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For Immediate Release

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**Statement of Jeanne Allen
President of the Center for Education Reform
on Comments Made by NEA President Bob Chase regarding the future of school choice**

(Washington, DC 11/15/00) National Education Association President Bob Chase and other advocates of the status quo in education are simply mistaken if they believe education reformers are about to fold up their tents and go home.

The electoral evidence where school choice exists is that once voters try it, they like it.

- In Florida, the candidate for state education superintendent supporting the A+ Education Plan's Opportunity Scholarships so vigorously opposed by the NEA won with 54 percent of the vote.
- In that state's Escambia County, where the children in two failing schools have been offered opportunity scholarships to the public or private school of their choice, the newly-elected county school superintendent is an avowed supporter of the A+ Plan.
- In Florida's panhandle, where the A+ Plan has had the greatest impact, the state representative who led the opposition to the plan was resoundingly defeated.
- And, of course, in Milwaukee, where pro-voucher Democratic Mayor John Norquist has had a voucher program in place for years, he and his team – including the city's pro-choice school board– are regularly elected and re-elected, despite the teacher union's six figure effort to defeat them.

This is what people like NEA President Bob Chase fear most: That when the public experiences the reality of school choice, they see through the scare tactics of those who care more about their political power than about children's education.

The NEA spends millions of dollars in court and public relations campaigns to defeat choice, defeat accountability, and defeat standards. In Massachusetts alone, the teachers union is spending \$600,000 against that state's accountability package. If their real concern is for the kids, why don't they spend that money on creating effective remedial programs for the children who aren't learning?

There is a simple way to make the advocates of reform pack up and go home: Improve the education of the children being underserved by the status quo. Mr. Chase and his colleagues have had their chance, and they've failed to act. Until they do, the fight goes on.

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The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization providing support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools. For further information, please call (202) 822-9000 or visit our website at <http://www.edreform.com>. For regular updates from CER, we invite you to subscribe to the CER Education Newswire. You may do so either by enrolling on the website or by calling or emailing the Center (cer@edreform.com).