



northwest professional educators

RESPONSE TO TEACHER UNION ATTACKS

Teacher Union Remarks About:	Teacher Union Remarks About:	NWPE Response
<p>Idaho Education Association</p> <p>Founded 1892.</p>	<p>Northwest Professional Educators / Association of American Educators</p> <p>NWPE founded in State of Washington in 2001.</p>	<p>Northwest Professional Educators</p> <p>Correct. NWPE, an affiliate of the Association of American Educators (AAE), was founded by a grassroots movement of educators desiring a professional association that focused on students as teachers' highest priority and advancing educators as academic professionals. After ten years of unsuccessfully trying to hold union spending accountable to members and campaign finance laws, these educators collaborated with the AAE to form NWPE, a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional association for educators in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. NWPE's dues are not contributed to political candidates, parties, or spent on political activities advancing noneducation issues. NWPE dues are a fraction of the cost of union dues.</p>
<p>Funded by member dues. The National Education Association contributed over \$657,000 to Idaho educators in 2003-04.</p>	<p>No funders who believe in public education. NWPE gets its money from out-of-state organizations who are pro-privatization, anti-public education and anti-labor . . . including the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation which financed research for <i>The Bell Curve</i>, the controversial book that attempted to link intellect to race.</p>	<p>False. NWPE is funded through membership dues, grants, and loans from the AAE Foundation. The AAE Foundation has received some of its funding from public charitable foundations that wish to see significant improvement in the public education system. These same sources also oppose monopoly labor unions, forced dues, and exclusive collective bargaining representation. NWPE supports educators' collective bargaining rights—including the right and opportunity to belong to a "local only" (non-NEA) teachers union. For more information refuting or clarifying union statements about NWPE, please see www.nwpe.org/answering union.htm.</p>

The latest anti-NWPE missive notes the AAE receiving funding from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation which also financed research for the controversial book *The Bell Curve*. This is an obvious attempt to paint the AAE as a racist organization. This is also a common union tactic to affix "guilt" by association.

First of all, as public records show, the Bradley Foundation funds a lot of university research and researchers, and as a charitable organization cannot dictate or influence the results of that research. In this instance, Harvard professor Charles Murray, whose previous book *Losing Ground* (which argued that government programs to help the poor did more harm than good), caused quite a stir with the research and conclusions published in *The Bell Curve*.

Shortly after publication, large numbers of people rallied both to criticize and defend the book. Positive reviews were issued by *Newsweek*, *Forbes*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, and *New York Times* which said the book "makes a strong case." Criticism came from many scholars across the political spectrum such as Howard Gardner at Harvard, Michael Hout at Cal Berkeley, and economist and conservative writer Thomas Sowell.

The controversy was so intense that the American Psychological Association established a special task force to publish an investigative report on the research and came to this non-definitive conclusion: "It is sometimes suggested that Black/White differential in psychometric intelligence is partly due to genetic differences...at present, no one knows what causes this differential."

In any event, to tie the AAE to an unrelated author of a controversial book written before the AAE was formed is willfully misleading.

AAE Advisory Board Member Dr. Thomas Fleming, a National Teacher of the Year and an African-American can assure anyone who is interested in the truth, that the AAE is not a racist organization.

		<p>The Bradley Foundation funds the AAE because they agree with our leadership that militant monopoly unionism is preventing teachers from receiving the respect and reward they deserve.</p>
	<p>No Transparency — In addition to secrecy about its funding, NWPE shares nothing about its members, provides little opportunity for input, and holds no membership meetings.</p> <p>NWPE gets its money from out-of-state organizations who are pro-privatization, anti-public education and anti-labor. They include the Walton Family Foundation, Jaquelin Hume Foundation and the John M. Olin Foundation.</p>	<p>NWPE guards the privacy of our members scrupulously. We do not share their names unless they have given us permission to do so.</p> <p>For the record on funding, according to the Media Transparency website, the John M. Olin Foundation gave most of its money to promote admittedly "conservative" programs in the country's most prestigious colleges and universities before it went defunct in 2005.</p> <p>According to publicly accessible IRS documents, the Walton Family Foundation is one of the largest supporters of <u>public</u> schools in America. The fact that Wal-Mart Corporation employees are not <i>unionized</i> is the real reason the WEA/IEA attempts to paint the Walton Family Foundation as "anti-public education."</p> <p>The spurious information in the WEA/IEA anti-NWPE flyer also says the Association of American Educators is "secretive about its funding" and "provides little opportunity for input" from its members. Yet, in the same flyer the WEA/IEA is detailing some of AAE's Foundation donors. Where did they get that information? From the openly accessible and detailed public record of AAE's finances! So much for the "no transparency" claim by the WEA/IEA.</p> <p>And regarding the "little opportunity for input" claim, the AAE conducts frequent surveys of its entire membership on educational issues, such as NCLB, and presents those results to Congress and the media.</p> <p>Additionally, NWPE has surveyed its members on a number of issues and has refrained from taking positions when the membership did not reach NWPE's 75% supermajority vote requirement prior to taking a position on an education issue.</p>

