



Rebutting WEA's Claims & Charges Regarding NWPE 2001-2002

WEA President Charles Hasse and his associates make the following claims, accusations, and innuendoes in various publications. Accurate information about NWPE is provided below to set the record straight. True educators rely on facts and recognize propaganda for what it is.

- ❖ [“. . . our members have full and open access to the minutest details of our budget.”](#)

No member has access to WEA's budget details. It took the *courts* to force the WEA to open their financial books. When they did, they were convicted of violating the law. Thurston County Superior Court Judge Gary Tabor issued a “guilty” verdict and doubled the fines against the WEA for what he characterized as *intentional* violations in the union's use of mandatory teacher dues and fees for politics.

- ❖ [WEA is devoted to “openness” and “democratic decision-making.”](#)

There can be no democratic decision-making without full and open disclosure of WEA spending, the true test of its priorities. Without this information members are powerless to make change within. They are victims of the controlled information that the WEA feeds them. When teachers have tried to discuss the union's illegal spending with union representatives, they were told to be quiet and threatened with a lawsuit if the issue wasn't dropped. This is hardly an environment of openness and democracy. Many NWPE members and founders are former union representatives, officers, and negotiators who have worked on countless union committees and attended WEA leadership training. After years of loyal work, they have concluded that WEA democracy is a sham.

- ❖ [“Our contributions to candidates are made with voluntary donations to a political action committee, WEA-PAC.”](#)

WEA's contributions to candidates come from WEA-PAC. However, **mandatory** dues from the general fund are used to fund **every other part of the process**, i.e., staff time spent on initiative, levy, or candidate elections; staff time spent training political activists; voter list development; polling; election-related mailings; marketing policy-related messages to the public to lay the groundwork for initiatives or legislation; fundraising for political causes; WEA-paid communication systems for regional and local union officials at their home or workplace; wages and benefits for all staff involved in organizing or combating opponents; travel, hospitality, and other expenses for all staff involved in outreach to journalists; staff time spent organizing political volunteers, etc. Funding for these political activities does not come from voluntary contributions but from the mandatory dues in the general fund.

- ❖ [“With the guidance and munificence of a right-wing political organization called the Evergreen Freedom Foundation \(EFF\), a small group of WEA detractors recently formed the Northwest Professional Educators.”](#)

The union is trying to instill fear in their membership by creating EFF as an imaginary enemy to public education. EFF is guilty only of wanting open, free and honest elections. EFF has never paid close to \$3 million in fines and penalties for breaking state campaign finance law, as has the WEA. Evergreen Freedom Foundation has provided NO financial support to NWPE. It does support the right of teachers to be free from the abuses of compulsory unionism and to have choices regarding their professional associations. NWPE's guidance and support comes from the Association of American Educators, the national professional educators' organization with which NWPE is affiliated.

- ❖ [NWPE “provides no assistance in collective bargaining, no field staff to support members and no in-house research, instructional, legal or communications staff.”](#)

NWPE membership includes the legal protection of a personal \$2 million professional liability policy. The WEA's \$1 million policy covers the organization, not the employee. This can leave members at the mercy of union discretion as to what is in *its* best interests. The NWPE policy *guarantees* attorney's fees for job protection issues; the WEA's does not. Additionally, NWPE members have access to attorneys in our Legal Services Department. NWPE does not need the heavy staffing of the WEA as it is not engaged in promoting an extensive social and political agenda unrelated to education. That is why NWPE dues are *only* \$169 while union dues generally run \$700-800 or more. Check our website at <http://www.nwpe.org/membertestimonials.htm> for what NWPE members think about member support.

- ❖ [Those who oppose the union's tactics and political activities are “foes of public education and opponents of the collective rights of union members.”](#)

These accusations are laughable. Northwest Professional Educators is made up of *public school teachers and staff!* We're also accused of being against higher wages! Sheesh!

NWPE is not against collective bargaining, but it is against abuse of mandatory collective bargaining fees for non-education political activities which violate employees' political, moral, and religious beliefs.

