

UNEDITED

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STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS BY
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THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
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Thank you very much, Jackie.

Fellow delegates, we meet on this great national birthday and it is time now, along with Bob Healey, to think back at our own very proud history and to touch on a few of the major events and turning points.

Seventy years ago when that small band of people met in 1916, just think, no matter how many worries and how many problems and how difficult it is for us to achieve our objectives, think of the vision and the courage that that handful of people, teachers, had to decide to become affiliated with organized labor at a time of great labor violence, at a time when collective bargaining was still decades away from being the law of the land in a private sector, and this handful of courageous teachers had a vision shared by almost no other teachers, and I might say probably not shared by many members of the labor movement at the time.

The teachers belonged in the labor movement because they had contributions to make to help raise the standards of others and yet all other workers would be

helpful to teachers because the future of their children was in the hands of public education.

Very few would have believed in 1916 that a group this size would be meeting here today representing well over 600,000 across the country.

Twenty-five years ago in New York City, in 1961, another pretty small group of teachers, about five percent of the teachers in New York City, were in the union and that was the year of the first collective bargaining election and a local that was then about 2,500, I am informed, has just reached a membership this month of 93,000 (applause). Our congratulations to the UFT.

How many AFT members in 1961 believed in collective bargaining? Not many. There were a few locals that were large and effective and influential and they felt they didn't need collective bargaining because they felt they could handle things through the telephone with the powers that be, and then there were a lot of little locals that felt they would never get a chance to win a bargaining election and they felt by establishing collective bargaining they would be wiped out so that in this very short period of time something that very few people believed would ever happen has indeed swept the country,

and then a different vision came along a few years later.

Notice that none of these visions contradict each other. They build on each other. It took us a long time to find out that we could be much more effective for labor and in the labor movement, and we could be more effective in collective bargaining if we were also a power in politics. It was quite a few years after entering bargaining before we got the idea that we ought to be active politically. Political action posed great problems for us. Our members have many different views on which candidates and which parties, and we were afraid that by entering politics we would divide the union. But it is because of that vision in 1916 and because of the action for collective bargaining in 1961, and because of our most effective involvement in political action that Jackie Vaughn sits with the mayor, that Sandy Feldman sits with the mayor in New York and the governor in New York State, and that Tom Hobart and people all over this room sit with community leaders.

I have had a dozen discussions already in the last two days with people who have had recent meetings with their mayors and governors, with important business leaders in their community.

I can tell you when my mother passed the Statue of Liberty just before World War I, she had to do it twice. They sent her back the first time because she was not well. And never did she dream that as a result of the growth of the teachers union that her son would sit with the President of the United States in the White House or that on the 100th anniversary of Miss Liberty he would be invited to be on a boat in the harbor and would have to turn it down because he had a convention here.

(Laughter and applause)

Well, this is a time to appreciate how far we have come. We tend to forget. We remember from one convention to the next and they get a little bigger each time and so we tend to forget the progress that we have made. There aren't many here who remember the conventions of the 1960s or 1950s or before that, but our progress has been miraculous. This is a time to see how far we have come as a result of that past courage and vision, a time to see how we have been doing and where we are going. So let us take a look to see what has been happening. This is the first time that we have had a two-year spread between conventions. I am happy to say to you that between 1984 and 1986, a time that has not been a good one for the labor movement because there has not been a period of growth, it is a time when perhaps more than half of the unions in the labor movement have lost membership because of the economic situation because of the practices of the National Labor Relations Board, and the experts of the type that Bob Healey was talking about, the American Federation of Teachers has grown by 45,000 members of this period of time.

(Applause)

Now 45,000 members if a lot of members. It represents a large number. When I joined, which is not that long ago, there were 50,000 members in the AFT, so we have grown in this two year period to what was almost the full membership of the American Federation of Teachers 25 years ago. We have done it in many different sectors. We have organized many new locals of teachers. We think that as a result of our Solidarity Committee that in future conventions we will have a place during conventions where we will recognize those locals who have shown great growth in membership.

We have a meeting here at the convention to consider ways of increasing membership in jurisdictions where we already have collective bargaining. We have made major progress in organizing state employees. They have a steering committee, a program, an annual conference which is very well attended. They have an annual budget meeting where there is an analysis of where the impact of various proposals, tax proposals and budget cuts will be as far as state and local employees are concerned. They used to be organized on a state basis and it was not recognized what an impact

Washington, D.C. has on the states.

