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# THE Center for Education Reform



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## CENTER SLAMS ANTI-SCHOOL CHOICE GROUP CALLS FOR FORMATION OF EDUCATION REFORM COALITION

President of the Center for Education Reform Jeanne Allen today called for the formation of a national coalition on public education reform that "would work with parents and communities to bring positive change to public schools and put the education needs of children first."

Allen's call came in response to a meeting being held today in Washington, DC to promote opposition to school choice initiatives. Organized under the auspices of a group calling itself the National Coalition for Public Education the meeting's agenda includes a review of state activities, preparation for fighting school-choice efforts that might be undertaken by the 105th Congress and "hill assignments" apparently being made to coordinate anti-school choice lobbying efforts. Included among the coalition's members are the National Organization for Women, the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans for Democratic Action, the National Education Association and approximately two dozen other like-minded organizations.

"This is just the latest step in what have become increasingly outrageous efforts by the education establishment and its allies to dictate policy and strangle reform. This is not a coalition for public education, it's a coalition for the preservation of the status quo regardless of the demands of parents and the needs of children," Allen said. "That's why today we're announcing the formation of the National Coalition for Public Education *Reform*."

Allen said the coalition for reform would be an informal organization of "real people who will make it clear to the public and legislators that parents and communities want real reforms, including school choice. Our coalition will respond to the overwhelming demand of choice advocates — young, old, black, white, Republican, Democrat and in-between — that it be made clear that the public believes in and demands education reform that includes choice."

Institute for Justice Litigation Director, Clint Bolick, endorsed Allen's plan and called it a much-needed effort to combat the increasingly politicized efforts of the education establishment to squash reform efforts. "The more success school choice enjoys the more hostile and political the unions become," Bolick said. "A coalition that will serve to counter their efforts is long overdue."

"It's clear that the unions and their allies are feeling pressure from an increasingly reform-minded public that is demanding the right to see to it that their children are properly educated," Allen said. "Unfortunately, instead of responding in a positive, constructive way, they've chosen to further polarize the education reform debate and to further distance themselves from the very people with whom they should be working."

"To put it simply, we're trying to work with parents and communities, and they're trying to work against them."

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