NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS CONVENTION

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SPEECH BY: (UNEDITED)

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MR. SHANKER: Thank you, Tom, fellow Delegates.

There are speeches that -- and articles that
end with footnotes, and I want to begin mine
with a footnote. It's not part of -- part of
the main body of my statement, but it's important
that the one point made by the Governor, and by
our Commissioner of Education be underlined
because of the importance. Before the Congress
of the United States there will soon be legisla-
tion which will propose reform of our tax
structure. We are not necessarily opposed to
reforming the tax structure. As a matter of
fact, for the most part, we support the provisions
that are being talked about. But one of those
would be very devastating, and that is that
under the proposal taxpayers could no longer take
the taxes that they pay for their school
districts, their local communities, or the State
of New York and deduct them on their Federal
income tax. So, each taxpayer would now take
a look at the end of the year and notice that
instead of paying sixty percent or fifty percent
of what they're actually paying here, they would
be paying one hundred percent.

The loss to New York State is especially great. The loss to education, elementary, secondary, and higher education, would be two point one billion dollars a year. The loss to elementary and secondary education alone would be one point six billion dollars a year, which amounts to a loss of five hundred and eighty-eight dollars for every child.

The loss to the State altogether would be six point five billion dollars. So the impact would not be on education alone, but on health services, on all public services and public employees.

It is very important that this be a major campaign on our part with the members of Congress in this State. Tax reform is popular. And we can be sure that anybody who opposes one provision or another will be immediately labeled as being part of a special interest and opposing overall reform. We're going to make it clear that we do not oppose overall reform, but that this particular item would be devastating not
only to our State, but to education and public services all across the country.

That's the end of the footnote.

I want to devote my time here this morning in a discussion of what I believe ought to be a major turning point in education in this country and the role that this Union, both at the local, State, and the National level, ought to play in that major change. And essentially, I'm going to be expanding on and dealing with the concept of professionalism. And over the years I should say that along with many of you, whenever I heard the word, professional, it sort of made me sick to my stomach because when I was in high school and I was in college, the word professional always brought with it feelings of occupations with great respect and dignity, usually well compensated.

When I started teaching I had somewhat different experiences with that word. I can remember the first time I started teaching in an elementary school on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. I was not prepared for teaching.
I was one of the many who came in as a regular substitute. I wasn't prepared for the problems I faced. I used to think back what school was back when I was in classes and it was nothing like that. And I waited a few days and a few weeks, hoping that the Principal would come in or an Assistant Principal would come in to give me some pointers to help me out. And finally the door did open and there was the Assistant Principal. And I don't know whether I physically welcomed him into the classroom, asked him to come in, or whether that was in my mind, but he didn't come in. He just stood there with the door open and his arm was outstretched and his finger was pointing into the room. And it seemed like twenty minutes, but it was probably just twenty seconds, and finally he said to me:

Mr. Shanker, there are several pieces of paper on the floor there in the third aisle; that's very unprofessional. If the Superintendent should come by, he wouldn't like that.

So, that was the first definition of the word professional that I got. A few days later
I went to my first faculty conference and they handed out the organization sheet, the list of teachers with room numbers and various assignments. This was an elementary school, and there weren't many men teaching in the elementary school in those days, and I was the second male in the school. And as I looked over at the duty chart, I noticed that the two males were listed for snow patrol. And the tradition in this school was that the male teachers, whenever it snowed, gave up their lunch hour and walked around the school and asked the children to stop throwing snowballs at each other. The other male teacher raised his hand and was called upon; he asked the principal, and he said: Look, now that there are two of us in the school, couldn't we rotate the snow patrol; you know, he goes Monday, I go Tuesday, et cetera. And the principal looked at him and said: That is a very unprofessional question.

Well, I was sitting there trying to think about what was unprofessional about the question. And first the principal said: Now, in the
first place, the duty schedule has already been rectographed. And secondly, this shows that you clearly are not interested in the health and safety of our children because one child might hit another child in the eye with a snowball and he could be blinded for life.

So, that was the second definition. Then there was a third a few years later when a teacher in Mt. Kisco, New York, James Warley, who had an excellent reputation in the school, came to school, as all the teachers did, a few days before the students and went to a faculty conference. And the new Principal of the school ordered Mr. Warley to submit -- and all the teachers in the school -- to be real professionals; to show how dedicated they were; to show they were willing to sacrifice for the students. He ordered all the teachers to prepare lesson plans one year in advance. All the teachers, with the exception of Mr. Warley, obeyed orders and did it. So, they were viewed as being professional. That's -- you know, that sense of the word professional is about the closest
thing to a propped up dead person as you can possibly imagine. It just means, you know, don't use your head, follow orders, do what you're told. But James Warley refused. He said: Look, I'm an outstanding teacher, look in my file. I've been here with five or six different Principals and they've all rated me as being one of the best teachers in the district. And I'm willing to submit all kinds of essays and plans and records -- I'm not lazy -- I work hard, but I'm not going to do something which everybody knows is unprofessional and that is to tell you right now what I'm going to be doing seven or eight months from now at ten o'clock in the morning.