We have developed relationships with independent state associations to be helpful to provide information for them, to provide services in the hope that by developing such relationships within a short time they will see the wisdom of affiliation and bring an end to a status which is founded on a false assumption that one can serve one's members by being a local and state organization only without national affiliation.

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We welcome here today our latest affiliate which is the Illinois State Employees Association, formerly an independent group, the newest member of the American Federation of Teachers. We welcome you here.

(Applause)

Questions are often asked by state employees and by teachers as well: Why do we belong in the same organization? If there ever were an example of why and how our interests are the same, it was the fight that was conducted over the last year on the tax reform question when that legislation first came out. There was a provision when it first came out that we end deductibility of state and local taxes. Which would

mean instead of taking it as a deduction, every taxpayer would realize he is paying the full freight, he is paying taxes paid on the taxes paid to the state and local government. People would be less willing to pay state and local taxes. They might ask for a reduction. I am proud that the American Federation of Teachers was the first organization on the national scene to bring public attention to this fact. We did research. I did a column in the New York Times. Senator Moynihan held a national press conference using our figures as to what the impact would be in the state and local government and then, of course, the labor movement, state governments, governors and mayors got together and we collected millions of dollars to conduct television campaigns in those districts of legislators who are on the wrong side. Now the issue has been resolved in our favor. It will mean more jobs, more salaries, higher salaries, better job security for all public employees at the state and local level. That includes teachers, who are state employees, and there is an example of why we need this kind of unity. The same types of political actions and the same laws affect both of us positively or negatively. We took the leadership and we have won

that fight.

We have continued our organization of health care professionals through FNHP. Now again, if any of us think we have a hard time organizing and we do, we all do, it is difficult, but the tough time that most of us have, tough as it is, does not begin to compare with the problems of organizing in the private sector.

Basically our public employers don't want us to organize. A lot of them would rather not have a union around or if they have one, rather not have it affiliated. We know that. But government employees have to stay out. They generally feel it is unfair for them to get into the fight. I don't know of a government employer who pulled the kind of things that Bob Healey is talking about. I don't know any who hired professional outfits. They will do little things to get in the way. They will make life difficult, but I don't know of any who engaged the private life and death struggle that exists in the private sector. Our health care people know that. They are mostly in the private sector. They have had tremendous problems with the first National Labor Relations Board which is loaded with people who are the hired henchmen who fought collective bargaining

all those years, but in spite of that we have been succeeding. We have been working on professional issues which are similar to those of teachers. We have fought the delays of the National Labor Relations Board and finally won a victory in St. Francis at Milwaukee.

(Applause)

And a very good one it was. And after all these years where we are still not successful, we will not stop the fight until we win and get contracts in Denver where we have been fighting for so many years and have been up against many odds.

(Applause)

We have shown great growth in school-related and paraprofessional fields. We have 18,000 members in that field.

(Applause)

It is 18,000. This group is extremely important in our efforts to improve and reform public education. We support certification for these employees. It is very important that we move toward establishing collegial relationships.

There is a relationship between what

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happens on the school bus and what happens in a school building. It spills over. When you have a good nutritional program in the school, frequently it is the only decent meal some of the kids get. There is no question that paraprofessionals and school secretaries have important positions. They play a very important role, but in the schools that we are about to talk about, these positions will play even a more important role than they do now.

We are proud of the fact that we have developed career ladders so that many employees move up. It is not necessary that everyone move up. These are important jobs. Many people will want to move up, many will be proud and happy to stay within their jobs. That's fine, too.

Perhaps the best pat on the back that we have gotten has been from that other organization. When we started organizing all these peoples, when we started, we got only criticism. "Look at the AFT. They are going to become an organization of all these other people, not just teachers."

Well, we have been very successful.

Guess who is organizing paraprofessionals and school-related

personnel? They are doing that as well. After a number of years of criticism, they are in the field. We have had some great successes in Hillsboro, San Antonio, Jacksonville, and we are about to do it in Denver. This movement really is sweeping across the country.

