harassment.

B-22. Educational Programs for Limited English Proficiency Students. The Association believes that LEP students should be placed in bilingual education programs to receive instruction in their native language from qualified teachers until such time as English proficiency is achieved.

B-31. Multicultural Education. The National Education Association believes that multiculturalism is the process of valuing differences and incorporating the values identified into behavior for the goal of achieving the common good. Multicultural education should promote the recognition of individual and group differences and similarities in order to reduce racism, homophobia, ethnic and all other forms of prejudice, and discrimination and to develop self-esteem as well as respect for others.

B-32. Global Education. The Association believes that global education increases respect for and awareness of the 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.

B-34. School-to-Work/Career Education. Career education must be interwoven into the total educational system and should include programs in gender-free career awareness and exploration to aid students in career course selection.

B-38. Family Life Education. The As-

sociation believes that programs should be established for both students and parents/guardians and supported at all educational levels to promote —

- ♦ The development of self-esteem
- ♦ Understanding of societal issues and problems related to children, spouses, parents/guardians, domestic partners, older generation family members, and other family members.

The Association also believes that education in these areas must be presented as part of an anti-biased, culturally-sensitive program.

B-39. 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 also believes that to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include 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, homophobia.

B-40. HIV/AIDS Education. The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should establish comprehensive acquired human immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) education programs as an integral part of the school curriculum.

B-42. Environmental Education. The Association supports educational programs that promote —

- ♦ The concept of the interdependence of humanity and nature
- ♦ An awareness of the effects of past, present, and future population growth patterns on world civilization, human survival, and the environment
- ♦ Solutions to such problems as pollution, global warming, ozone depletion, and acid precipitation and deposition
- ♦ The recognition of and participation in such activities as Earth Day, Arbor Day, and Energy Education Day.

B-44. Labor Movement Education. The National Education Association believes that the struggles of working men and women to establish unions and the influence of the labor movement on the growth of the United States should be an integral part of the curriculum in our schools.

B-48. Education on Peace and International Understanding. The National Education Association believes that educational strategies for teaching peace should include the role of international and nongovernmental organizations. The Association also believes that educational materials should include activities dealing with the effects of nuclear weaponry and other weapons of mass destruction, strategies for disarmament, and methods to achieve peace.

B-49. Genocide. Acts of genocide must be acknowledged and taught in order to provide insight into how such inhumanity develops, prevent its occurrence, and preclude its recurrence.

B-53. Conflict Resolution Education. The National Education Association supports the adoption and use, at all educational levels, of proven conflict-resolution strategies, materials, and activities by school districts, education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the school community to encourage nonviolent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts.

B-56. Standardized Testing of Students. The Association opposes the use of standardized tests when —

- ♦ Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding
- ♦ Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states.

The Association also believes that students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, schools and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests.

B-68. Home Schooling. The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. When home schooling 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 also believes that home-schooled students should not participate in any extracurricular activities in the public schools.

Second New B. Women's Education. The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of women and girls require the direct involvement of women educators, parents/guardians, community leaders, and organizations to assure the development of adequate and equal educational programs. The Association believes in efforts that provide for programs that present the roles and contributions of women in curricula from pre-kindergarten through higher education, including specific women's studies courses.

C-14. Extremist Groups. The National

Education Association condemns the philosophy and practices of extremist groups and urges active opposition to all such movements that are inimical to the ideals of the Association.

C-22. Comprehensive School Health, Social and Psychological 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 believes that schools should provide —

- ♦ A planned sequential, pre-K through 12 health education curriculum that integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, violence, safety issues, 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 that provide basic health care services (which may include diagnosis and treatment)

- ♦ If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use.

C-23. School Guidance and Counseling Programs. The National Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, pre-K through college.

C-27. Student Sexual Orientation. The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, should be afforded equal opportunity and guaranteed a safe and inclusive environment within the public education system. The Association also believes that, for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation, every school district and educational institution should provide counseling services and programs that deal with high suicide and dropout rates and the high incidence of teen prostitution.

C-29. Suicide Prevention Programs. The National Education Association believes that suicide prevention programs including prevention, intervention, and postvention must be developed and implemented. The Association urges its affiliates to ensure that these programs are an integral part of the school program.

D-8. Hiring Policies and Practices for Teaching Positions. The National Education Association believes that hiring policies and practices must be nondiscriminatory and include provisions for the recruitment of a diverse teaching staff.

E-3. Selection and Challenges of Ma-

terials and Teaching Techniques. The Association deplores prepublishing censorship, book-burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from school libraries/media centers and school curricula.

F-1. Nondiscriminatory Personnel Policies/Affirmative Action. The National Education Association believes that personnel policies and practices must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred, or retired because of race, color, national origin, cultural diversity, accent, religious beliefs, residence, physical disability, political activities, professional association activity, age, size, marital status, family relationship, gender, or sexual orientation. Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and men in under-represented education categories should be developed and implemented.

F-39. 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-1. The Education Employee as a Citizen. The Association urges its members to become politically involved and to support the political action committees of the Association and its affiliates.

H-7. 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-11. Statehood for the District of Columbia. The National Education Association supports efforts to achieve statehood for the District of Columbia.

I-1. Peace and International Relations. The Association urges all nations to develop treaties and disarmament agreements that reduce the possibility of war. The Association also believes that such treaties and agreements should prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. The Association further believes that the United Nations (UN) furthers world peace and promote the rights of all people by preventing war, racism, and genocide.

I-2. International Court of Justice. The Association urges participation by the United States in deliberations before the court.

I-10. Civil Rights. The Association calls upon Americans to eliminate — by statute and practice — barriers of race, color, national origin, religion, philosophical beliefs, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, size, marital

status, and economic status that prevent some individuals, adult or juvenile, from exercising rights enjoyed by others, including liberties decreed in common law, the Constitution, and statutes of the United States.

I-12. Family Planning. The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom. The Association also urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel.

I-26. Freedom of Religion. The Association opposes any federal legislation or mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence.

I-27. Gun-free Schools and the Regulation of Deadly Weapons. The Association believes that strict proscriptive regulations are necessary for the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale and resale of handguns and ammunition magazines.

I-38. Elimination of Discrimination. The National Education Association is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and all other forms of discrimination.

I-42. Hate-Motivated Violence. The Association believes that federal, state, and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence.

I-46. English as the Official Language. The Association believes that efforts to legislate English as the official language disregard cultural pluralism; deprive those in need of education, social services, and employment; and must be challenged.

I-49. Equal Opportunity for Women. The National Education Association believes that all persons must have equal opportunity for employment, promotion, compensation (including equal pay for comparable worth). The Association supports an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (such as the Equal Rights Amendment) that guarantees that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state because of gender. The Association endorses the use of nonsexist language.

The above text is excerpted from resolutions adopted at the 2001 NEA Convention. Resolutions have been shortened for reasons of space.

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