So, James Warley was fired. And his firing was upheld by the State Commissioner at that time and by the Courts, and James Warley lost his job.

Now, of course, he was the real professional. He was not incompetent; the Principal was the real incompetent. But the issue at stake was not really one of professionalism. The
issue was insubordination.

And we still have a situation throughout the country today where written in the laws the insubordination overrides is more important than the issue of professionalism. It is not a question of what is the right thing or the wrong thing to do; it's a question of who has the power to tell us what to do. And so, clearly, we're not at this point professionals.

Now, we need a new revolution in education. We made one some years ago; teachers were very disorganized. They had very little power, and through collective bargaining and through organization we have accomplished a great deal. But let's take a look and we'll see that not all is right.

Public education is still in great trouble. At this very moment there is a tuition tax credit and deduction bill on the floor of the Senate of the State of New York and the star which is on it could be removed at any moment. And it could move, and it could pass, and it could become law in this State. And as in the
State of Minnesota, it would just be the beginning.
next year the issue would be that the tax credit
isn't large enough, and that would be the annual
fight before the Legislature.

We're still in trouble because public
opinion polls continue to show that a large
segment of the American public, which would be
a majority, gives the schools a poor mark. The
reasons for that are not always good reasons.
The interesting thing is that the one thing
that divides those people who give the schools
a good mark from those that give it a bad mark
is that anybody who has actually physically set
foot in a school within one year of being asked
the question says the schools are pretty good
because they've actually seen them. Whereas
those who have not set foot in the schools say
the schools are pretty bad because all they hear
about schools are what they read in the news-
papers or watch on television, and generally
bad news makes news a lot more than good news
does.

But, nevertheless, we have public opinion to
contend with, and in a Democratic society that's very important because political figures listen to what people think.

The scores on all sorts of tests, while they've bottomed out and gone up slightly, are still quite low and the public is quite unhappy with them. And the various reforms that have been put into place to improve education; I believe many of them will improve education, but we know that scores don't go up in one or two or three or four years. Students who are now sixteen and seventeen years old are unlikely to move -- change their school habits and change their learning habits and have their scores go up. Most of the improvements will take place years from now as we start with kindergarten and pre-kindergarten and first and second graders; the results will be seen years from now. But the political agenda doesn't coincide with the educational agenda. If the politician doesn't get results in two years or four years, then programs are generally deemed to be failures.

In addition to the -- and I could cite
other instances -- one of the most important
reasons for citing the fact that we're in great
trouble is the very great dissatisfaction
across the country among teachers. The number
of teachers who say that if they had to do it
again, they would not. The number of teachers
who say that they would not advise their own
children to go into teaching.

Now, we have a mechanism, a good one,
collective bargaining. And we have to ask
ourselves whether collective bargaining, which
I am certainly not proposing that we abandon;
I'm proposing that we continue it -- but we have
to ask whether collective bargaining will get
us where we want to go. Certainly through
collective bargaining we have increased
teachers' salaries; we have limited class size;
we have taken away some of the non-teaching
chores; we have given teachers power politically
to be a voice in their communities and in the
country. But if you go back to the time when
we started getting into collective bargaining,
and if you did what I did at that time -- and
I'm sure that you did -- you listened to teachers very carefully. You went around to a lot of lunchtime meetings and after-school meetings, and you made lists of all the things that teachers wanted. And I know that in New York City we had initially compiled a list of about eight hundred items. And some of these were salary increases and class sizes, but many of those things had to do with professional issues, things that different groups of teachers -- math teachers or English teachers or teachers in physical education and others wanted in order to make their professional lives more satisfying.

And as we got to the bargaining table we found some -- we found that Boards of Education took a very interesting position. We thought that they would resist the salary demands and that they would be very open to discussion of ways of restructuring and reorganizing the schools so teachers would be happier and children would be better. But quite the opposite was the case. The School Board said: You're a union; anything that's good for teachers, we'll be happy to talk
about that, if it has to do with salaries or working conditions; but we will not talk to you about anything that's good for children because you're not elected to represent the children; you're not their collective bargaining agents, and professional issues are not subject to negotiations. And there we were.

Many of the things that we wanted to deal with, we could not deal with at the bargaining table. So, we have moved from being a group of weak, disorganized and unorganized employees to being a group of strong unionized employees with substantial power. We've made substantial improvements, but still fall short of the professionalism that our members wanted then and still want today.