<p>Members belong to the local, state & national associations</p>	<p>Members belong to out-of-state organizations; no locals exist; No on-site representation — This group is not recognized as a bargaining agent by any school district in Idaho.</p>	<p>Not relevant. NWPE members belong to a regional association focused on providing exceptional services. Members need not go through a local teacher or committee in order to obtain independent legal services—thus ensuring service without conflicts of interest. Members may use the attorney of <i>their choice</i> for job protection issues. NWPE is not a union and does not seek to become a bargaining agent. NWPE bylaws prohibit it from bargaining. However, NWPE supports teachers’ collective bargaining rights including the right to form local only bargaining units free from NEA/IEA dues. NWPE can support local bargaining members with legal services, liability insurance, and referrals to bargaining and insurance experts. Teachers may be interested to know that there is research which suggests that union bargaining may actually harm teacher interests. See www.teacherspet.com/Library/study.pdf and www.nwpe.org/PDF/Open_Letter.pdf.</p>
	<p>No staff with pure intentions — Cindy Omlin, NWPE’s executive director and its ONLY staff person, is a former Washington state teacher who for 10 years has been working to limit public school employees’ rights on issues that affect their profession.</p>	<p>Cindy Omlin is a former speech-language pathologist who helped found NWPE after working within the union as a representative and participant in the WEA Leadership Academy. Unable to bring about change due to union rules that members may not access union spending records, she helped organize nonunion teachers to bring a class action lawsuit challenging the union’s spending claims. She also helped pursue government and private action on union campaign finance violations that resulted in the WEA paying the largest fines for such violations in state history. She also helped support nonunion teachers’ fight to protect their free speech rights not to fund politics with which they object with their mandatory union fees. This struggle resulted in <i>Davenport v. Washington Education Association</i> which was decided 9-0 in favor of nonunion teachers rights by the United States Supreme Court. See www.teachers-vs-union.org/.</p> <p>In addition to Omlin, NWPE members are supported by a cadre of AAE member service professionals, researchers, and education analysts.</p>

	No collective voice for public education.	NWPE is a member of the Idaho Education Coalition, has two members on the Idaho State Department of Education Professional Standards Commission, serves on the Idaho Teacher of the Year Selection Committee. Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter acknowledged NWPE's contributions to public education with the honor of a proclamation.
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Membership Features	IEA States:	NWPE-AAE States:
On-site representation of members.	Phone &/or on-site representation from a trained IEA professional director to protect you. (IEA staff handled 360 member rights cases in 2003-04.)	Members need not go through a local teacher or committee in order to obtain independent legal services. Attorneys handle members' job protection issues, not a fellow teacher. This ensures service without conflicts of interest.
Local & regional leadership.	Grassroots representation to give voice to your professional concerns & observations. (Local presidents & officers exist in virtually all school districts.)	NWPE provides members with a voice on education issues. No positions are taken without first surveying our members and receiving a supermajority (75%) of voting members. NWPE is not a union but can direct educators to resources should they wish to establish "local only" teacher bargaining units that are not financially obligated to the NEA. NWPE can provide nonbargaining support services such as liability insurance and legal services to "local only" bargaining units for reasonable cost.
Local bargaining of salaries, contracts	Grassroots negotiators, trained by IEA, to enhance your salary, insurance & working conditions. (IEA is the bargaining agent in virtually all school districts.)	Some question the effectiveness of the NEA and its affiliates on raising salaries. Some believe the current NEA unified system has compressed teacher salaries resulting in a decline in teacher quality. Since the infiltration of the teacher unions in the 1970s, "teacher pay indexed to per pupil expenditures has declined by nearly 50%." See www.nwpe.org/PDF/Open_Letter.pdf . NEA even reported in 2005, "Over the last decade, teacher salaries have remained flat, growing just 2.9 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars. Fifteen states saw real declines in average teacher salaries between the 1993-94 and 2003-04 school years, adjusted for inflation." NWPE is not a union but can direct educators to resources to establish effective "local only" teacher bargaining units that are not financially or philosophically obligated to the NEA. NWPE provides nonbargaining support services such as liability insurance and legal services to "local only" bargaining unit members for reasonable cost.

