

Who is the Biggest Campaign Spender of All?

Political ads constantly warn Americans to beware of the legislative clout big business can buy. But the biggest political campaign spender isn't ExxonMobil, Wal-Mart or Microsoft, or even an industry association like the American Bankers Association. It's not even an entire labor federation, like the AFL-CIO. Indeed, the combined campaign spending of all those entities does not match the amount spent by the National Education Association, the public-sector union of 2.3 million teachers and nearly one million support staff.

In a first-of-its-kind comprehensive analysis of 2007-2008 state and national election cycle spending, the NEA ranked number one on state and federal campaign, political party, and ballot measure spending, shelling out \$56.3 million, or \$12.5 million more than the second-place group. If you add the \$12 million spent by the American Federation of Teachers and the \$3.4 million spent on NEA/AFT joint campaigns, the two unions doled out a whopping \$71.7 million in the 2007-2008 election cycle.

In addition to their direct attempts to influence elections and policy through lobbying and election campaigns, the NEA and AFT give millions more to allies who help further their educational and social agendas.

They also create and fund front groups to give the impression of widespread, independent agreement with their education policies.

For example, Communities for Quali-

ty Education (CQE) was formed in 2004 as an ostensibly independent organization. Despite the fact that CQE's board consisted entirely of current and past teachers union officials, and that it garnered its entire 2004 budget of \$8.9 million dollars from NEA national and state affiliates, news coverage never mentioned its union ties.

Beyond its extensive 2004 election campaign activities, CQE also worked for Pennsylvania State Education Association's "Save Pennsylvania Schools" campaign in 2009 and Utah's 2007 referendum to overturn the state's voucher law.

Another group, the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice, purports to be a "unique partnership" between Great Lakes states sharing a common goal of "qualitative improvement and healthy growth of all public schools in the entire Great Lakes region." Actually, the group is a consortium of NEA state affiliates from Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. The press release announcing the center's launch in 2000 made no mention of teachers unions or that 16 of its 17 officers and trustees are NEA officers and employees.

NEA and AFT union dues buy a tremendous amount of political influence, and 95% of their contributions go to Democrat candidates or promote left-leaning issues. Is that because most teachers are politically liberal? A 2005 NEA survey found that its members "are slightly more conservative (50%) than liberal (43%) in political philosophy," but that local presi-



Some buttons seen at the 2010 NEA Convention

dents are disproportionately liberal as compared to their constituents, particularly in the larger affiliates.

Furthermore, teachers and support staff often have no choice about whether to pay the dues that fund all of their unions' political advocacy. Currently, employees in 28 states risk losing their jobs if they refuse to join a union; some workers are forced to pay dues even if they don't join. During the 2009-2010 school year, the NEA national affiliate collected \$162 per teacher and \$93 per public school support staffer; teachers and staff pay an average of \$300 in additional dues to their local and state affiliates. NEA's budget for 2010 is \$355 million.

In most states, it is perfectly legal for teachers unions to use member dues to contribute to political campaigns and causes, including those that have nothing to do with education. The general

public is largely unaware of the outsized influence of teachers unions on candidate elections and issues ranging from taxation and health care to redistricting and gay marriage, according to Mike Antonucci, director of the Education Intelligence Agency. "More than any other single national entity, the NEA is a driving force supporting attempts to raise state taxes, and defeating tax cut or limitation measures."

Antonucci believes news reporters should cover the teachers unions as major national and fiscal political players in all the issues they engage in rather than letting them continue to slip under the radar on non-education issues. "Only then will the public see that Big Oil and Big Tobacco have been superseded by Big Education," he said. (*Education Next*, Fall 2010; heritage.org, 7-20-10)

NEA Delegates Express 'No Confidence' in Race to the Top

After a protracted and contentious debate, NEA delegates narrowly passed a "no confidence" vote on the Department of Education's Race to the Top (RTT) grant competition guidelines, and on the use of competitive grants in the upcoming Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization. The measure was a symbolic swing at the Obama administration's policies, but stopped short of naming or criticizing President Obama, whom the union spent tens of millions of dollars to elect.