And so, if we were to achieve that professionalism, we have to take a step beyond collective bargaining; not to abandon it, but to build on it; to develop new processes, new institutions, and new procedures which will provide us with the things that our members want: Namely, in addition to the things we
get from collective bargaining, status, dignity, a voice in professional matters. And by professional, I don't mean the word as used when I was teaching in school and the way in which it's used frequently today. A professional is not a person who just follows orders. A professional is not a person who is really a propped up dead person. A professional is a person who is an expert, and by virtue of his or her expertise is permitted to operate pretty independently; is permitted to make decisions; is given a good deal of discretion; is generally not supervised by somebody else. Nobody stands over a surgeon at the operating table telling him to cut a little to the left or to the right. The surgeon is trusted. And, of course, because of that trust and because of the high degree of expertise, they are generally well compensated.

Well, what is it? How can we get this? What are those things? I'd like to talk a little more about that because there has been a very basic change, not just in teachers in
this country, but in most people who work for a living.

I had the privilege of serving on the AFL CIO's Committee on Future Work. If you've not seen the report or read it, please do, because it is a revolutionary document. And essentially what the report tells us and what many polls in recent years tell us is that something has happened over the last thirty, forty, fifty years. If I had asked my parents: Why are you working? They would have looked at me as though I were crazy because there was only one reason that they were working and that was to feed themselves and to feed us and to provide shelter and clothing. It never dawned on them that they should be working because they had a job that they were proud of or that they enjoyed or derived satisfaction from.

Now, of course, people still have to make a living and want to, But if a pollster goes out and asks people on the street: Why are you working? The interesting thing is that in recent years the first answer is not because, I
want food and shelter; the first answer that most
people on the street give is: Because I'm able
to express various interests that I have through
my job; because I get satisfaction; because I
am respected on the job; because I do it and
I'm allowed to do it the way I think is best
and I know how to do it very well, and I like
that. And when these pollsters went out and
asked the question: Well, what do you think of
the boss? We expected, of course, that we would
get answers that were rather hostile in terms of
the relationship, but about seventy percent of
all employees who work for a living in the
United States say that their boss is a good guy,
that when they go to the boss with problems that
he or she is generally helpful. They like
working there. They think unions are very good
things for the guy working down the block who
has a lousy boss, but they don't want any -- a
union in their own place because they say -- I
can do the job the way I want, and if you have
a union, you'll develop an adversarial
relationship, and when you have an adversarial
relationship, you have union rules and you have
the employer's rules. Before you know it, I won't
be able to exercise all the judgment that I
now exercise; it would infringe on my ability
to do my job well and I couldn't get the
satisfaction that I now get.

And so, we have the problem that whereas
out there in the industrial world more and more
workers who are now educated workers are being
given -- treated with dignity and respect, but
how about teachers. Along comes school reform
in the State of California and passes a piece
of legislation, which is one hundred and fifty
pages long, telling the teachers what textbooks
to use, how many hours students should be
instructed on this subject and that subject,
just about everything you can think of.
There is no doubt that no other occupation
is regulated in this way by State legislatures.
Bright people in college who are thinking of
going into teaching will think twice because
they will say that when a legislature tells the
people what to do, everything that they have to

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do, doesn't trust them, doesn't respect their judgment, they must think that these people are incompetent or a bunch of fools. That's not the kind of field I want to go into when the legislature tells you what to do. Of course, in many places where people are hired at low salaries, you have to watch carefully and tell them what to do. If I hired people at some of the salaries we pay across the country, I'd watch them very carefully and wouldn't trust them; that's part of the overall process.

So, also more and more employees out there in the private sector don't want rules that say that they are only supposed to do this or that. They feel that they want their business to succeed. If their business succeeds, they will do better; they will have a more secure job; they will make more. And if it doesn't succeed, they will be in trouble, perhaps they will lose a job. Now, that exists more and more in the private sector. And more and more in the private sector workers are not being treated as traditional workers were. There's an interesting
story which came out within the last couple of years which deals with that change. And essentially it says that the reason that the Japanese are out-maneuvering us and are producing better products is that they treat their workers in a different way than the way that we treat our workers. We put our people out there on the assembly line and for every ten workers we have a supervisor watching them. And we fire the bad workers and we give merit pay to the good workers. And we keep producing, and then we wait until the thing is produced at the other end. And then we sell it and then we wait for the customer to find out it's a lemon. And then we bring back three hundred thousand of them and we do them all over again. Now that's a very expensive process of production. And the Japanese have worked out a way of getting it right in the first place. It's always cheaper to do it right in the first place because there's nothing more expensive than having to re-do a product.

