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The Community Page

SEPTEMBER 9, 2012

Unions Declare War on Idaho Kids!

Union bosses have declared war on education reform Two months ago while the world watched, the National Education Association (teacher's union) fought Governor Scott Walker's education reforms in Wisconsin. The kids won. The union lost.

Having recently lost the battle to wrestle control of education from parents in Wisconsin, the union bosses from Washington, D.C. are now focusing their efforts on Idaho because Idaho passed sweeping education reform 18 months ago.

Idaho is next The NEA has committed to spend whatever it takes to stop education reform anywhere it's happening. They fear that if this model legislation is confirmed by Idaho voters, it will gain steam in other states. They may be right about that. Many states are already proposing to use Idaho's education reform as model legislation for their own states. The unions are expected to spend up to \$2 million to stop it in its tracks right here in Idaho before it can gain momentum in other states.

Here's what happened Just 18 months ago, under the leadership of Governor Otter, Idaho's legislature passed three very innovative bills, called *Students Come First*, to greatly improve Idaho schools. Immediately after the bills passed, union bosses in Washington, D.C. committed major resources to stop the legislation from being implemented. They spent tens of thousands of dollars to hire people to gain enough signatures to place the new legislation on this November's ballot. In their efforts to gain signatures, they made several misrepresentations as to what was included in the new laws. Using those tactics, they were successful in getting enough signatures to put it on the ballot. Now the decision is up to the voters. It will not go fully into effect until Idaho voters give it an official "thumbs-up" with their vote in November.



"The teacher's unions are the clearest example of a group that has lost its way. Whenever anyone dares to offer a new idea, the unions protest the loudest."

—Mitt Romney, May 23, 2012

Don't confuse teachers with the "teacher's union"

Most teachers are wonderful people who dedicate their entire careers towards the kids they love to teach.

Unions have taken advantage of these great teachers for decades, scaring them into believing that they need the union to protect their jobs. Teachers are starting to figure out the unions out. They are exiting the unions by the thousands. The NEA reports they have lost 150,000 members over the last two years and estimates that they will lose more than 200,000 members over the next two years.

Unions are becoming increasingly unpopular with teachers. According to a survey done by Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance, teachers who have a positive view of unions dropped from 58% in 2011 to 43% in 2012. Teachers holding a negative view of unions nearly doubled during the same period from 17% to 32%.

VOTE YES on Proposition 1:

- Places our children's education in the hands of local school boards rather than in the hands of the unions.
- Phases out "tenure." Tenure inhibits the school boards' ability to take corrective action on poorly performing teachers.
- Limits all collective bargaining agreements (with unions) to 1 year and requires all labor negotiations to be in open meetings rather than behind closed doors as they were in the past.
- Prior to this legislation, teachers were the only government employees to receive an \$18,000 bonus when they retired. Proposition 1 eliminates that one-time bonus. But Proposition 2 replaces it with annual bonuses that will far exceed the one-time \$18,000 bonus. However, teachers will receive these new bonuses based on performance much earlier in their careers and they do not have to wait for retirement to receive them.
- Requires parental input to be part of a teacher's and principal's job evaluation.
- Requires that 50% of a teacher's job evaluation be based on student achievement.

Important:

Tenure does not go away immediately. No current teachers lose tenure. All teachers will keep the tenure that they now have. But the concept of tenure will be phased out over time for new teachers, allowing school boards to reward better teachers and to ask more from teachers who are below standard.

VOTE YES on Proposition 2:

- Introduces pay-for-performance to reward effective teachers.
- Teachers will continue to be paid their salaries based on the number of years they have taught and their level of education. (Nothing changes with their current salaries or how they are calculated.) But in addition to their current pay, teachers will be eligible to earn an additional bonus of up to \$8,000 per year depending on their school's performance each year.
- Provides three ways to earn additional bonuses: 1) teach in a school that shows student academic growth; 2) teach in a hard-to-fill position; or 3) take on a leadership role. Teachers can earn one, two or all three bonuses.
- Actual bonus qualifications are determined by each local school board.
- These pay-for-performance bonuses are already fully funded with 38 million dollars for teachers without increasing any taxes.

Important:

1. **85% of all Idaho teachers qualified for bonuses this past school year. The average is approximately \$2,000 per teacher. Many teachers will receive an \$8,000 bonus. Over \$38 million is in the bank ready to be paid out. But the union has blocked payment of these bonuses. Because the union has placed Proposition 2 on the ballot, these bonuses cannot legally be paid unless voters pass Proposition 2.**
2. *Prior to Idaho's implementation of this pay-for-performance plan, all teachers were paid the same. For example: If I am the best teacher in my school district and I have taught 8 years and have a master's degree, I make the same amount as the most ineffective teacher in my district who has taught 8 years and has a master's degree. Those rules prevented school districts from rewarding and retaining their most effective teachers, causing school districts to lose many of their best teachers each year.*
3. *The unions hate Proposition 2 because it significantly increases teacher pay without union control. For decades, union bosses have convinced teachers that they would never receive a raise without union involvement. Union bosses fear that when teachers learn that states are willing to pay teachers more without union pressure, the union will become obsolete.*

VOTE YES on Proposition 3:

- Brings all classrooms in Idaho into the 21st century by providing teachers and students with the latest technology in every classroom.
- Every student in grades 9 to 12 will be provided a laptop in class. Security regarding laptops and other technology in the classroom will be determined by local school districts under the guidance of local school boards.
- All students can earn up to 36 college credits (equivalent to one year of college) before graduating from high school, all paid for by the state, saving parents and families thousands of dollars in college expenses.
- In addition, beginning in the year 2016, before a student will be able to graduate, he or she will be required to take at least two credits of distance (online) or blended learning sometime in their high school career. These two courses will be taken at school, during the school day, in a classroom with a teacher.

Important:

1. *This technology will provide an equal opportunity for all children, regardless of their family's financial status, to become proficient in the latest technology, allowing them to be competitive in college and in the workplace.*
Prior to this legislation, where children lived in Idaho determined the quality of the education they received, because of insufficient funding in some school districts.
2. *Laptops are not replacing teachers, but they are replacing textbooks, calculators, word processors, and computer labs. This saves millions of dollars per year. This proposition makes every classroom in every Idaho school a world-class learning environment. No longer will students have to wait their turn for the computer lab. Now all teachers will have the necessary tools to learn and teach in a 21st century environment.*
3. *Union bosses are trying to scare teachers and misinform the public by suggesting that this is an unfunded mandate and that someday teachers will be replaced by computers. Neither premise is true. This legislation is fully funded by the savings the computers produce each year and by other efficiencies. No teachers are being replaced.*



This ad was paid for by Melaleuca. A logical question would be why Melaleuca (or any other company) would be interested in education reform. The answer is simple. Melaleuca hires over 500 new Idaho employees every year. At any one time Melaleuca has dozens of unfilled high-paying positions because there are not enough qualified people to fill them. Better education would make a world of difference to Melaleuca and to the young people we hire.

Vote "Yes!" ON PROPS 1, 2, & 3!