



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK THE NEA ABOUT EDUCATION

(Washington, DC 6/28/01) Next week the National Education Association will convene its annual convention from July 2-7, in Los Angeles, California.

The Center for Education Reform is once again pleased to provide some simple questions to help determine whether or not the actions of the NEA are consistent with their expressed views and stated objectives. While these questions were originally formulated to assist education reporters, we believe they can be posed by any concerned citizen or NEA member who wants to discover what the school employee unions are saying – and doing – about critical education issues.

What follows are ten questions directed at the NEA (the American Federation of Teachers does not hold a convention this year). We hope these questions will assist you in evaluating the changing face of education.

- 1.) Teacher strikes are bad for kids. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why or why not?
- 2.) Currently, there are failing public schools and there are children consigned to them. There are many public school teachers who send their children to private school and many politicians whom you support who make the same choice. Do you see a contradiction in your opposition to school choice?
- 3.) Should parents and the public use test results and progress on test results to evaluate, in large part, teachers and schools year to year? Does a teacher matter to the education of a child?

(more)

- 4.) There has been dramatic growth in non-union alternative education associations. Today more than 250,000 teachers belong to such associations. Is this development healthy and how do you square their growth with your own membership?
- 5.) Teachers recognize that education degrees are often a barrier to attracting quality teachers into the classroom. Is your organization prepared to use its political muscle to make certification requirements more flexible so that qualified professionals can obtain alternative certification and join your ranks?
- 6.) The NEA proposes testing college students before they enter education programs, but not after they complete the programs. Because education programs vary so much in terms of content and quality, shouldn't prospective teachers be tested again after they complete these programs and before they begin teaching?
- 7.) The NEA has characterized private businesses wanting to get involved in schools as "ideologues and profiteers." How do these management companies differ from textbook publishers, manufacturers of school supplies, bus companies, and even tutoring firms that contract with schools to deliver goods and services?
- 8.) The school employee unions refuse to report the funds they spend on organizing for political candidates. However, court disclosures indicate they spend more than \$10 million per year for political organizing, in addition to spending more than \$9.5 million in direct campaign contributions. When does the NEA ask its members which candidates should be supported?
- 9.) The NEA's Pennsylvania state affiliate PSEA recently declared, "If we lose our grip on the labor supply to the education industry, we will bargain from a position of weakness. ...If we want to maintain our influence, our ability to do ANYTHING, we must make sure that education remains a unionized industry." Does the NEA care more about children's education, or more about maintaining its control over teachers?"
- 10.) You argue that teachers make less money than engineers and computer scientists. Engineers and computer scientists who cannot do the job are usually let go, while successful employees earn high salaries. This is not the case with teachers. Are you willing to exchange collective bargaining agreements for high pay based on performance?

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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://edreform.com>.*