While we celebrate all these successes in collective bargaining, we will not forget the very large numbers of us are still from the states where we enjoy no collective bargaining rights at all. Some of us are in states where we have to shoot our way in, but there are other states where collective bargaining is actually prohibited. Our own collective bargaining is under attack. It has been under attack in a number of places. There have been efforts to raid us over the last few years by the NEA in Baltimore, Detroit and the District of Columbia. That is also true in St. Louis and Broward. I am happy to say that in all these cases we won those elections with overwhelming votes, but please remember that when we get to our dues question that we spend more than half of the dollars that the AFT has. More than half of those dollars go into organizing new people and go into supporting those of our locals who are in trouble and they are under attack and

they are in danger of losing, and while we won because our locals were doing a terrific job, we also won them because our national organization put tremendous resources into the campaigns there.

Now, it is time to look forward to some of the things that we are going to consider, some of the major things we are going to consider at this convention. The first major thing that I would like to talk about is the proposed constitutional amendment which will offer a period of time to substantially enlarge the membership, enhance the strength of our organization. It is a proposal which is moving forward not only in the American Federation of Teachers, but in a number of other unions as well. A couple of years ago, the AFL-CIO took some polls and they found that for every union member, there were two or three people out there working for a living who would like to be a member of a union. The only thing is that in a lot of places, they are all alone, or they are afraid to ask. They think if they ask, they may not have a job or their life may be made unpleasant. Or they may have been in a union and they moved to a job where they owned the business, but they still believe in the union. They would like to help. They would like the members, and

they would like to be on the mailing list and get some of the benefits. Many unions say when you leave your job, that is it. You are not in the union.

The same thing is true with respect to retirees. Because of that, the AFL-CIO had a discussion on this. I was very much a part of that discussion and we said, why are we limited if there are 30 or 45 or 50 million people out there who would like to be in a union, why can you only be a member if you only have 60 or 100 or 200 people with you at the same time? If hundreds of organizations in the United States can sign up members through the mail and get the support of these people and reach them with literature and get the support in political campaigns, why can't we have a category of membership which would not apply to anybody who is eligible to join a functioning local? Obviously, there is no comparison between being a member of a local who is able to function and provide services and being out there on a mailing list. There is no comparison. There is no reason why doing one means we can't do the other. We will be proposing something which I believe in the next few years will mean literally hundreds of thousands of additional members will be brought into

the American Federation of Teachers. Within the next seven years, if the national figures are correct, 300,000 of our members will be leaving our jurisdictions, either through retirement or they will be leaving for other positions. Many of those people would like to continue to be members of the AFT, not for full dues, because we will no longer be bargaining for them. They will no longer be active teachers. Some will be retiring. Some will be going into business or other professions. Some will be moving into other locales. They will be the only AFT member there. They would still like to be members of our organization.

The possibilities here are very good within a short period of time that the AFT with its active members and with its active associate members, could well go over the million mark.

(Applause)

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We have already tried this program on an experimental basis in Texas and Louisiana and New Mexico. The reports are just great.

I hope that in considering this problem that when we get to it, that we are able to do this on a national basis. Remember that when a man sits in the White House or sits in the governor's mansion, that person isn't going to ask the question, is this person a member of a local, or is this a person who is sitting out there at home who so strongly believes in the membership in the Federation of Teachers that year after year he sends his dues to you because he wants to support the organization.

Now, of course, we will use these mailing lists. After 10 or 15 or 30 or 40 people sign up through the mail in one district, they probably don't know they have all joined individually. They probably think they are the only AFT members there.

This will be a good way of writing them saying, you are not alone. There are 40 other people in your school district that are signed up. How would you like to have a meeting.

So this is not a substitution for -- it is another way of organizing, another way of bringing people into the AFT and the AFL-CIO, and it is another way of building new locals where we have none at the present time.

Now, of course, the major activity of the last two years has continued to be the issue of school reform, and I think it is very important that we look back, because at our last convention, last two conventions, there was a lot of debate, and the debate was over whether we should embrace generally the various school reform proposals that have come out.

There were some good things in those proposals, quite a few good things, but there were also quite a few things in them that we don't like. Some of them proposed merit pay. Some of them proposed a longer school day. Some of them proposed a longer year. Some of them proposed spending so many hours on the subjects that teachers of other subjects felt squeezed out, and indeed in many cases, they were squeezed out.