The NEA/WEA isn't as successful in improving salaries and working conditions as they make out. Educator and niece of Martin Luther King, Jr., Alveda King, notes that, "Much of the 'union dues' teachers pay doesn't have anything to do with negotiating contracts or other services . . . Teacher pay has barely moved up for a generation. From 1970 to 1995, when adjusted for inflation, the mean teacher salary actually declined by a little more than 1 percent. And it was in the early 70s that the unions infiltrated the teaching trade." Yet, overall education spending has boomed. King adds, "Had the NEA and AFT simply kept our share of the education pie where it was in 1970, then today, the average teacher salary would exceed \$65,000."

AAE does not oppose bargaining; it simply is not a bargaining agent. AAE is, however, anti-exclusive representation, anti-forced dues, and anti-monopoly bargaining. This system is not helping education or educators! AAE and NWPE support teacher choice!

Some independent local education associations offer collective bargaining for a mere \$150-\$200 compared to the \$700-\$800 charged by affiliates of the WEA and NEA.

Maligning those who question or oppose union priorities or philosophy is standard fare for the union. Those who don't fall in line are targeted for punishment, disrespect and religious bigotry. Teachers and others with opposing viewpoints are vilified as "dunces," "cranks," "religious fanatics" and dangerous "right wing extremists" set on censorship and tearing down public schools.

❖ "NWPE is not a recognized bargaining agent."

This is actually true! NWPE is not a union nor does it plan to become one. We encourage educators to exercise their rights to collectively bargain, including the right to establish their own local only teacher unions (LOTU) for bargaining and contract maintenance. Like police who organize local only unions in order to keep bargaining fees economical and accountable to local members, educators can also choose this option. Like police, they can join an optional statewide professional organization such as NWPE for professional services such as liability insurance with job protection benefits, professional development, etc.

The WEA claims NWPE is not a recognized bargaining agent. Yet, when NWPE seeks to distribute information to teachers' mailboxes as other nonprofit, nonunion educator organizations are allowed, e.g., Phi Delta Kappa, WEA threatens districts with unfair labor practice complaints by claiming that NWPE *is a union or might become one!*

❖ "NWPE supports anti-gay policies in schools."

False. WEA provides no documentation for this outrageous claim because there is none.

❖ "NWPE claims no political involvement, but testified against the anti-bullying bill."

Northwest Professional Educators has never claimed that it would not be involved in politics. NWPE has claimed that it would be involved in *education issues only* – not controversial non-education social agendas. Positions are taken on education issues only after surveying our members and receiving a *supermajority* vote.

❖ NWPE's parent organization, "the Association of American Educators, propounds the views of Milton Friedman, the architect of the controversial school privatization movement."

False. The AAE has *never* lobbied for vouchers. Positions on education issues are taken only when member surveys indicate a super majority (75 percent) of members is for or against a position. At present, AAE membership is about evenly divided on the merits of vouchers. Unlike the teachers' union, AAE is open to discussing all points of view.

❖ "AAE leadership is also linked to extremist efforts to end all government involvement in schools."

Wrong! Unlike the NEA and AFT, the AAE seeks more involvement and help from parents and local communities and state departments rather than the federal government. AAE believes the schools and their administration, instructional services, and curriculum should be primarily accountable to the parents and taxpayers of the local communities they serve.

❖ AAE "has strong ties to anti-union groups such as the National Right to Work Foundation."

AAE has received no funding from any such organizations. As a professional educators' association, AAE supports the rights of teachers, but our members are more concerned about our children's right to a good education than they are with just their own benefits.

❖ "Televangelist Pat Robertson is a prominent AAE supporter."

AAE is in no way affiliated with, associated with, or funded by Focus on the Family or the Christian Coalition. Many people support our mission to be focused on students, accountable to educators, committed to the community, ethical, responsible, and professional. Does WEA disagree with that?

❖ "NWPE advocates for adding religious teachings to school curriculum" while "WEA advocates for separation of church and state."

NWPE supports academic freedom to teach about "the religious heritage and diversity of the United States" as well as "the historical and cultural influences of various world religions." (So does the NEA according to Resolution I-26.)