Union leaders say competitive grants like RTT "force local and state agencies to compete against each other for precious funding and resources," as compared to grants that disburse funds based on formulas. NEA President Dennis Van Roekel complained that, "We got a system that creates too few winners and far too many losers. Our members feel be-

trayed, and so do I." The NEA also objects to the RTT emphases on standardized testing, increasing the number of charter schools, and evaluating teachers on student performance.

Phil Rumore, president of the Buffalo, NY affiliate and author of the anti-RTT vote, scored hearty applause when he said that RTT "brutalizes our students with standardized tests, which in my opinion is like giving someone blood tests until they die." Another supporter suggested the initiative is "a gun with bullets in it to take out teachers, public education, and the union itself."

Despite the impassioned rhetoric of delegates who backed the resolution, others were uncomfortable with the measure. Some worried about the political ramifications of such a public censure of the Obama administration. "I'm not sure that's the way we want to go into reauthorization [of ESEA], throwing punches," said one. Another state representative said the vote communicated a message of "disunity" among NEA members because many of union's state and local affiliates are still pursuing RTT funding. (blogs.edweek.org, 7-4-10)



NEA delegates wrote thousands of postcards addressed to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

NEA Plans Public Image Makeover

Public support for teachers unions is dropping as their self-serving antics become more widely known. But the 9,000 teachers and education staffers who gathered in New Orleans for the annual NEA convention have plans for a public image makeover.

Charter schools are a particular target. Delegates passed New Business Item (NBI) 93, which proposed that the NEA and its affiliates "expose and educate the media and the public about allegedly grassroots, pro-charter 'parent groups' that are popping up with greater frequency."

The more extensive NBI 99 was also approved, and is meant to counter the public relations impact of live lotteries. Unions and the politicians they support severely restrict the number of charter schools allowed to open, so spots are limited, highly coveted, and often awarded by random lottery to ensure fairness. NEA delegates aim to disprove the growing perception that "charter schools and their operators are the heroes out to save education...against teacher unions who have irreparably destroyed education."

(See NEA Makeover, page 2)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

No doubt meant as a slap at Texas' recently adopted social studies and history guidelines, the NEA will ask major textbook publishers not to produce textbooks they believe reflect the "ideological whims of political extremists." The union will also press state legislators not to fund "ill-conceived standards for textbooks and other instructional supplies."

NEA delegates voted to challenge Arizona legislation prohibiting ethnic studies classes believed to promote ethnic resentment or advocate overthrowing the U.S. government. The union vowed to lend organizational and legal support to any affiliates working to defend or expand ethnic studies, and to publicize any research demonstrating the "social and academic value" of such programs.

As part of its Diversity Calendar, the NEA suggested schools celebrate the founding of China's repressive communist regime on October 1. The reference disappeared from the NEA website after it was publicized by WorldNetDaily. (wnd.com, 7-29-10)

In contrast to 2007-2009, neither the NEA nor the AFT invited Obama or his aides to speak at their annual conventions last month, partly because union officials worried that administration speakers would face heckling. The unions have benefited from more than a 100% increase in federal education spending under Obama, but reject certain administration policies, including tying teacher evaluation to student performance. In his keynote speech, NEA president Dennis Van Roekel said the administration's policies are "not the change I hoped for." (*New York Times*, 7-5-10)

NEA convention delegates used parliamentary procedure to quash discussion and voting on a measure that would have asked President Obama to replace education secretary Arne Duncan with "a person who is aligned with the interests of the NEA, its members, and especially the students it serves." Education blogger Stephen Sawchuk said delegates made Duncan a "whipping boy" for unpopular policies clearly backed by President Obama. (blogs.edweek.org, 7-4-10)

Education Reporter (ISSN 0887-0608) is published monthly by Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund with editorial offices at 7800 Bonhomme Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105, (314) 721-1213, fax (314) 721-3373. Editor: Andrea Curry. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the persons quoted and should not be attributed to Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund. Annual subscription \$25. Back issues available @ \$2. Periodicals postage paid at Alton, Illinois.

Web site: <http://www.eagleforum.org>
E-mail: education@eagleforum.org

NEA Legislative Directives

The following excerpts are from the July 2010 publication, *Advancing NEA's Legislative Program*, and reflect the marching orders for NEA lobbyists seeking to influence Congress and the White House. The union has 600 employees and the ability to generate thousands of emails and phone calls from its members to influence legislators.