We had quite a time asking ourselves, do

we embrace something which has so many problems for our members? After a good deal of discussion, not just at the chief conventions, but at the regional conferences, at local, at state federation meetings all across the country, we did something. We took a chance.

We said that there is a movement in this country to improve education, that a lot of these ideas that are being proposed we don't agree with. But if we get into a fight over the little details of these proposals that we disagree with, we are going to be forgetting the big picture, and the big picture in school reform was that governors and presidents of major corporations were saying, support local education. Out of 30 reports, not a single one of them recommended tuition tax credits or vouchers, and that we ought to go along with reports that basically want to improve the institution that we work in even if we didn't agree with every item in those reports. (Applause)

Now here we are three years later. Remember a lot of people said, let's not get excited about school reform. It is going to blow over in three weeks. The press promotes these things. One week it is school reform. The next week it is child abuse. The third

week it is pornography. The fourth week is is nuclear something. Don't take this thing too seriously.

Well, here we are more than three years later and school reform is still on the agenda of the National Governors Association, the major issue before every business group in the country.

I don't think I have to tell all of you how successful we have been all across the country, how our open and welcome attitude toward school reform has created this tremendously positive attitude on the part of governors, on the part of the business community. Look at the state aid increases in almost every state in the country, the salary increases that have been coming through. Look at the fact that people who before wanted to just impose things on us now respect the positions that we have taken and generally don't do what they did before, which is to act without talking to us first.

More often than not these days we are called in at the very beginning, and we are told, you guys took a courageous and a good position three years ago. Without you this whole thing would have been destroyed or it seriously would have been hampered. You people played such a responsible role that from now on

we don't want to make any moves without bringing you in as partners.

What we did over these three years has been a tremendous success, and I think we should enjoy a round of self-congratulations for a good strategy.

(Applause)

Now, all this movement for school reform has resulted in a lot of high hopes in the part of governors and legislators and parents and the American people. After all, when you get hundreds of additional millions of dollars, when you raise salaries, when you start early childhood programs, when you do all sorts of these things, people generally feel that things are going to get better. After all, we passed all these laws. The kids are now going to have to take all these courses. They are not going to be automatically promoted. We are testing teachers. We are giving them more money. Everybody now is going to start looking for results.

Now, we all know that results in education do not come quickly. A student who was there when he was 16 years old, when all these good things happened, the chances are that these reforms are not going to

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change a 16-year old youngster very much. These reforms will have the most effect on five and six year olds who are just entering school at a time when things are getting better and who will go through an entire system which has been improved.

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But while these expectations are there, there is a new realization all across the country and that is that you cannot improve education merely by passing laws. You can pass a law requiring students to take two or three years of mathematics, but there aren't many students who are going to learn two or three years of mathematics if there aren't any mathematics teachers and if the mathematics is going to be taught by people who are fine English teachers or social studies teachers but who never claimed to know any mathematics.

So as we get this hopeful feeling, there are certain facts that we look at, and we look at them a second and a third time. They give us a picture that the months and years ahead are not going to be easy, unless some additional major changes are made. Now, what are these facts?

Within the next six years one-half of all the teachers in America will leave teaching. 1.1 million out of 2.2 million will leave, either through retirement or for the usual reasons of seeking other and better opportunities.

The problem with retaining and recruiting minority teachers is really at disaster levels. At a time

when about one out of every three students in America will be black or Hispanic, we will approach a time when there will be practically no minority teachers in the country -- moving backward very, very quickly.

Twenty-three percent of all the students in college this year, next year, four years from now, and ten years from now, 23 percent of all the students in college will have to come into teaching if we are to have enough teachers to fill the schools on the present working conditions, that is, maintaining class size and maintaining the working load. With no improvements, we will need 23 percent of all college graduates to come into teaching.

When college students were asked in 1983 how many of you want to become teachers, 4-1/2 percent said they want to become teachers, not 23 percent. Four and one-half percent said they are going to become teachers.

Last year things got a little better, because they heard about these additional increases in salary and some improvements in conditions. So now a little over six percent say they want to become teachers.

Why do we have this shortage? Well, a lot of reasons, but I will give you one of them. There was an article in the Wall Street Journal a couple weeks ago and

here is what it tells us.