<p>Idaho in-house attorney</p>	<p>Legal advice & representation to protect your job & right to be an educator. (IEA's attorney handled 59 legal cases & advised IEA staff on numerous other member rights' cases in 03-04.)</p>	<p>Members need not go through a local teacher or committee in order to obtain legal services. Service is just an email or call away. Attorneys handle members' legal issues, not a fellow teacher. In addition to our Legal Services department, members may use the attorney of <i>their choice</i> for job protection issues. NWPE members' liability policy guarantees payment of legal fees for job protection issues. IEA excludes coverage for job protection issues and does not guarantee legal fees. NWPE's services are not based on whether the teacher's case "advances the goals and core values" of the organization as the teachers' union has stated. See www.nwpe.org/benefits.htm.</p>
<p>Money-saving benefits program</p>	<p>Financial services, insurance programs, & member discounts to save you money (See www.neamb.com & www.idahoaea.org)</p>	<p>NWPE offers a variety of benefits and discounts. These may be viewed at www.aeteachers.org/benefits.shtml. NWPE saves members money by providing superior liability/legal protection, the primary benefit of interest to most educators, and services related to advancing the professionalism of educators—not on a wide range of politics unrelated to education. (See www.nwpe.org/Unionism_Public_Education.htm and www.ichooscharity.org for information on union political spending.)</p>
<p>Professional Development</p>	<p>Workshops, seminars & conferences to address professional needs.</p>	<p>NWPE conferences focus on education issues. The NWPE Conference on Education Issues, July 23, 2005, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, included topics on 504s and IEPs, Academic Freedom, Teacher Skills that Impact Student Learning, Federal Update for Independent Educators, and Preventing and Handling Misconduct Charges. See www.nwpe.org/resources.htm. This conference was described by one attendee as "the best education conference I've attended in forty years!"</p>
<p>Lobbying in Boise & D.C.</p>	<p>Resistance to bad law & endorsement of good law through grassroots lobbying to represent your desires. (In 2004, IEA sent 94 grassroots lobbyists to the legislature.)</p>	<p>NWPE provides a voice on education issues to the state and national lawmaking bodies. NWPE dues are not diverted to lobby for controversial noneducation social and political issues that have no place in a professional organization. The IEA and NEA sued to stop Idaho's "paycheck protection" law, which would protect members from the union using their dues for politics against their will.</p>
<p>Professional Communications</p>	<p>NEA Today, IEA Reporter, IEA & NEA websites, e-mail communication during legislative session.</p>	<p>NWPE members receive monthly newsletters from the AAE and email updates providing practical education news and resources that support educators as academic professionals. See www.nwpe.org/newsletters.htm and www.aeteachers.org/newsletters.shtml.</p>

<p>Research & negotiation assistance</p>	<p>IEA & NEA's research departments to keep you & your local bargainners informed.</p>	<p>NWPE is not a union but can direct educators who want to establish "local only" bargaining units to resources where they can obtain cost effective advice and research on bargaining issues at more reasonable cost than NEA membership.</p>
<p>Negotiation & Union Services</p>	<p>IEA lobbied for the creation of the Idaho Professional Negotiation Law in the early 1970s. IEA provides collective bargaining training, school budget workshops, and assistance to Association negotiation teams.</p>	<p>NWPE is not a union but can direct educators wanting "local only" bargaining units to experts on bargaining issues. For options to the mandatory NEA unified union structure, see the Unionism in Public Schools articles posted at www.nwpe.org/viewpoints.htm.</p>
<p>Participatory decision making: annual assembly in Idaho & nationally</p>	<p>Grassroots democracy in action to represent your best thinking about our professional & organization.</p>	<p>Union democracy cannot exist because the union does not inform membership of how the dues are spent. Money is power and money is speech. Without an accounting of how their dues are spent, members can have little to no influence on the union. U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao has said that vague teacher union reports "were one reason that officials of the Washington Teachers Union, who later were convicted, had been able to get away with illegal use of members' dues for "designer clothes, lavish vacations and political activity to the tune of \$5 million. The answer is simple," she said in a speech last year. "Union members have almost no access to detailed information about their unions' finances. Even the U.S. Labor Department has a difficult time getting this detailed information. Furthermore, we just don't have the resources to carefully audit all the reports the unions must file. All that has got to change." The Department of Labor successfully fought off a lawsuit by the NEA, which sought to thwart new labor reporting requirements that would disclose teacher union spending for members. See www.washtimes.com/national/20040304-111054-3279r.htm. NWPE conducts member surveys and communicates position statements on education issues only when a supermajority (75%) of voting members is achieved. NWPE does not impose a viewpoint on its members, nor does it malign or denigrate those holding diverse points of view. NWPE respects the values of its members by not diverting their dues to political activity that may violate moral, political or religious views of some members. See www.nwpe.org/yourrights.htm.</p>

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