

Progressive Point

National News Updates
from AFT Progressive Caucus



Volume 2, Issue 2

November 2015

Progressive Caucus: Turning the Tide in Support of Unions

President Randi Weingarten Speaks On Charter Schools in NYT/Huff Post Article

Writing in *the New York Times* and *the Huffington Post*, President Randi Weingarten shed light last week on differences among charter schools.

Some charters are unionized, yet most are not. Using public funds to play by private rules, many of these schools have segregated America's most vulnerable students—urban kindergartners, children with disabilities, and English language learners—while further alienating teachers and communities.

The privatization of public education has led many charters to inflate their test scores—and their brands—at the expense of children and taxpayers.

"Some charter schools reportedly 'counsel out' or expel students just before state testing day," Randi writes. "Recent exposés revealed that the Success Academy Charter Schools chain has suspended or expelled children as young as kindergartners—often for minor infractions—at a rate seven times higher than elementary students in New York City's public schools."

[At one Success Academy location, an official "Got to Go" list named 16 of these vulnerable students.](#)

Meanwhile, Randi adds, "a new report revealed more than \$200 million in fraud, waste and mismanagement in the 15 states examined of the 43 states that allow charters. The U.S. Department of Education this fall awarded \$71 million for charter schools to Ohio—whose charter schools are notorious for financial and ethical scandals and academic results that lag far behind traditional public schools—prompting an outcry from the state auditor. Federal officials have since placed restrictions on the funds."

[Click here](#) for the Huffington Post article, which includes links to more details.

Friedrichs v. CTA – President Weingarten Co-Writes Amicus Brief on Landmark Case

Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association is a direct attack against unions and their members, for whom we negotiate job security, pensions, and fair pay—and for the success and basic safety of our students. "Fair share" is

the amount that non-members must currently pay to the Union for benefits they receive that the union has secured for them, and is the basis for this case.

FRIEDRICHS v. CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

A bad decision from the U.S. Supreme Court could limit working people's ability to negotiate better wages, benefits and working conditions.

Higher wages. Better benefits. Workplace safety.

Union workers earn \$207 more per week than nonunion workers.

Unions make communities stronger by advocating for smaller class sizes for our children and better patient-to-staff ratios in our hospitals.

So what is this case really about?

Greedy CEOs and wealthy special interest groups want to manipulate economic rules in their favor and make it even harder for our public servants—our teachers, firefighters and nurses—to speak up together and fight for what's good for our families.

AMERICA'S ECONOMY IS ALREADY OUT OF BALANCE. A BAD DECISION HERE WILL MAKE IT WORSE.

#WorkTogether

The America Works Together graphic explains the case.

This month, the AFT and the American Association of University Professors joined together to file a “friend of the court” brief. The Supreme Court may hear *Friedrichs* as early as January, and this brief will empower us to address the court directly.

President Randi Weingarten co-wrote the brief. “If the court overturns 40 years of precedent,” she says, “it will be much harder for unions to do this vital work. When working people can speak up together, our children are better off.”

For the full brief, [click here](#).

Friedrichs has the backing of the Center for Individual Rights. The center, funded by the Koch Brothers, has spent millions in a campaign against unions—and Lacy Barnes, a college professor and Progressive Caucus member, is standing up to fight back.

“Corporate CEOs and the wealthy special interests cannot stop us from banding together and forming unions,” Lacy writes. If you agree—and if you’re not one of the 17,000 who’s already signed her petition—[click here](#).

For updates on the Supreme Court case, follow #WorkTogether on Twitter.

ESEA Reauthorization Moves Forward

Progressive Caucus members have been speaking proactively for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA).

Daniel Santos Retweeted

Texas AFT @TexasAFT · Nov 19

Finally a finish for #ESEA revamp and good bye to #NCLB ? Let's hope so for #txed texasaft.org/end-seems-nigh...

The End Seems Nigh at Last for the No Child Left Behind Act

A House-Senate conference committee of the U.S. Congress agreed today on a comprehensive rewrite of the No Child Left Behind Act that is likely L...

