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The NEA Steps Up Its Anti-Parent Politics

"I want each and every one of you to know with certainty that, when you stand up to the privatizers and the voucher pushers, you'll have behind you every bit of support that this organization can muster." That "every bit of support" started with a one million dollar contribution to defeat the school choice initiative on the California ballot on November 2.

With those words, Keith Geiger, president of the National Education Association (NEA), threw down the gauntlet against parents during the NEA's annual convention, held in San Francisco on July 2-5. The \$1 million check was approved unanimously by the NEA's board of directors because, in Geiger's words, "there's no better cause for that money."

The NEA's passion against school choice was explained by Del Weber, president of the California NEA affiliate, which plans to spend \$10 million to defeat the November 2 ballot initiative. "There are some proposals that are so evil," he said, "that they should never be presented to the voters."

The NEA antagonism against parents' choice in schools has nothing to do with quality education. It has everything to do with power. Those who want chapter and verse to document the power goals of the NEA should refer to the sensational June 7 cover story in *Forbes* magazine called "The National Extortion Association."

The California choice initiative should bring about a tremendous savings to taxpayers. Each schoolchild whose parents exercise the choice would henceforth cost the taxpayers only \$2,500 per year (the price of the voucher) instead of \$5,000 (the average cost of keeping the child in public school).

But the NEA isn't about saving the taxpayers' money, it's about retaining control over the minds of

schoolchildren. The hundreds of resolutions passed by the some 9,000 delegates at the 1993 convention show arrogance of power, a compulsion to control the minds and behavior of children, and a pervasive hostility toward parents.

The NEA demands "early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight." Since the public schools have done such a poor job of educating kids from age six to 18, who but the NEA could, with a straight face, think it would be good idea to turn over infants and toddlers to them, too?

The NEA demands mandatory kindergarten and heavy regulation of home-schooling. The resolutions demand that homeschooling parents be licensed and their curriculum approved in advance by an NEA-staffed agency. The whole reason some parents dedicate themselves to the task of homeschooling is that they do **not** want the public school curriculum.

The NEA demands that every student have "immediate, direct, and confidential access to health, social and psychological services." "Confidential" means without parents being informed when their children are given contraceptives and other kinds of sex services.

The NEA asserts "the right of every individual [i.e., schoolchildren of any age] to live in an environment of freely available information, knowledge, and wisdom about sexuality." This means: Parents, butt out; the schools are going to tell primary schoolchildren all about how to engage in sex and with what devices.

The NEA demands that "guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, beginning at the prekindergarten level." That

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means the NEA wants group psychotherapy at every grade level, regardless of parental wishes.

NEA speakers were especially vocal at this year's convention with complaints that "time limitations are impacting the working lives of teachers" and inhibiting their work. At the same time, they demand telephones in every classroom, faxes, E-mail, TVs, and VCRs.

Special Caucuses at the San Francisco convention included Peace and Justice, Green Earth, Gay and Lesbian, Wellness, Women's, and Physically Challenged, and they all distributed position papers. The Gay and Lesbian Caucus promotes Project 21, a program in which students are taught about the gay liberation movement and discuss historically famous figures' sexual preference when it is thought to be homosexual.

Non-school causes endorsed by this year's NEA resolutions include tax-financed socialized medicine, statehood for the District of Columbia, gays in the

military, and approval of the right of the National Endowment for the Arts (the *other* NEA) to spend tax dollars on the "creative" obscenities of their choice. The NEA is politically involved in several state initiatives (in addition to California) including opposition to term limits, tax limitation, and property tax reduction, and support of gay rights.

The convention delegates gave President Clinton a triumphant reception: 88 percent of them voted at last year's convention to endorse his candidacy. The crowd was revved up for his appearance by an NEA-prepared video that drew huge cheers for clips of the Kennedy brothers and hisses and boos for clips of George Bush and Dan Quayle.

The NEA budget for the current year is \$173 million and covers a staff of 553 persons. That includes tens of millions of dollars for lobbying hidden under various euphemisms such as Government Relations and Communications.

Some 1992 NEA Resolutions

- A-8. **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-26. **Deleterious Programs.** The National Education Association believes that the following programs and practices are detrimental to public education and must be eliminated: tax credits for tuition to private and parochial schools, voucher plans (or funding formulas that have the same effect as vouchers).
- A-27. **Federally or State-Mandated Choice/Parental Option Plans.** The National Education Association opposes such federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans.
- A-28. **Tuition Tax Credits.** Therefore, the Association believes that all federal and state legislation designed to establish or implement plans for prekindergarten through grade 12 tuition tax credits is detrimental to the public interest and urges its affiliates to work for the defeat of such legislation.
- A-29. **Voucher Plans.** The Association believes that legislation designed to establish or implement prekindergarten through grade 12 voucher plans is detrimental to the public interest and calls upon its affiliates to work for the defeat of such legislation.
- 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 further believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents and children, including child care, child development, appropriate developmental and diversity-based curricula, special education, and appropriate bias-free screening devices.
- The Association believes that federal legislation should be enacted to assist in organizing the implementation of fully funded early childhood education programs offered through the public schools. These programs should be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance.
- B-6. **Sexism in Education.** The Association endorses the use of nonsexist language by all schools. It further believes that sexism and sex discrimination must be eliminated from the curriculum and effective training of education employees is necessary for this purpose. The Association endorses positive action plans that establish procedures and timetables for eliminating sexism in the curriculum.
- B-26. **Multicultural/Global Education.** The National Education Association further