NEA Supports:

1. Amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to grant states flexibility to waive annual required testing
2. Mandatory full-day kindergarten attendance for children, and the federal resources necessary to do so
3. Legislation to reduce or eliminate tuition costs in public higher education
4. Providing financial assistance sufficient to enable all students to pay for college tuition, textbooks, and appropriate expenses
5. Access to quality prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal care services [for school children who have children]
6. Total federal assumption of the cost and operation of welfare programs based on standards of human dignity
7. Repeal of the so-called right-to-work provision of federal labor law
8. A tax-supported, single-payer health care plan for all residents of the U.S., its territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
9. Provision of federal funds for the education of undocumented workers, immigrants, refugees, and members of the diplomatic community
10. Federal programs that provide information to students to improve understanding about different sexual orientations
11. Legislation that would prohibit reli-

gious organizations that accept federal funding from discriminating in hiring on the basis of religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or HIV/AIDS status

12. The use of affirmative action to redress historical discrimination
13. Legislation to study possible reparations to African Americans to address the past and residual effects of slavery in America
14. Statehood for the District of Columbia
15. A national holiday honoring César Chávez

NEA Opposes:

1. Tuition tax credits for elementary or secondary schools
2. Use of vouchers in education
3. Federally mandated parental option or "choice" in education programs
4. Denying federal student aid funds to college students based on their immigration status
5. Denying federal financial aid to college students who have been convicted of misdemeanor, nonviolent drug offenses
6. The use of draft registration as an eligibility criterion for financial assistance
7. The testing of teachers as a criterion for job retention, promotion, tenure, or salary increments
8. Federal legislation that denies children's access to public education or health care based on their citizen/documentation status
9. Any legislation or constitutional amendment designating English as the official language of the United States
10. The utilization of voter ID cards for the privilege of voting in local, state, and national elections
11. Privatization of social security

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



NEA Makeover (Continued from page 1)

The strategy outlined in NBI 99 is to highlight success stories from public schools, and to educate the public on how "difficult" it is to be a public school teacher. The difficulties the NEA wants the public to recognize include shrinking budgets, "ballooning" class sizes, lack of materials, and buildings in disrepair. (Never mind that charter schools have much smaller budgets, fewer resources, and generally more austere conditions.) The proposal also complains that public school teachers have to teach the really tough cases, that is the special education, ELL, disruptive and poverty-stricken students the union disingenuously suggests charter schools don't accept.

Another measure seeks to "en-

lighten retired and post-middle aged populations about the negative effects of cuts to public education on economic viability, national security and public safety." This informational campaign will be in "partnership with pertinent organizations."

If the NEA can't win back parents and grandparents who know too much, the union will set its sights on the next generation. NBI 51 lays out plans to develop a national K-12 and college-level curriculum on labor unions in a "coordinated effort with the AFT, AFL-CIO . . . and other union and worker organizations" to push pro-labor propaganda into classrooms. Who better to explain the necessity of labor unions to kids than the teachers who profit from them?

Book of the Month



50 Successful Harvard Application Essays: What Worked For Them Can Help You Get Into the College of Your Choice, Third Edition, Staff of the Harvard Crimson, St. Martin's Griffin, 2010, 208 pages, \$14.99.



The college application essay is the most nerve-wracking writing assignment most 17-year-olds have ever faced. Generally, students have about 500 words to set themselves apart and convey personal qualities not readily apparent in grade point averages, SAT scores, and lists of extracurricular activities. This book offers a straightforward learn-by-example approach that can help any applicant write the lucid, compelling, and persuasive essay needed to gain acceptance to competitive colleges.

The book begins with some general tips on how best to communicate what admissions officers are looking for, including: "Show your readers through anecdotes, colorful details, or self-reflection how you've grown, how you've overcome a certain loss, or how you've mastered a personal weakness."

The most helpful aspect of the book, however, is a compilation of essays written by students who were ultimately accepted to the nation's top-ranked school. Editors of Harvard's student newspaper, *The Harvard Crimson*, provide commentary on each essay's strengths and weaknesses, and offer advice on how it might be improved.