This week, a bicameral, bipartisan conference committee agreed on a framework to reauthorize ESEA. The framework will usher in a system focused on teaching and learning in public education, increased local control, and federal funding to level the playing field for all of our nation’s children. Stay tuned for House and Senate votes in early December.

Mary Cathryn Ricker: “I Am an Unafraid Educator”



Kudos to Vice President Mary Cathryn Ricker on her wonderful piece, “I Am an Unafraid Educator.” The article makes a significant statement, reminding all of us to support undocumented students: to “step forward to say enough with the xenophobic rhetoric that drives fear in the hearts and minds of our most vulnerable students.”

“Today,” she adds, “we are stepping forward to combat the vitriol too often heard in the debate on immigration with a new immigration story — one that says: Every child has a place in our public schools, our classrooms and our hearts. To read more, [click here](#).

Across the Country ...

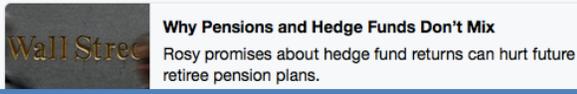
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers – There Should Be One Counselor in Every School for the Children

Congratulations to the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, union president Jerry Jordan, on their legal win with the School District over seniority and counselor staffing levels. Judge Linda A. Carpenter supported an arbitrator's 2013 decision that the District was in violation of the union contract in ignoring seniority when recalling laid-off counselors. According to President Jordan, nearly 40 of the counselors who were laid off in 2013 were not recalled. Judge Carpenter agreed with the arbitrator's determination that the PFT contract necessitated each school to have at least one counselor on staff. Jerry Jordan stated that he was "delighted with Judge Carpenter's decision that clearly there should be one counselor in every school for the children...I think that this is a big victory for the children. I hoped that her ruling would be the end of this, and that the counselors would be restored to the schools."

See -

http://articles.philly.com/2015-11-14/news/68253936_1_counselors-pft-contract-philadelphia-federation

Progressive Caucus Taps Into Twitter

Lorretta Johnson @LorrettaJohnson · 23h
Hedge funds looting public pensions. Has to stop. nytimes.com
/2015/11/20/opi...


David Quolke @CTU279 · Nov 11
Hats off to John Dorotics and @WillsonSchool staff. Strong public schools create strong communities!@CleFoodBank


Mary Cathryn Ricker Retweeted
Workday Minnesota @workdaymn · 18h
Ricker: We must fight rhetoric of hate, champion comprehensive immigration reform @mcricker @EducationMN @aft


Mary Cathryn Ricker Retweeted
Dan Montgomery @DanJMontgomery · Nov 14
@rweingarten nails it in opening spch: We'll succeed when we engage all @AFTunion members @iftaft @mcricker @KarenLewisCTU


Mary Cathryn Ricker @mcricker · Nov 14
Fabulous welcome & lessons by @KarenLewisCTU & @DanJMontgomery to launch inspiring Great Lakes #AFTallin by @rweingarten. #1u #reclaimit

phyllis young murray @cybrarian75x · Oct 24
#UFT LeRoy Barr on receipt of the Parkchester NAACP's President's Award. Congratulations! @LBUFT


Fedrick Ingram @fedingram · Nov 14
763 bills filed already in the FI Legislature SMH @UTD_AFT1974 @BetterschoolsFL @ioannefea @lafynt1000 expected by the start of session


Stephanie Ly Retweeted
Jessica Smith @jechsmith · Oct 25
. @LorrettaJohnson w/ @SnteNacional @AFTunion: Together we fight those who divide our kids into winners and losers.


Melissa Cropper @mccropper1 · Nov 14
Every single one of our children deserve a chance to live up to their potential. That's what we should be working towards. @HillaryClinton


Jeff Freitas @jeff_freitas · 2h
It's time to stop corporate CEOs from manipulating the rules to benefit themselves over others. Sign the petition petitions.moveon.org/aft/sign/cente...


Viri Pettersen @mmpetter - Nov 14
@HillaryClinton fights for working families. Glad she's fighting to raise wages! #DemDebate #AFTeam #AFT4Hillary #ImWithHer


Twitter Users: Follow

Lorretta @LorrettaJohnson

Randi @rweingarten

Mary Cathryn @mcricker