It says that in 1973 11 percent of all the Bachelor's Degrees in accounting were awarded to women, 11 percent. In 1983, 45 percent of all the people who became Bachelor Degree accountants were women.

In 1973, 3.8 percent of the Bachelor's in banking and finance went to women. Ten years later 33 percent of all degrees went to women in banking.

Business management, '73, 11 percent of the women got those degrees; in '83, 42 percent got those degrees.

Data processing, 1973, 13 percent; 1983, 41 percent.

Personnel management, '73, nine percent; '83, 49 percent.

And pharmacy, 24 percent in '73 and 49 percent in '83.

Well, what does that mean? It means that a great thing is happening. Opportunities, jobs are opening up for women that we closed before as a result of discrimination of various types.

It is great for women, great for the country, a disaster for public education in America.

Practically all those women would have gone into teaching or nursing. They are gone now. They have decided which job is the more attractive job and which job is the more rewarding job. They still have the opportunity to go into teaching, but they have chosen all those other fields.

So what's happening? Sure, there are some kids in college on their way. Some of them are brilliant, and some of them are wonderful students and are going to make sacrifices, but I'm sorry to say that we may at the present time have the best and brightest federation of teachers that we will ever have in the history of this country, the ones who are here right now.

(Applause)

It is great, but it is not great when you take the other side of that coin, which is that you don't want a public school system ten years from now where they say, after all those billions that we spent, look what we have got. They are not half as good as the people who were there ten years ago.

What we are in danger of doing is that, in spite of the reforms, in spite of more money, with opportunities opening up for people and a few of the

reasons that we will talk about in just a minute, we are in great danger of having a substantial disaster.

I will tell you, after all this work by governors and legislators in the business community, and putting up all that money, if we end up with a school system that's worse instead of being better, people are going to bring out those old tuition tax credits and vouchers again. They are going to say it is the unions. It is the school boards. It is the superintendents. Whatever they are going to say, they are going to look for some other way. They are going to say you can't fix this up.

So we will be in serious trouble. More and more teachers are being hired out of license, in more states, in spite of the fact that they are giving examinations, are actually lowering standards. That is, they are giving an examination, and then they are hiring the people who failed the examination.

Some districts are saying, we can't get qualified teachers, so we will increase class size, and by increasing class size, of course, they drive out some of the teachers who are qualified, who are already there.

The old traditional way of handling a problem

like this. would be to say, well, it is simple. All we have got to do is raise salaries and improve conditions, like reduce class size and give teachers more time to think and to work with their colleagues.

But think about it. How can you reduce class size if you can't get enough teachers to fill the positions you have now got? How can you give teachers more time? Giving more time means teaching fewer periods. Teaching fewer periods means someone else is teaching the periods you are now teaching.

So if we were to do those things in the current context, we would need not 1.1 million teachers, but maybe 1.7 million teachers. We wouldn't need 23 percent of the college graduates. We might need 33 or 35 or 37 percent of them.

Now, remember, it's the baby bust generation that is now in college. Talent is going to be in short supply. Everybody is going to be competing for those people.

Some people are in such short supply that even if you raised salaries substantially, we still wouldn't get them. For instance, there are so few people in mathematics and science that even if salaries were

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raised substantially you could be sure that IBM and Hewlitt-Packard and the other companies would just raise them a little bit more. They are not about to close their companies just because teaching became a more attractive profession.

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There are two things connected with this. If indeed the schools begin to hire more and more people who are not qualified, what happens? Well, what happens is -- I can tell you what most employers do if they hire people that they feel are not qualified. They watch them very closely. You know, if you hire people who you feel are smart, you give them a training program and kind of let them work on their own. You feel if they are intelligent, they will either know how to do it, or if they don't know how to do it, they will know that they don't know and they will ask somebody, or they will find out.

If you hire people that you don't think are qualified, you will not think that they will know how to do it or they will even recognize a problem when they bump into it, and the result is that you get oppressive supervision, more oppressive supervision, more inspection, more accountability programs, more observations.

The more you put in of that, the more good people you drive out. The only people you get in then are people who have got no other choice.

So we have got a very tough situation, a very difficult one.