And so, this story is a true story of an
American automobile plant, a Ford plant, that was the worst in the whole country and it was about to go out of business. And before closing it down the Ford Motor Company decided that they would introduce a program in which they would listen to the workers; they'd go around and ask the workers: What's wrong here? How can we improve the product? But they wouldn't ask them in general; they went up to each worker. For instance, they went up to one fellow who was working -- this was the place that they produce small trucks. And this worker was working in a pit. He had some sort of a tool which he lifted up every, oh, I don't know, ten seconds or fifteen seconds or twenty seconds as a new truck came by just above him on the assembly line. And he would pull the trigger on his tool and that would tighten a bolt. And then that car would go off and the next truck would come along. And one of the managers came up to him and said: Look, this place is going to close down soon unless we improve. So, you've got nothing to
lose, and I'm asking all the workers here about things that go wrong. And I want to ask you, Jack, when you try to tighten those bolts, do you ever miss? And Jack said: Yes, I do. He said: Well, how often do you miss? Well, about every six minutes or so I don't tighten one of the bolts. He said: Well, why is that? And Jack said: Well, it's a very hard job. You have to keep looking up all day and holding the tool, and I get a crick in my neck. And every once in a while I go like that (indicating), and when I go like that and I miss, as soon as I look up that truck is gone and I can't tighten it. I feel bad about it, but there's nothing I can do.

So, the manager said: Well, do you have any ideas about what we can do? He says: Yes, I do. I've been thinking about this for a long time. He said: There are really two things you can do. One is to put a little pedal under my foot so that every time I feel a crick I press the pedal and the assembly line will stop for a second and as soon as I take care of the
crick, I would tighten it. He said: Of course, it would mean that every six minutes or so the assembly line would stop for a second, but you would get all the bolts tightened.

And the second thing he said, you know, he said: Could you have me standing on top of the car holding this tool down because looking down holding it down is a lot easier and a lot more natural than looking up and holding the tool up.

Well, that's what management did. They went around to all the workers in the place and asked: Do you know when you make a mistake? And the workers said: Yes. Why did you make a mistake and what can we do about it to change it. And they went to them and they redid that entire plant in accordance with the wishes of the employees. And the result was that now they have the best plant in the entire Ford Company anywhere in the country. It's a classic case.

Now, how much of that happens in schools? When any decision is made to change anything about the organization of a school, materials,
curriculum, anything else, all those things come from legislatures, they come from school boards, they come from principals, they come from superintendents. And as long as they keep making those same mistakes, that all they've got to do is have supervisors up there watching the teachers to see who is a good teacher and who is a bad teacher; reward some and punish others. They're doing the wrong thing, because the only thing that's going to turn the schools right and get the production process going so that we don't have these failures and these lemons and these problems at the other end is the same way industry is going and that is that they have to start turning over the decision making process as to what works and what doesn't work to the people who are actually doing the work and know what's happening here.

Now, the major problem we have in the next period is how we are going to attract and keep teachers. Just a few years ago I was standing here talking about all the teachers who were out of work. Well, no more. If we
do not attract and keep good teachers, public
support will erode further and there will be
further pressures for tuition tax credits.

We will not, even if we were to get better
salaries, and even if we could get some improve-
ments in working conditions -- intelligent,
well-educated people today will not work in a
traditional type of factory, and that's what
the public schools of this country are. They
will not work in a place where they are not
trusted, where they are time clocked, where
they're supervised, where they're observed,
where they are treated as people to be pushed
around and instructed and regulated. And the
relationship essentially between professionalism
and the future of education is that we are not
going to attract good people and bright people
unless the nature of the job changes and
unless the way teachers are treated will change.

Now, what does it mean to be a professional?
I'm not going to give a dictionary definition
here, but I'm going to say first that you cannot
have a professional without having high standards.
What happens now in colleges across the country?
Johnny goes up to his professor and his
professor says: Johnny, what are you going to
be when you leave here? And Johnny says: Well,
I'm thinking about going into teaching. And
the professor says: Oh, you, you're so smart.
So, we have a problem. And when Chester Finn
was talking yesterday about the irony of the
tightening up on standards at the very time when
there is a teacher shortage looming -- and the
interesting thing that happened in California
was that as soon as they announced that there
would be a fairly tough examination to become
a teacher, more people lined up to become
teachers and they were people of better
quality than they were getting before because
people don't want to have a reputation of going
into a profession that anybody can get into.
They don't want the reputation of going into
a field where their brothers and sisters and
mothers and fathers and everyone else is going
to say: Why did he choose that, because it's
easy, because it's not demanding, because he or
she couldn't get into something else. And if you have no standards or low standards so that people who can come in can come in very easily, easy come easy go.

If I were President of the American Federation of Ex-Teachers, I would be president of a much larger organization than I'm president of now. There are more ex-teachers. Everybody's an ex-teacher out there, just follow me when I walk down the street. Everyone comes up -- why? How many ex-surgeons are there out there? How many people go through the trouble of becoming an actuary and decide to do something else? That's one issue.

Secondly, there is no profession without a well established colleagueal set of relationships. It's not a set of supervisory relationships. It's a set of relationships of equality, peer relationships. Doctors do not have the right to do anything they want to do. You don't go to a doctor and he says to you: Well, any other doctor would give you the following pills and that would take care of it,
but I don't like that, that's kind of boring; I'm going to give you something different than that and see what happens. They can't do that. Doctors are expected to act in accordance with a knowledge base and in accordance with what they're -- the way they're expected to by all of their peers on the basis of that knowledge.

