



# California Teachers Empowerment Network

*Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues*

February 16, 2010

Dear Colleague,

Good news! As many of you know, CTEN has a partnership with DonorsChoose.org and the Koret Foundation for the purpose of supporting public school teachers who need resources for their classrooms. Because not all the money at our disposal was appropriated during Phase 1 of the program, we are now entering a second phase. The Koret Foundation is generously funding up to \$100 per California classroom project on DonorsChoose.org (while the funding lasts). To take advantage of this offer to receive materials for your classroom, visit [www.donorschoose.org/teachers](http://www.donorschoose.org/teachers) . **Your project must be submitted for consideration no later than February 28<sup>th</sup>!**

In our December letter, we told you about Edward Amatetti, a teacher in Maryland, who has proposed some badly needed curriculum reform. His mission statement spells out his goal.

*We are dedicated to promoting integrity and rational thinking in K-12 and higher education, as well as enhancing teaching of America's cultural and Constitutional heritage, including the eminence of individual liberty, free enterprise, rule of law, and social virtues such as justice, hard work, and temperance.*

At that time his *New Renaissance In Education* website was not online, but it is now - <http://www.nrie.org/> Ed has graciously donated a compelling article to our newsletter which will be pasted in at the end. If you would like to comment on it, please do and we will post comments pro and con in our next letter. If you would like to contact Ed directly, his email address is [newrenaissanceineducation@comcast.net](mailto:newrenaissanceineducation@comcast.net)

In a January 29 blog post, Jay Greene uncovered some errors in an NEA press release concerning teachers' salaries and inflation. The odd thing is that *the press release contradicts NEA's own data*. To get the whole picture, please go to <http://jaygreene.com/2010/01/29/the-ministry-of-truth-speaks/>

Last month, we let NEA members know where their political donations went. This month, once again via Mike Antonucci, we give AFT members that information. Some of the \$5.3 million spent by AFT went to ACORN, SEIU, Edward Kennedy Institute for

the United States Senate and the National Coalition on Health Care. As with NEA, a great proportion of the money went to organizations that have nothing to do with education. There are a few **\*notable\*** exceptions such as the National Association for Bilingual Education, the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network and the Committee for Education Funding. To see the entire list, go to <http://www.eiaonline.com/archives/20100208.htm>

In another very important blog post, Mike Antonucci makes a point, the significance of which cannot be exaggerated. On LM2s and elsewhere we can find out just where the NEA donates its members' dues. What most people don't realize is that they donate far more than is commonly thought – only it is not listed under *donations*. For example, according to Antonucci, in the 2008 election cycle, “NEA dropped \$260,000 on one of the many front groups operated by Craig Varoga and George Rakis, two men Fox News identifies as ‘Democratic Party strategists.’” This money is not listed under donations to advocacy groups. It is listed in their disclosure report “as expenses for media.” As Antonucci says, “...NEA’s advocacy spending extends well beyond the easily identifiable groups. To read his entire post, go to <http://www.eiaonline.com/intercepts/2010/02/10/union-sock-puppets-well-laundered/>

We reported last month about some heavy-handed tactics used by the California Faculty Association, a union that represents some 23,000 faculty, counselors, librarians, and coaches on the 23 Cal State University campuses. CTEN to this point has been essentially involved with grades K-12. But we have decided to expand – the plan is to have a page for CFA members. If you would like to have some input about content, provide us with information, etc., we welcome your input.

As reported a couple of months ago, I will be participating in a debate in New York City next month. The title of the Oxford-style debate is *Don't Blame Teachers Unions For Our Failing Schools*. I am very fortunate to have as my teammates Terry Moe, Professor of Political Science at Stanford University, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, and a member of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education and Rod Paige, life-long educator and former U.S. Secretary of Education (2001-2005). The other team includes Randi Weingarten, president of the 1.4-million-member American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, Gary Smuts, superintendent of the ABC Unified School District in CA, and Kate McLaughlin, a math resource teacher at Bailey Elementary School, Lowell, MA public schools. She is also executive vice president of United Teachers of Lowell.