One of the big reasons that a lot of people are not coming into teaching, part of it is, of course, salaries, and we have got to keep moving on that. Of course, part of it is the fact that you cannot get self-satisfaction if you have got so many children in the class and you know you don't have time to mark a set of papers because it will take 25 hours to do it if you do it right.

Of course, a lot of people leave because, while they enjoy working with the students, professionals really need time to spend with each other to talk about what they are doing, to be able to share ideas and not be only with the students all day long. So a lot of people are leaving because of this.

They are leaving because many of these other jobs give them something that they don't feel that they will have in teaching. They don't feel that in teaching their own judgment is going to be respected.

They are going to be told to what time to come in. They are going to be told to punch a timeclock. They are going to be told which curriculum to use, which book to use, what exam the kids are going to have, howmany minutes to teach each subject. In other words, they are going to be treated like people who are not very well educated at all. Somebody else has all the answers and the only thing that is expected of us is that we carry out what somebody else wants us to do.

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There are not that very many educated people who want that sort of a job when there are other jobs where they go in and say, here's the job, do it the best way you can, you got a right to make some mistakes once in a while, we know that you'll put it together.

And so we've got to look at what changes are needed, and changes that are needed are not going to come from state legislatures. All we get from them is more laws. I hope we get more money, too, but we get a lot of regulations from them, but we don't need those regulations.

Intelligent changes are only going to come from one source, they're going to come from teachers, because nobody knows better than teachers what's going on in schools.

(Applause)

I had the privilege a couple of months ago of being at a conference where a bunch of labor leaders met with a group of union presidents. It's a group called the Labor/Higher Education Council,

sponsored jointly by the Ohio education community, and the AFL-CIO, and there were a number of presentations there and they just published some of them. I was very pleased to be present when the international secretary of the United Steelworkers of America, Edgar Ball, made a presentation of some of the things that are happening in the steel industry. I would like to read one paragraph of this, because it will show how far we in public education, how far behind we are and some of the things that are being done in private industry with blue collar workers.

Mr. Ball said: "Earlier this year we finished a two-year plan to redesign labor/management relationships in an ALCOA plant in Arkansas. For 45 years a very strong, militant adversarial relationship existed. The union faced the problem of changing the adversarial relationship and redesigning jobs and methods of doing work.

"After two years, autonomous work crews went into effect into every department, almost eliminating the need for the shop floor management in the plant.

"Indeed, of 18 job classifications, there are no more than three in any department.

"The crew in every department designed its own jobs based on what they felt would work and what they were willing to try to make work.

"The craftsmen also agreed to do away with purecrafts and go to multi-crafts. They decided what the groupings will be and what the new jobs will be.

"I talked to a grouping of employees in the first department that tried the new system. The first three months the plan was in effect, down time was down by half, and within the next three months decreased by half again.

"I asked them, 'Why? How did you do it?' and they said this, 'What we used to do was come to work, punch time cards, go to our work station and stand there until the foreman came by and told us what to do. Then he told us what to do. If he didn't tell us to do something that needed to be done, we didn't do it. If he wasn't there enough, that was his fault, he was the boss. If he told us to do it wrong, we did it wrong even if we knew it was wrong, because we were subject to discharge if we didn't do what he told us to do.'"

Is that familiar?

(Applause)

"If something went wrong, after we knew it was going wrong with the equipment or process, we didn't say anything to anyone about it.

"If the foreman happened to come by and catch it, fine. If he didn't, we let it go. If equipment broke down, we shut the power off. We didn't call anybody. We stood there until someone from management came by and looked at it and decided and they had to decide to call maintenance.

"When maintenance got there, we didn't tell them what was going wrong with it and we didn't help them. If they knew how to fix it, fine, and if they fixed it wrong, too bad, that wasn't our concern. We weren't being paid to do those things. We were being paid to do the few little things that were in our job description and that's all we did."

"I asked, 'What are you doing now?' Their reply, 'We know how to run the plant. We come to work. We start operating it. We are running maintenance even though it's not in our job description. We help each other. If one is having trouble, we help. If we think something is going to go wrong, we plan around that and we alert maintenance in advance and we have them there and we

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tell them what's wrong, and we show them and we help them fix it.'"

Now I have heard descriptions like that in auto plants, in steel plants and other companies all across the country, companies that were going to close up or decide to take their operations overseas.