Part of what we need to attract people into teaching is the development of this colleagueal set of relationships because most people do not want a job where they are to be locked in a room with twenty-five to thirty-five kids for their entire lives. There's a certain amount of satisfaction in that, but unless it is supplemented by the satisfaction that you get from a relationship with colleagues and adults and other professionals, this relationship -- the relationship with children alone, that extreme isolation that teachers suffer, drives many away from the profession and out of the classroom.

Third, there is no profession, unless it is -- unless the practitioner is seen as acting
on behalf of their -- in the interests of their clients. And here we have a problem. Collective bargaining is an adversarial proceeding and at one time we were viewed as being very powerless people. We get the flowers in our lapels every year for teacher recognition day. I used to say that it sort of resembled: "Be Kind To the Handicapped Week," and people looked at us. Well, the pendulum has swung, and they don't look at us that way any more. However, they do look at us now more and more as though we are interested only in our own self interest. Teachers want more salaries, they want the more smaller class size so their lives will be easier. They never translate that into what's good for the students. But that's a problem that's standing in the way of professionalism, and we're going to have to deal with that. We must act on behalf of our clients and have to be seen to be acting that way.

Fourth, I have touched on already; there is no profession without a knowledge base. You don't do things just because you want to do
them. I'm not saying that we should take the power away from the school boards and superintendents and principals and give the power to teachers because we're teachers and because we want more power; that isn't it at all. We ought to have it if and only if we know more about it: Teaching students, selecting textbooks, and all sorts of other questions and issues in education. And some of those things we do know and some we don't yet and ought to develop.

So, we have a decision to make. We can continue working away only at collective bargaining. And I predict that if that happens, we will find ourselves ten or fifteen years from now back at a Representative Assembly and that we will find that we have largely been on a treadmill.

Collective bargaining brought us from a low point to a point substantially higher. We must continue to engage in collective bargaining because if we don't, there is absolutely no doubt that we will fall behind. But I know that many of you have experienced in the last
five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, whatever your experience is, you get a good year and you move up a point and then that's followed by a bad period and you move down a little bit. And then you work very hard and you move up again. And then, when you look back after ten or fifteen years, for a long period of time you could work very very hard and stand still. Of course, we have to work hard, or otherwise we wouldn't stand still; we would fall behind. But there is a combination of things. There is low pay, linked to low standards, linked to no trust because you can't trust people who have been brought in on those standards and worked for low pay. And those people do have to be supervised and those people generally have low prestige. And on a national basis, that's where teachers are right now. That has to be changed, with teachers viewed as professionals and viewed as experts whose judgement can be counted on, who act on behalf of their clients, are not supervised and rated and evaluated constantly, who have a peer
relationship with other teachers.

Now, I'd like to -- I can't spell out all the things that need to be done, but I'd like to give a few outlines. One or two are familiar, and some will not be familiar, of what the next steps ought to be.

First, I proposed several months ago that there be a national teachers examination. There are such examinations for the Bar and for medicine. There are not -- I did not call for a Federal Government examination. I think that ultimately the determination ought to be controlled by teachers, just as lawyers control the Bar exams and doctors control the medical examinations. The examination should have three parts: First, a tough examination of subject matter, not the cheap type of examination, the twenty dollar kind that you score on machines, something that requires the people who are taking it to think and to write and to organize their thoughts and be able to persuade. Perhaps a second day, which is knowledge of pedagogy, educational issues, the application of
educational principals to particular problems that are presented. And the third part would be an internship program, from one to three years in which teachers would actually be evaluated on the basis of how they work with students and how they work with their colleagues and not just whether they are good at taking a pencil and paper test.

Now, the response to that speech that I gave, with the exception of the Nation at Risk Report, nothing in the last five or six years has gotten the same amount of editorial support and attention all across the country. Within a few months I believe you will see such a commission launched. But the interesting question to ask is: Why did this make headlines all across the country? Why did it receive such favorable support? Because I threw into that speech one idea, and that was that within three years after the establishment of such an examination that the AFT would refuse to accept in their membership any new teachers, newly hired, who were unable to pass the examination.
In other words, what I was saying to the general public is that we the teachers care about the quality of teachers, that we care about what happens in schools, and that we are even willing to make an organizational sacrifice in terms of not recruiting into membership or collecting dues of people who do not meet the standards. That's what got the headlines, and that's what made people believe that we were serious in that business.

The day after I gave that speech at the National Press Club, I went out to Utah where we were organizing teachers. And the morning I arrived in Utah the headlines were: Union Boss Supports Teachers Tests. And I poked around a couple of places in Salt Lake City and the next day they had a headline that said: Speaker Reiterates Support For National Test. And the third day they had a headline that said: Educator Supports Teacher Testing.

Well, you see what happened, within three days I went from being a union boss to being an educator. That's what this is all about.
It is about what our role is going to be and how the public is going to see us. So, let me then go to the second place beyond the teacher test.