believes the goal of multicultural/global education is the recognition of individual and group differences and similarities in developing self-esteem as well as respect for others.

- B-33. **Sex Education.** The National Education Association believes that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. Teachers and health professionals must be qualified to teach in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits.

The Association urges its affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs, including information on sexual abstinence, birth control and family planning, diversity of culture and sexual orientation, parenting skills, prenatal care, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and problems associated with and resulting from preteen and teenage pregnancies.

To facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information, knowledge, and wisdom about sexuality.

- B-34. **AIDS Education.** The National Education Association recommends that educational institutions establish comprehensive acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) education programs as an integral part of the school curriculum.

- B-58. **Home Schooling.** The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. The Association believes that if parental preference home schooling study occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used. The Association further believes that such home schooling programs should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents.

- C-1. **Health Care for All Children.** The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health care.

- C-22. **Student Health and Personnel Services.**

The National Education Association believes that every student should have immediate, direct, and confidential access to health, social, and psychological services within both school and community settings. These services must include:

Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics that provide basic health care services (which may include diagnosis and treatment) to supplement, but not supplant, school nurses.

The Association urges that, if deemed appropriate by local choice, these health care services include family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods and instruction in their use.

- C-23. **School Counseling Programs.** The National Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, beginning at the prekindergarten level.

- C-24. **Student Stress.** The Association supports stress management programs that address the needs of children within both school and community settings and that provide follow-up support.

- C-26. **Student Sexual Orientation.** The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, should be afforded equal opportunity within the public education system. The Association further believes that every school district should provide counseling by trained personnel for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation.

- C-28. **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.

- E-3. **Selection of Materials and Teaching Techniques.** The Association believes that teachers and librarians/media specialists must have the right to select instructional/library materials without censorship or legislative interference.

- E-5. **Instructional Materials and Teaching Techniques Challenges.** The Association deplors prepublishing censorship, book burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from the school library/media center and school curriculum.

- 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.

To address societal needs, however, the Association urges the development and implementation of affirmative action plans and procedures that will encourage active recruitment and employment of women, minorities, and men in underrepresented education categories.

It may be necessary, therefore, to give preference in recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion policies to certain ethnic-minority groups or women or men to overcome past discrimination.

- F-2. **Pay Equity/Comparable Worth.** The Association supports all efforts to attain accurate and unbiased forms of job evaluation and to raise the pay of those jobs that are presently undervalued. The "market value" means of establishing pay cannot be the final determinant of pay scales, since it itself too frequently reflects the race and sex bias in our society.
- F-36. **Employees with 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 acquired immunodeficiency syndrome/human immunodeficiency virus (AIDS/HIV) antibody or have been diagnosed as having AIDS.
- H-6. **National Health Care.** The Association believes that the federal government should adopt a national health care policy that will mandate universal access to the highest quality health care at the lowest possible cost.
- H-11. **Statehood for the District of Columbia.** The Association urges its affiliates to support efforts to achieve statehood for the District of Columbia.
- I-13. **Family Planning.** The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom. The Association urges the government to give high priority to making available all

methods of family planning to women and men unable to take advantage of private facilities. The Association further urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel.

- I-22. **Freedom of Creative Expression.** The National Education Association supports freedom of expression in the creative arts and therefore deplors any efforts by government to suppress, directly or indirectly, such expression. The Association further supports the freedom of publicly funded agencies to exercise judgment in the awarding of grants to individuals and organizations.
- I-47. **Equal Opportunity for Women.** The National Education Association supports the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which 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.

New Business Item 1993-C. The NEA 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.

New Business Item 15. The NEA is directed to research Outcome Based Education (OBE) and to disseminate information about OBE through member publications such as *NEA Today* and *NEA NOW*.

New Business Item 54. NEA take a proactive role in supporting the policy proposals to eliminate discrimination in the military and public employment based upon a person's sexual orientation.

"The National Extortion Association?" is the title of a very important 9-page article in the June 7 issue of Forbes magazine. It describes the tremendous monopoly power of the NEA. Reprints are available from Eagle Forum @ \$1.

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