

Solidarity Schmolidarity: Teacher Larry Sand Exposes His Union

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When you spend day after day examining the self-serving agenda of the nation's two largest teachers unions, you develop a tendency to think badly of teachers.

That's a mistake. We have to remember that there are millions of great teachers out there, doing their best to help our children develop on a daily basis. We have to remember that many teachers do not subscribe to the left-wing political agendas of their unions, or approve of their tactics.

Larry Sand is a great example. This recently-retired educator from Los Angeles was a member of the NEA-affiliated California Teachers Association. To his credit, he's also a major pain in the backside of the CTA.

Sand is the founder and president of [CTEN](#), or California Teachers Empowerment Network, an organization of union teachers who don't approve of their union. He appeared at a recent "tea party" rally in his home state, and [addressed the gathering](#) about the gross misuse of dues dollars by the CTA.

He pointed out that the average California teacher pays \$1,000 per year in dues to the CTA, meaning the union collects about \$200 million in dues every year. Then Sand outlined some of the left-wing causes the union supports with that money.

The list includes opposition to a ballot proposal that would have banned sex offenders from the classroom, opposition to a ballot proposal that defined marriage as a union between one man and one woman, opposition to a ballot proposal that would have extended the service requirement for teacher tenure from 2-5 years, support for a plan to establish a single-payer health insurance system in California, and support for a ballot proposal that would have raised taxes.

"CTA is using your tax money to try to push something that will increase your taxes," Sand told the crowd. "Something's wrong."

Even in a state like California, where average citizens are probably significantly more liberal than most Americans, we have to wonder if rank-and-file teachers know about this type of union spending, and if the majority would approve. Our guess is that a sizable percentage of members would be aghast, and would demand some fundamental policy changes at union headquarters.

We hope to see more educators like Sand come out of the woodwork in the near future, and speak on behalf of the silent millions who simply go to work every day and pay their dues. As more educators become aware of the activities of their unions, more will choose to send their dues money elsewhere, or will try to break with the unions altogether.

Some day, in the bright, distant future, we can foresee a nation of teachers who bargain individually, like the professionals they are.

So keep chipping away at the powerful CTA, Larry, and encourage others to do so, as well. Every brick that falls out of the wall makes the union a little less united and a little less harmful.