



# California Teachers Empowerment Network

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

*Please note that in addition to the traditional emailing of the CTEN monthly newsletter, we will once again post it on the CTEN blog- <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com/> As usual, there are several controversial issues covered in this letter and we urge you to share your opinions with other teachers.*

August 16, 2011

Dear Colleague,

We know that many of you are back to work already, but quite a few are still enjoying your summer, so we will wait till September for our official back-to-school letter. In the meantime though, there is plenty happening.

The SOS March on Washington came and went without creating so much as a ripple from a policy standpoint. The small crowd carried signs criticizing President Obama, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, capitalism, corporatizers, privatizers, the rich, charter schools and every education reform imaginable as you can see here - <https://picasaweb.google.com/113193310602533838134/SOSMarch73011?authkey=Gv1sRgCMfyu8ab68j4sgE&feat=flashalbum#>

In a just released book that has received raves from every quarter, *Class Warfare: Inside the Fight to Fix America's Schools*, author Steven Brill claims that former education reformer, turned union shill Diane Ravitch is “in it for the money.” It seems that Dr. Ravitch has been well paid for being the unions’ head cheerleader. In any event, Brill’s book promises to be a most interesting read.

One other book, a very brief one, is also well worth reading. Jay Greene, education researcher and head of the Education Reform Department at the University of Arkansas, has written *Why America Needs School Choice*, which refutes all the usual arguments with a well reasoned and researched approach.

The American Federation of Teachers’ sleazy tactics used to successfully neuter a Parent Trigger law in Connecticut came to light because someone within AFT decided to put its strategy in the form of a PowerPoint on their website. Education writer RiShawn Biddle posted a story with an embedded link before AFT realized what happened. They pulled the PowerPoint immediately, but fortunately Mr. Biddle saved a copy. All is revealed here - <http://dropoutnation.net/2011/08/02/the-afts-real-feelings-about-parent-power/>

Teachers unions playing hardball is hardly new. Perhaps the most egregious example of this phenomenon is a training tape, clearly inspired by Marxist community organizer Saul Alinsky, made by the Michigan Education Association, an NEA affiliate, in the 1990s for union negotiators who collectively bargain with school boards. I urge you to listen to the audio and not just read the text. The creepiness of actually hearing the trainer pitch his uncompromising tactics adds a dimension that is missing when you just read the words - <http://www.mackinac.org/9405>

Also noteworthy is a new study just out from the National Center for Education Information - [http://www.ncei.com/Profile\\_Teachers\\_US\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ncei.com/Profile_Teachers_US_2011.pdf) According to the *Orange County Register*, the poll reports that,

*“Nearly one in five U.S. educators say they support abolishing teachers unions, and one in three support ending tenure for teachers, according to a new survey by the think-tank National Center for Education Information.*

*“The survey of 1,076 public school teachers nationwide indicates that educators are becoming increasingly supportive of doing away with unions and tenure, with support growing by four to five percentage points over the past 15 years, to 19 percent and 33 percent, respectively.”*( [http://articles.ocregister.com/2011-08-03/news/29852188\\_1\\_teacher-tenure-math-teacher-public-school-teachers](http://articles.ocregister.com/2011-08-03/news/29852188_1_teacher-tenure-math-teacher-public-school-teachers) )

The National Council on Teacher Quality has come out with yet another extensive, scrupulously researched report. This time NCTQ tackles the issue of “Student Teaching.” If your less-than-satisfactory experience was anything like mine, I think you’ll find plenty to chew on here - <http://www.nctq.org/edschoolreports/studentteaching/>

In another interesting story, NCTQ claims that the new IMPACT teacher evaluation system in Washington D.C. is working out quite well. For more info, go to <http://www.nctq.org/p/tqb/viewStory.jsp?id=27431>

And finally, I had an op-ed published in the *San Jose Mercury News* about the Commission on Teacher Credentialing Commission scandal which curiously got very little media coverage - <http://www.ctenhome.org/PDFdocs/SJMN%20-%20CTC%20scandal%5B1%5D.pdf>

As always, we at CTEN want to thank you for your ongoing support. Please visit our website – [www.ctenhome.org](http://www.ctenhome.org) regularly. If you any need information that you can’t find on the website, please send an email to [cteninfo@ctenhome.org](mailto:cteninfo@ctenhome.org) or call us at 888-290-8471 and we will get back to you in short order. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand  
CTEN President