



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

May 13, 2008

Dear Colleague,

In an attempt to stimulate our stagnant economy the federal government is sending tax rebates to millions of Americans this month. While we at the California Teachers Empowerment Network didn't expect a union dues rebate, we were hoping that there would not be a dues increase. But, according to the *California Educator*, the California Teachers Association is planning to ask for an annual \$20 "contribution."

You see, the CTA raised its dues \$60 a year over a three year period in order to fight several initiatives that were on the November 2005 ballot in California. Now that this three year period is coming to an end, the CTA is doing what it can to retain some of this "lost" revenue. And to make things more difficult for teachers, it is an "opt-out" situation. In other words, the money will be deducted unless the teacher instructs the union not to.

The CTA State Council will vote on this proposal at their June meeting. Consider it a done deal. We have yet to learn if the other state teachers' union, the California Federation of Teachers, will follow suit.

In order to make a more informed decision, you should know where this \$20 would be spent. The CTA says it will give you a choice between the CTA Foundation and advocacy efforts. For more information about the latter, please go to the links page on our website - <http://www.ctenhome.org/links.htm> - and click on the Center for Responsive Politics links or the LM2 link. Also, the Education Intelligence Agency website has information from 2007 posted in an easy-to-read list in their January 22nd Communiqué, which can be accessed at <http://www.eiaonline.com/archives/20080122.htm>

Recently, the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation conducted a study and found that competition fostered by a free market benefits education. An article about this study appeared in School Reform News. To read it, please go to <http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=22553&CFID=5958511&CFTOKEN=25092921>
The study itself can be accessed from the article.

The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research organization dedicated to reforming public policy for the purpose of increasing the number of effective teachers. Their website is - <http://www.nctq.org/p/> Also, according to a recent email that we received, “The National Council on Teacher Quality is calling for proposals for our research competition, *Help or Hindrance? What is the impact of teacher rules, roles, and rights on teacher quality?* The competition is an opportunity to explore NCTQ's groundbreaking database, TR³, which posts the content of collective bargaining agreements, school board policies, and state laws for 100 schools districts and all 50 states. The deadline for proposals is **May 30, 2008.**” For more information about this, please go to <http://www.nctq.org/tr3/conference/>

We have found an excellent current events website for high school students called StudentNewsDaily.com. Its goal is to build students' knowledge of current events and strengthen critical thinking skills. Please visit them at <http://www.studentnewsdaily.com/>

Please visit our website – www.ctenhome.org . The answers to many of your questions can be found there on our FAQ page. Also, some of you have asked if we have a brochure, and we most certainly do. You can find it in downloadable form on our home page. If you would prefer to have a glossy hard copy, please notify us by email and we will send you as many as you would like.

And finally, CTEN will be holding a conference call on Thursday, May 29 at 7pm for teachers who would like to learn more about, and possibly become more involved with our organization. If you would like to be a part of that call please let us know and we will send you details. Thank you.

Larry Sand, President