Both creative and conventional approaches are illustrated in the example essays. The samples also demonstrate that writers need not worry if they don't have a heroic or dramatic event to draw from, because even the mundane stuff of everyday life can elegantly showcase personality or character qualities and win over admissions officers. For example, one young woman explains how her art teacher broadened her perception of beauty with a simple rusted pot. A young man's response to a well-intended, but hurtful comment from his father displays the teen's growing maturity and sense of self.

Some of the essays take risks that might be considered gimmicky: one composition is a humorous take on the torturous process of writing his essay. The *Harvard Crimson* editors explain why these examples work, while warning readers of the pitfalls of such an approach.

Nervous college applicants will gain both topic ideas and increased confidence from reading essays that vary widely in subject, style, and even quality of writing. Readers will see that there really isn't a formula for the perfect college essay; a compelling composition is one that reveals the applicant as a thoughtful person with inspirations and passions that they claim as their own.

Some NEA Resolutions Passed at the 2010 Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana

A-2. Educational Opportunity for All. The Association believes that all schools must be accredited under uniform standards established by the appropriate agencies in collaboration with the Association and its affiliates.

A-11. Use of Closed 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-14. 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, sexual orientation and gender identification stereotypes in the public schools.
- ◆ Full-day, every day kindergarten programs should be fully funded.
- ◆ Federal, state, and, as appropriate, local governments should provide funds sufficient to make pre-kindergarten available for all three- and four-year-old children.

A-15. Federal Financial Support for Education. The Association opposes any federal legislation, laws, or regulations that provide funds, goods, or services to sectarian schools.

A-25. Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits. The Association opposes voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other such funding arrangements that pay for students to attend sectarian schools. The Association also believes that any private school or agency that receives public funding through voucher plans, tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements must be subject to all accountability measures and regulations required of public schools.

A-34. Federally or State-Mandated Choice/Parental Option Plans. The Association believes that federally or state-mandated parental option or choice plans compromise free, equitable, universal, and quality public education for every student. Therefore, the Association opposes such federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans.

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 supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. 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 as-

ist 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-11. 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-12. Diversity. The National Education Association believes that similarities and differences among race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, physical ability, size, occupation, and 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.

B-13. Racial Diversity Within Student Populations. The Association believes that to achieve or maintain racial diversity, it may be necessary for elementary/secondary schools, colleges, and universities to take race into account in making decisions as to student admissions, assignments, and/or transfers.

B-14. Racism, Sexism, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Discrimination. Discrimination and stereotyping based on such factors as race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion must be eliminated. The Association also believes that these factors should not affect the legal rights and obligations of the partners in a legally recognized domestic partnership, civil union, or marriage in regard to matters involving the other partner, such as medical decisions, taxes, inheritance, adoption, and immigration. 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, Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender persons, and people with disabilities

- ◆ Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.

- ◆ Foster the dissemination and use of non-discriminatory and nonstereotypical language, resources, practices, and activities

- ◆ Integrate an accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of all groups throughout history across curricula, particularly groups that have been under-represented historically

- ◆ Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, or religion

- ◆ 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.

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

B-24. Education of Refugee and Undocumented Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants. The Association supports access for undocumented students to financial aid and in-state tuition to state colleges and universities. The Association further believes that students who have resided in the United States for at least five years at the time of high school graduation should be granted legal residency status, and allowed to apply for U.S. citizenship.

B-30. Educational Programs for English Language Learners. The Association believes that ELL 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-39. 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-40. Global Education. The National Education Association believes that global education imparts an appreciation of our interdependency in sharing the world's resources to meet mutual human needs.

B-42. School-to-Work/Career Education. The National Education Association believes that 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-48. Family Life Education. The Association 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
- ◆ An 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 antibiased, culturally sensitive program.

B-49. Environmental Education. The Association supports educational programs that promote —

- ◆ An awareness of the effects of past, present, and future population growth patterns on world civilization, human survival, and the environment

- ◆ Solutions to environmental problems such as nonrenewable resource depletion, pollution, global warming, ozone depletion, and acid precipitation and deposition

- ◆ The recognition of and participation in such activities as Earth Day.

B-51. 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, family planning, diversity of culture and diversity of sexual orientation and gender identification, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and homophobia.

B-52. HIV/AIDS Education. The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should establish comprehensive human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) education programs as an integral part of the school curriculum.

