



Northwest Professional Educators
An Affiliate of the Association of American Educators

August 23, 2006

Melissa [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Caldwell, ID 83605

Dear Melissa,

I'm sorry that you have decided not to continue your membership in Northwest Professional Educators. I do remember speaking with you numerous times throughout your membership. In one conversation I recall, I asked why you had joined NWPE because you seemed so hostile to it. You explained to me that NWPE membership was more affordable and you couldn't afford the teacher union dues. (Your recent letter notes that you, in fact, joined both.) I remember that you challenged NWPE's assertions that the teacher union supports abortion and same-sex rights and I sent you quite a bit of documentation proving the union's support for these social agendas. Upon reception of your letter, it seems to me that you may have joined NWPE with a chip on your shoulder and have been looking for ways to validate it.

Since we spoke numerous times, I believe that your characterization that you could not "get in touch" with NWPE to be unfair. In fact, if your phone calls were missed because we were assisting other members, they were promptly returned. You will remember that your emails were responded to promptly as well. Despite your assumptions, when NWPE members need legal assistance they are promptly referred to our Director of Legal Services who strives to provide definitive advice with 48 hours of the member's initial contact. Our numerous member testimonials on this excellent service run counter to your portrayal, I am happy to report.

NWPE has taken no position on the initiative to which you refer. We take positions on issues only after surveying our members and receiving a supermajority vote. It was accurate to state in the editorial that the initiative is "controversial" and it was also accurate to state that the initiative strategy to raise teacher salaries has not earned teachers "the lasting pay hikes they sought through similar measures in other states." In fact, the Washington state legislature cancelled teacher pay hikes two years after a Washington state initiative had raised the salaries. I'm sorry that felt like a slap in the face for all your hard work gaining signatures, but perhaps if you had known the information prior to signature gathering, you would have considered other strategies that might be more successful. (I do appreciate your hard work on behalf of hard-working teachers, however. Your intentions and labors are honorable.)

Northwest Professional Educators does not claim to be apolitical. We do primarily focus our efforts on advancing the professionalism of educators and providing the protections they want most without forcing them to pay for an expensive non-workplace, non-education political

agenda. NWPE *will* take positions on education issues, but as I said before, only after gaining a supermajority vote of our members on an issue.

I applaud your personal efforts in the political arena. NWPE so respects your individual rights that we are committed to never using your NWPE dues to advance political or social agendas that you may find personally objectionable. Unfortunately, the teacher union cannot make the same claim. In fact, a case regarding the Washington Education Association using dues for politics against the will of some teachers may be going to the United States Supreme Court.

We are here to assist teachers and honor their choices. For some the NEA system is a good fit. For others, NWPE is a good fit. Some teachers have joined both organizations for the myriad unique services and benefits gained through dual membership. We respect your choice and wish you all the best.

Sincerely,



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