I believe that we in the teacher union movement ought to support the greatest possible choice in terms of schools by parents, students, and teachers. The current system is one that was designed a long time ago when most people who sent their children to school were not educated. Most of the people in communities looked up at the teachers and principals and they were much less educated and they just accepted the authority of the government.

People aren't like that now. Students are dropping out in large numbers or not attending in many high schools which essentially shows that they're telling us something about -- they haven't decided that they want to do it, and if they don't want to do it, they won't. The greater the choice that we have in public schools, the more we can argue against tuition tax credits or vouchers.

If students can move from one school to
another, and we ought to consider the possibility of having students have the choice in some ways of moving from one district to another within the public system, it very substantially reduces the argument for giving money to parents to send their children to private schools.

    If we could turn to a parent and say: You've got a huge number of choices here in the public sector, why not take them.

    The problem that we have that other professions don't have is that in most other cases the clients of that profession are not captives. You choose the doctor you go to; you choose the lawyer you go to. You pick an accountant that you need, an actuary, or a dentist. We are different because children are assigned to your school or to you as a teacher. We ought to think about the question of why, if there is a personality dispute between the student and the teacher, why they have to be stuck with each other all year long. Why can't we have the flexibility of reducing the resentment, getting rid of the notion that people
are captives. And in talking about this question of choice, I would like to point out one thing with respect to teaching. There is a lot of talk about career ladders.

Many people don't work in places -- many people throughout this country in other fields do not work in places where there is a career ladder. The typical career person has started working for one company and he gets some experience and a good reputation and then he is stolen by some other company. They offer him a raise. And he works there for a while and establishes a reputation and moves on. And each place where he goes, he generally gets an increase in salary and perhaps a change in title and perhaps greater responsibilities.

Now, if you think about it, teaching is probably the only occupation in this country where if you move from one place to another you have to suffer for it. In most places, if you taught for fifteen years, there are no other -- no other school districts that will even give you credit for your fifteen years in service. Or they'll
give you half credit or part credit or maximum
credit of three years or six years. One of the
elements of freedom in choice ought to be for
teachers as well so that they can move around.
And we ought to point out this very negative
thing that school boards do, point it out to
the business community. I don't know of any
business that operates without trying to get
talent from other places by offering them more.

If we did that in public education, some
of our worst school districts would soon be
empty of teachers. Many teachers are captives
in their districts because they will lose all
the credit they have, and we've got to remove
that.

Third, I was thinking over the last few
weeks about what is it that we can do that
might bring about a revolution which would not
require State legislation and national
legislation and local legislation. And I would
like now to propose that we as an organization
create a professional teacher board. That
board would be made up of outstanding teachers
through some process which we would develop.

They wouldn't be the only -- outstanding teachers, there would be a number of outstanding teachers. The board would be independent -- even though initially it would be appointed by the union -- in the same sense that the Supreme Court of the United States is independent, even thought it's appointed by various presidents and most presidents have been surprised. The purpose of this professional board -- the purposes would be many, but here are some. There are a good many complaints from parents across the country. Some of those complaints might be that the teachers -- the teacher is -- we get a lot of it across the country that the teachers are teaching their own political views in the classroom and are engaging in propaganda instead of objective teaching. Or there might be a question about whether teachers should teach out of license. After all, we're saying that teachers ought to go through a rigorous examination and they ought to be very qualified in the subject matter. Well, what implication does
that have for a social studies teacher who is teaching mathematics in the future or at the present. So, this professional board would be a place -- would be an independent body which would develop standards and either members of the profession or members of the public. For instance, parents complaining about the way a specific teacher is teaching could complain to this board which would have procedures for investigation. It could set up an evaluation system for textbooks. The textbook situation now is an absolute national disgrace and scandal. Textbooks are selected by school boards who have no knowledge whatsoever of what a good textbook is. You get these trends about textbooks should have words that are shorter so that the kids can read them; and the words get so short and the sentences get so short that you can't have a story that makes any sense or that has any interest. Then they decide that these books are too dumb, so they decide to make all the words long. Then they decide that this book is no good because it does...
pictures of this or that or something else.

Well, who is there asking the question: Is it a good textbook? Can a student read it? Can a student understand it? If a student didn't understand the work in class, can he take his book home and get to understand it? What is he supposed to learn there. Are the pictures clear? Do they really illustrate the point that is supposed to be made? Are the questions concise and in the right form? Is it a good textbook?

Now, nobody is in a better position to answer that than those teachers who have studied what is good textbook. And we ought to be out there standing before school boards and Principals and Superintendents. And we ought to be looking at the books that are used in the State, not from a point of view of political content or long words or short words or the politics of different groups being represented; all that could be accomplished, but we as professional educators ought to take on the responsibility of saying that we ought to make those decisions because we have looked
at every one of these books and we are outstanding people. We ought to say: Look how terrible this book is. On page two there is a picture with a caption underneath that has nothing to do with the picture. Here's a concept they're trying to explain and nobody can understand it because it doesn't explain anything. Here are things that are written where it assumes that you learn something but what they assume you learned doesn't come until thirty pages later. We ought to be the experts who are able to stand up and say that we decide those issues because we studied them. Such a commission could set up such procedures.