This debate is one of a series which is broadcast by NPR, televised by Bloomberg TV and covered in Newsweek. For more info, please go to <http://intelligencesquaredus.org/>

In the current issue of Townhall Magazine, there is a very fair, in-depth article about CTEN. This periodical is not available online, but we do have a PDF version on our website. To read the article, please go to <http://www.ctenhome.org/PDFdocs/Townhall2010.pdf>

One reminder - various districts now block our emails. To ensure that these letters keep coming to you - if you are using your school email address, please consider sending us an email with your personal email address.

As always, we at CTEN want to thank you for the continued support. Please continue to provide feedback so that we can continue to meet your needs. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand  
CTEN President

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**The State of Our Public Educational System and Its Consequences**  
**By Edward Amatetti**

Today, two people can walk into a room. One can proclaim that “free market capitalism has inherent flaws that has lead it to fail almost everywhere it has been tried, while socialism supports natural human tendencies and motives that allow it to succeed almost everywhere it has been tried.” The other can state that “socialism has inherent flaws that has lead it to fail almost everywhere it has been tried, while free market capitalism supports natural human tendencies and motives that allow it to succeed almost everywhere it has been tried.” Too many people in the audience would not know who to believe or they would come to the unsubstantiated conclusion that the right answer must be somewhere in the middle. This even though one has proven wildly successfully throughout history and the other has proven wildly unsuccessfully the numerous times it has been tried.

The increasingly non-objective, biased, and preachy education system in the United States is fast bringing the country to a point where the entire fabric of American society is at risk. The foundation of education in which learning takes place through objective analysis of history, science, and the pursuits of great people before us is being ignored in favor of agenda-driven curriculums with the purpose of influencing the beliefs and social behavior of our children. This agenda is too often anti-free market, pro-government power, anti-Western, anti-American exceptionalism, anti-military, and anti-traditional. It does not reinforce, and often attacks, the core principles of our Founding Fathers and the Judeo-Christian principles that have guided our country since its inception. It is too often opposed to the deeply-held values of Americans everywhere and contrary to common sense.

In short, our education system strengthens ties to socialism, progressive movements, and “globalism” while weakening the ties that bind Americans to our own heritage and greatness.

One consequence is that traditionalists, conservatives, libertarians, educationalists, and others who share a deep understanding and respect for what the human experience has taught us and for how objective truth can guide us, are always playing catch-up on the critical issues of the day because by the time the average American turns 21, he/she has been fed a steady diet of left-leaning, progressive bias in public education. This world view is then strongly reinforced by our media and the arts. It is very difficult to change the world views or political leanings of people later in life as studies and experience prove time and again. Our biased education serves to make the rational viewpoints of reasoned traditionalists seem heretical, dogmatic, and not credible, while extending credibility to progressive viewpoints even when they are not supported by the facts. Our education system leaves our citizens with an inadequate understanding of the historical

significance of our country and the extraordinary impact of our Constitution. It has left our citizens virtually illiterate in the principles of economics, and renders them unable to objectively or accurately assess current and proposed economic, environmental, foreign relations, health care, immigration, and other policies. In the end, it leaves them susceptible to unsubstantiated assertions of those who attack our society and unrealistic promises of those who wish to change it.

The more far-reaching consequence is it will eventually compromise not only our desire to preserve those things that made our society the greatest in world history, but even our desire for self-preservation at all. How else can so many of our fellow citizens become so supportive of the constant verbal attacks on United States and our society by our leaders, spokespersons, and celebrities, or become so accepting of the initiatives that are transforming our great country, especially since the financial crisis of 2008?

It is critical that U.S. citizens reassert integrity and objectivity in education before institutional memory of our great society becomes too diluted or too distant a memory.