



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

September 16, 2008

Dear Colleague,

As working teachers, we at CTEN are well aware how hectic the first few weeks of school are. This is the time when ground rules are set, expectations are explained, parents are first contacted and students will begin to test you. We hope everyone got through them in grand style and that you will have a great school year.

The beginning of the school year is also a good time to take care of financial matters. One area where many of us are lacking is in the area of 403bs, which are tax deferred retirement plans available to employees of educational institutions. If this is not your area of expertise, please visit the links page of our website and you will see the very first entry is 403bwise - <http://www.403bwise.com/> which will answer all your questions and help you navigate your way through these tricky waters.

Also, many of us are affected by the Social Security offset situation. If this is an issue that concerns you, now might be a good time to get involved. A good place to start is <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10045.html#who> . Also, we know a teacher who is willing to spear a grass roots movement to tackle this issue. If you are interested in taking action, please contact long time friend of CTEN, Diana Atwood at mzdja@cox.net .

For those of you interested in real education reform – not the usual “let’s throw more money at it” kind of reform, Edspresso - <http://www.edspresso.com/> is a terrific site. By the way, if you go to the cool beans page, you will see an article I wrote -- http://www.edspresso.com/2008/06/are_teachers_unions_antiteache.htm a few months ago in which I suggest that teachers’ unions frequently don’t act in the best interest of teachers.

Nothing brings this fact to light more than an election season. Earlier this year Reg Weaver, the president of the National Education Association at that time, said that his organization will spend 40 to 50 million dollars in this year’s election cycle. And they will spend almost all of it on liberal candidates and causes. (Just a few of the NEAs favorite “educational” causes are Planned Parenthood, amnesty for illegals and single-payer health plans.) This money, forcibly taken from your paychecks as union dues, is spent without regard to your wishes. (Many teachers don’t realize that when they

belong to a local union, most of their dues don't stay there; the bulk – approximately \$600 a year goes to the CTA.)

Do you know that in addition to funding the forces that are determined to redefine marriage, the CTA has backed legislation that would allow Communists back into the classroom and fought legislation that would keep sex offenders out of the classroom? Teachers, does the CTA really represent you? Does this organization really care about you? (By the way, it seems that the teachers' unions are getting it from both sides of the political aisle now. On the eve of the DNC in Denver, Mickey Kaus reports on an education reform event which can be found here - [http://www.slate.com/id/2197768/ - kaus](http://www.slate.com/id/2197768/-kaus))

To find out just what kind of legislation the CTA is backing and opposing please visit the government action page of their website - <http://www.cta.org/action/> and see if you are in accord with the causes they support. If you think that the CTA is spending your dues money in ways you don't approve, we suggest you make your feelings known to them at <http://www.cta.org/about/ContactUs/ContactUs.htm>

If you are an agency fee payer, now is the time to go through the yearly ritual of requesting a dues rebate from the union. If you are still a full dues paying member but are interested in getting off the carousel, we have a wealth of information on our website that will help guide you through the process. Please visit our "membership options" page of our website <http://www.ctenhome.org/knowMembership.htm> . We have all the information you need right there. If you have questions please contact us and we will respond as soon as possible.

One question we frequently get is about the insurance that the union affords its teachers. We have access to a much better plan. On our bimonthly conference call we will have an expert who can answer all your questions on this very important subject. If you would like to join us, please let us know and we will get you contact information

And finally, please visit our website – www.ctenhome.org . We try to update it regularly. If you have something that you would like to see on our website that is not currently there, please let us know and we will try to accommodate you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Larry Sand, President