Now, I would like to go beyond that to what will be very controversial, I'm sure. I believe that in order to become a professional, in order to gain the respect of the public, in order to do what really, I believe, most of our members want us to do anyway; in order to show we have the interest of our clients at heart, I believe that such a professional teacher board should have a function in addition
to the ones that I've just talked about.

If a teacher in a given school district is brought up on charges for incompetence by a Principal or a Superintendent, I believe that this board ought to select three outstanding teachers from somewhere in the state who do not know either the teacher or the supervisors involved. And that group of three should visit the teacher who is accused of being incompetent and should issue an independent report essentially having a group of peers evaluate the decision of the Principal or the Supervisor.

There is no other profession where the professionals themselves do not play a part when the question of incompetence is raised.

Now, I know that the issue of due process will be raised. Well, due process just means that the decision is not going to be made by the Principal or Superintendent or the School Board. It won't be here. The teacher still has the right to panels and to courts. But we, as the profession, ought to say: We have an interest in whether we believe that the
charges are accurate or not accurate. By the way, any Principal or Superintendent who would not allow a committee of three teachers to take a look, that would be evidence right away that that Principal or Superintendent was inventing a lot of charges and doesn't want anybody to see a very good teacher at work.

This is not peer review of teachers; it is essentially a peer review of the decision of a Principal or a Superintendent. It would have to -- the only way it could work would be if those teachers who were involved in this process are absolutely independent. The only instructions they would ever be given by the union is that they're on jury duty as professional jurors, and they are to call it as they see it as teachers and as professionals.

The fourth point I want to make is one dealing with career ladders. I don't like most career ladders that I've seen because I think most of them are phony. Most of them are just devices to try to figure out how to give a handful of people more money than others. Most
of them are sort of a cover up for merit pay. We don't like merit pay, so somebody will call it a career ladder and we'll create a bunch of categories.

I'm not opposed to career ladders in principal, if someone could come up with the notion, but I want to propose one possible career ladder that would make some sense. We have said for a good many years that we favor internships for new teachers, that no new person should be just dumped into a classroom without that kind of special help. In Toledo and in other places those internships consist of experienced and outstanding teachers who served for three years, who actually provide the internships help for the new teachers and for the probationary teachers.

Now, I would propose that one model of the career ladder might be that a substantial number of teachers would be involved in the training of new teachers and that because of the training of new teachers, and because the training of new teachers is really an obligation
of colleges and universities and schools of education, that those teachers who are selected to be teacher trainers of the probationary teachers and the interns should, in addition to having some program of teaching within their own schools, should probably have some employment status and rank with the local college or university because they are performing part of the job that that college and university performs in terms of actually training teachers. There would be a continuity between teaching in elementary and secondary schools and some of the teaching in colleges. Some of the salaries of those teachers would be paid for by the college or university. There would be, I think, a change in status for elementary and secondary schools and there would be a change in status for teachers. And I think that you would have one of the most important criticisms of colleges of education, and they are under great attack and great threat today -- one of the greatest criticisms is that people who teach in colleges of education frequently never taught in
elementary or secondary schools. So, you have a rank of people who have the theory, but who have not done this work.

Now, we need to continue to have people who have the theory and to do the research. But in addition, on the ranks within those college faculties there ought to be a substantial number of outstanding classroom teachers who are devoting a part of their time to teacher training.

Fifth, I ask that we consider a restructuring of the entire way in which educational services are delivered. And without such a consideration, we will not achieve professional status. Now I'm saying this for at least two reasons. There are two million public school teachers in this country. There is no way in which in the next five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years, with the demographics, the declining enrollment in higher education, the greater demands of more educated people by more other industries and by other government agencies; there is no way in which public education is
going to get two million people in the future of the caliber that we need in terms of the standards that we have set up. Also, if you considered the finances of it -- if you give two million teachers a one thousand dollar salary increase, that's two billion dollars. Now, a one thousand dollar salary increase doesn't do very much. Suppose we gave all the teachers a fifty percent increase in pay. That still would not make us a very well paid profession, not at all; but the cost of that would be about thirty billion dollars. Title I is about three and a half billion dollars.

Now, I know that it's nice to sit back and think about a day when two million teachers will all be earning seventy-five or eighty or ninety thousand dollars a year. It's unlikely to happen. The minute we raise salaries, let's say, for math teachers, IBM will raise salaries even more because they're not about to close down IBM plants because the local school needs a teacher. And the same is true in other fields, including writing, sciences, all kinds of fields.
If you look at it scientifically and objectively, with a work force that's the size of two million, we're not likely to get the talent that we need and we're not likely to get the money. You have to consider doing something a little differently, because if we don't consider doing it differently, somebody will anyway.