Now I'd like to know whether if blue collar workers can be trusted to run their own plants and organize their own jobs, why can't teachers be trusted to do exactly the same thing?

(Applause)

You will have before you for consideration at this convention the Carnegie Task Force Report and the AFT Task Force Report. These reports are different from the ones we had several years ago. Those several years ago were given to us from the outside and we had a choice of either attacking them or embracing them. But these reports that you're going to be dealing with here, well, I must say they have my fingerprints all over them, and they were developed by people who look at the inside of schools.

I'm not going to go into detail, you'll have copies of the reports, I hope that you've read them, I

hope that you will read them by the time we get to the debate on them. They're not easy to summarize. These are not a bunch of little slogans you can put down and say, here are the five things that we're going to do or the six things we're going to do. These are very sophisticated. They involve a revolutionary change in public education in America. They involve a revolutionary change in the role of the teacher in the future.

So I will just touch upon some of the underlying concepts of both of these reports.

They both call on teaching to become a self-governing profession, and like any other self-governing profession, there should be a national board made up of members of the board of the profession. That national board would do many things.

It would develop a code of ethics and it would develop a set of standards for each entry.

The government did not develop the bar exam. No government agency developed the exam to certify public accountants. No government agency tells the surgeons of America who will become a board certified surgeon. Every profession develops its own standards, and by and large those standards are national standards.

When you go to Alabama, you are not being operated on by an Alabama surgeon who meets different qualifications from an Illinois surgeon. And if you are a surgeon in one state, you can move to another state and you don't have to go back to medical school. The same is true of most professions.

So we need to move to create a national board, and one of the things that Carnegie is doing, it's a foundation that has a lot of money and it's done this before.

4b fls.

It was a Carnegie Report by Dr. Abraham Flexner that turned medicine from an occupation in which fathers wrote to their sons at Harvard that if they dared to become a doctor, they would take their names out of their wills. They turned medicine into a profession, and Carnegie will now devote substantial sums of money over the next ten years to the creation of this national board, financing it, and to do what all other professions have, which is to create a national examination for teachers for certification.

This national examination would be voluntary. States would still license teachers, as they license one level, but the profession would certify a standard of

excellence.

Now that's how the bar exam first started. After all, there were hundreds of thousands of lawyers around and there was no bar exam until it was created, and when it was created, a lot of lawyers who were then lawyers decided to take it to show the public that they could pass it and that they were highly qualified. And then some law firms decided only to hire lawyers who were members of the bar and who had passed the bar exam, and eventually 50 states separately required passage of the bar examination as a standard for practice within the state.

So when such an examination is created, it may take 10 or 15 or 20 years before state after state adopts it, but it will begin as a voluntary program.

Now in talking about a national examination, I am not talking about the kinds of teacher examinations that exist today.

About the only thing the current teacher examinations are good at telling you is whether people are illiterate. That is an important piece of information, but it hardly qualifies one to be called a professional.

The exams we have now often in city after city, newspaper reporters go in and take the examination

and walk out an hour or two later and they passed it with flying colors. An examination that can be passed by any reasonably well-educated person is not a professional examination. You couldn't go in and sit for the bar, you couldn't go in for a medical exam, you couldn't go in for a CPA exam or an actuary exam without long and intensive years of training, and a professional examination is one that does that, not just one that permits any person to walk in and take it and pass it.

Now such an examination would not necessarily be only a paper and pencil test. It would certainly not be the kind of things that we have today, and I'll give you one little example.

One of the most popular national examinations here is one of the questions to see whether you are indeed a professional teacher.

The question is: What do you do if a group comes to you and complains about the textbook you are using?

Now it doesn't tell you who the people are, what the complaint is, or anything, but you get four choices, and here they are.

A, refer them to school board policy.

B, talk to the principal about it.

C, ask them if they can suggest something better to use.

D, claim first amendment rights to determine what to teach.

(Applause)

Well, I will not embarrass you by asking you to raise your hands for each of these choices. According to the NTE, the answer is C, ask them if they can suggest something better to use.

(Applause)

Now it's very clear why the NTE is telling you that, because that's the one that causes the least problem for the principal and the school board.

However, notice that they don't even consider answering these people as to why you have selected a good textbook. That's not even one of the possible answers.

Well, I assume you didn't select it. Someone else picked it for you and you want to cover up for them, you don't want to say the other person did it.