B-60. Education on Peace and International Understanding. The National Education Association believes that educational strategies for teaching peace and justice issues should include the role of individuals, social movements, 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

(Continued on page 4)

destruction, strategies for disarmament, and methods to achieve peace. Such curricular materials should also cover major contributing factors to conflict, such as economic disparity, demographic variables, unequal political power and resource distribution, and the indebtedness of the developing world.

B-66. Standardized Testing of Students. The National Education Association believes that standardized tests should be used only to improve the quality of education and instruction for 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
- ◆ Scores are used to track students
- ◆ Students with special needs or limited English proficiency are required to take the same tests as regular education students without modifications and/or accommodations.

B-71. 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 security personnel as well as the school community to encourage nonviolent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts.

B-82. Home Schooling. The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs based on parental choice cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. When home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state curricular requirements, including the taking and passing of assessments to ensure adequate academic progress. Home schooling should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents/guardians. 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.

C-15. 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-24. 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 health education curriculum for pre-K through adult education that integrates various health top-

ics (such as drug abuse, the dangers of performance-enhancing dietary herbal supplements, violence, safety issues, universal precautions, and HIV education)

◆ Counseling programs that provide developmental guidance and broad-based interventions and referrals

◆ Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics that provide basic physical and mental health, and 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-25. 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 higher education.

C-30. Student Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification. The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identification, 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 orientation or gender identification, 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-31. 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.

D-21. Competency Testing of Licensed Teachers. The National Education Association believes that competency testing must not be used as a condition of employment, license retention, evaluation, placement, ranking, or promotion of licensed teachers.

E-3. Selection and Challenges of Materials and Teaching Techniques. The Association deplores prepublishing censorship, book-burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from school library media centers and school curricula.

E-10. Academic and Professional Freedom. Academic freedom includes the rights of teachers and learners to explore and discuss divergent points of view. A teacher shall not be fired, transferred, re-assigned, removed from his or her position, or disciplined for refusing to suppress the free expression rights of students. Professional freedom includes the teachers' right to evaluate, criticize, and/or advocate their personal point of view

concerning the policies and programs of the schools. Furthermore, teachers must be free to depart from mandated scripted learning programs, pacing charts, and classroom assessments without prejudice or punishment.

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, retired or harassed 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, sexual orientation, or gender identification. 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-2. Pay Equity/Comparable Worth. The "market value" means of establishing pay cannot be the final determinant of pay scales since it too frequently reflects the race and sex bias in our society.

F-49. Medication and Medical Services in Schools. The Association believes that education employees who are not licensed medical personnel should be protected from all liability if they are required to administer medication or perform medical services.

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 National Education Association believes that affordable, comprehensive health care, including prescription drug coverage, is the right of every resident. 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 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 believes that the United Nations furthers world peace and promotes 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-3. International Criminal Court. The Association believes that the United States should ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and recognize and support its authority and jurisdiction.

I-9. Global Climate Change. The Association believes that humans must take steps to change activities that contribute to global climate change.

I-12. Human Rights. The National Education Association believes that the governments of all nations must respect and protect equal access to education as embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I-17. 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-22. Immigration. The Association opposes any immigration policy that denies educational opportunities to immigrants and their children regardless of their immigration status.

I-33. Freedom of Religion. The Association opposes any federal legislation or mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence.

I-34. Gun-free Schools and the Regulation of Deadly Weapons. The Association believes that strict prescriptive regulations are necessary for the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale and resale of handguns and ammunition magazines. A mandatory background check and a mandatory waiting period should occur prior to the sale of all firearms.

I-47. Elimination of Discrimination. The National Education Association is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, economic status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, and all other forms of discrimination. The Association encourages its members and all other members of the educational community to engage in courageous conversations in order to examine assumptions, prejudices, discriminatory practices, and their effects.

I-52. Hate-Motivated Violence. The Association believes that federal, state, and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence.

I-58. Linguistic Diversity. 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-61. Equal Opportunity for Women. The Association supports an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (such as the Equal Rights Amendment). The Association urges its affiliates to support ratification of such an amendment. The Association also supports the enactment and full funding of the Women's Educational Equity Act. The Association endorses the use of non-sexist language.

The above text is excerpted from NEA resolutions adopted at the 2010 NEA Convention. Much language has been omitted, but no words have been changed, added, or put out of order.