Let me -- I'm not digressing, I want to add one other factor to this, which is important in terms of where I'm going. There were three national reports which dealt with what actually goes on in schools and classrooms. All three of them indicated that teachers across the country spend about eighty-five percent of their time lecturing students. Now, they didn't put it so kindly, they said: Lecturing students who were falling asleep a good part of the time; but that's what they said, eighty-five percent of the time lecturing. There are some things that teachers lecture about that can now be handled technologically better than through a teacher lecture. Video cassettes can probably do a better job in a half hour of showing a
student how Eskimos live in Alaska, or something about the Middle East, or something about the debates that took place when the Declaration of Independence was written, than a lecture can by an individual teacher. These machines can never replace what teachers really need to do, which is to stimulate creative thinking, the marking of papers, the coaching of individual students to rewrite their papers, helping students to develop argument, persuasion, argument, lining up reasoning; these machines are not going to do away with the need for teachers. But if we think of the fact that they are there now, and it's only a matter of a short amount of time that somebody is going to say that there are some things that some machines can do better than human beings can do; that's not to replace human beings, but to have the teachers that we have do what it is they can do uniquely.

Now, I would suggest that we think about different models of restructuring. If we can't get two million teachers of the caliber that we
need, either in terms of the number of people available or the money, to think of something along the following lines: That a small -- that American public education would not have two million career teachers, but would have a number smaller than that, substantially smaller. That career teachers would be paid seventy-five or eighty-five thousand dollars a year; that it would be a very difficult profession to get into; that the only people who would get in would be people who were tested and evaluated in accordance with the procedures that I talked about before. And these teachers would have the responsibility, not only for coaching students and selecting materials and evaluating textbooks and training young teachers, they would essentially have a series of these professional responsibilities, but a good deal of the classroom work, normal classroom work, would go on with what Chester Finn yesterday called the people who are not going to stay for a long time. Outstanding college graduates who decide, like going into the Peace Corps, that they would
like to wipe out their college loans and that
they would like to get some money to go on to
whatever other profession they're going onto,
but who would agree to teach for five years.
They would, in advance, say what many people
already say when they go into teaching, that they
would not be career teachers.

Now, if we had a structure like that, we
could have the career teachers, not two million
of them, but a large number, having the power
that other professions have, earning the
salary which is not just doubled, but perhaps
tripled or more what salaries are today, and
we could have delivered a system in which the public
would have a substantial amount of confidence
and because, not only with the career teachers,
but teachers, for a short time, would be
selected from only the best of the college
graduates.

I'm not going to go any further on the list;
I'm sure there are many of you who believe I've
already gone too far. You will have an opportunity
in the future, I'm sure, to debate many of these
ideas. But I'm convinced that if we just fight to slightly improve things as they now are, maybe we will reduce class size by one or two students, maybe we will get teacher salaries up another few points, maybe we will do a few other things like that. But I am convinced that we will not get people into teaching or among the best and the brightest who are graduating today if teachers continue to be treated as they are today. If they continue to be treated as workers in a factory who are not to exercise their own discretion and judgment, who are to be supervised and directed by everybody from the State legislature down to the school level Principal. In order to change that around, we have to take a number of serious steps, such as the ones that I have talked about here.

I would like to conclude by referring to a speech that I heard about a month and a half ago by a writer, Terrence Beal, who deals in organizational cultures. It was a fascinating speech, and when he came to the end of it he talked about some of the differences between
teachers and other employees. And he talked about walking into a concern that made cosmetics; it was one of the nationally-recognized outfits. He walked up to somebody. He walked up to somebody who was a secretary and he said to her: What do you do here? And she didn't say: I'm a secretary; she started talking about what a wonderful company it was and what new ideas they had and how they were increasing sales and how within two years they were moving into the European market and how they opened up a big Latin American branch. And you could see that she was not only filled with enthusiasm, but that she felt that she was playing a very very important part in that company. And he walked a few blocks down, and he walked into an IBM plant and bumped into somebody there who was obviously involved in cleaning the place. And he asked this fellow: What do you do? And the man started talking about IBM and how it's the greatest company in the world and how they are going to be first with this new chip and what sort of a computer they were working on. And
again, he had a tremendous sense of pride and
a sense of very great importance in terms of
what he was doing. And then Mr. Beal said that
he walked a few blocks down and walked into a
school. And he walked up to somebody, and he
said: What do you do here? And the person
answered and said: Oh, I'm only a teacher.
Now, that set of words: I'm only a teacher --
and I've heard that many times, and I think
you have too.

I think the next step that we have to take
is a step that will turn teaching into a true
profession so that when somebody walks into a
school and asks somebody, what are you doing,
no one would ever again say: I'm only a teacher.

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