Well, this kind of stuff is just nonsense.

I am talking about an examination which is

like the exams given to other professionals. You're given a situation with a context, they tell you a lot about a situation, and then you are supposed to show the kind of thinking that you engage in in order to try to work out the problems.

You could have two different correct answers because these are difficult, complex issues, and what the examination tries to find out is whether you can weigh these different things and how sensitive you are to looking at these different things and doesn't aim at getting one simple right answer, which never exists in one of these situations.

4c fls.

So we need the creation of such an examination, and here again, Carnegie is financing a study of what it is that teachers ought to know, which would be comparable for teachers to what it is lawyers or doctors or pharmacists or CPAs need to know, and has asked that the first such exams be prepared, and we expect that the first such exams will be available around three and a half to four years from now, and I'm sure the first one will not be as good as the one that will be around 20 years after that.

If one were to look at the first bar exam

now, it might not look like a very good exam. I haven't done it, but maybe some of our legal colleagues will do it. But it's the beginning of a process.

Now there's a third important philosophic and general aspect to the Carnegie Report.

I don't know whether you have looked at the budgets, of operating budgets of schools in America lately.

What percentage of all the operating budget, this is not building construction, all the operating budget, what percentage of all the money spent in public education are spent on teacher salaries alone?

Now that's very important, because it's the teacher who is in the classroom with students, and all other moneys except for textbooks given to students, which is a very small amount of money, and except for painting and heating the building, all the other money goes into people who are helping teachers in downtown headquarters or helping them in the office in the building or elsewhere.

Well, you probably will not be surprised to know that teachers have lots of helpers, because the percentage of money spent on teachers' salaries is 37 percent, which means that almost two out of every three dollars goes into what in business would be called overhead.

Now, you know, one of the reasons we found out why the Japanese are producing better products is that in American plants, traditional American plants, for every 100 workers there are 15 helpers or inspectors watching the workers.

In the Japanese plants for every 100 workers, there's one administrator.

Now what do they do with all the money they save for those 14 other supervisors?

What they do is they give workers time to talk to each other about what's going wrong on the job, and then they tell this one administrator what he needs to do to fix things up so that they will be able to get their work done.

(Applause)

Now the American school operates very much like American factories in that way.

Now I received a communication from a writer a few weeks ago, and I know that some of you will be concerned about the concept of lead teachers. Aren't these people really supervisors? Now isn't Carnegie just changing the name?

And I'd like to read this little newsletter

sent to me by a man by the name of Frank Lewis. He says, "Doctors who supervise other doctors also treat patients. Lawyers who supervise lawyers also work with clients. Architects who supervise architects continue to design structures. The credibility and effectiveness of such supervisors are largely based upon their continued demonstration of knowledge and expertise. By what particular pedagogic logic did it happen that supervisors and teachers have -- supervisors of teachers have removed themselves from the very essence of their profession?"

(Applause)

"That essence is leadership in the group process of engaging 30 youngsters in a classroom learning process by getting out of the classroom, which has become one standard of success among educators in general. Supervisors have seriously reduced their capacity to promote realistic and productive pedagogic policy.

"Taking this cynical situation a step further, those professing to offer solutions to the problem in education are those furthest removed from the heart of the learning environment, the classroom."

(Applause)

"Conversely, there seems to be a pervasive

kind of perverse thinking that goes if someone is silly enough to spend their days with large groups of children, that is, being a classroom teacher, how can they know anything about teaching children, namely, education?

"Are medical consultants and the best supervisors of doctors those physicians who do not treat patients? Are those lawyers who do not have clients in the best position to advise other lawyers?"

Now this is the issue that Carnegie confronts, and if you read carefully what Carnegie talks about, it's very substantially reducing the amount of administrative and bureaucratic overhead and moving a lot of that money and personnel and decision-making power and responsibility into the hands of those who still work and continue to work with the children within the school.

(Applause)

4d fls.

What are our schools like today? Well, the emphasis is not largely on learning or on education, the emphasis is largely on the custodial function.

A number of school districts last year gave a simple test to prospective teachers. What was the test? They asked teachers to write out a little note to parents telling them something about a child. A number of those

teachers, prospective teachers failed the exam because they misspelled a lot of words, were ungrammatical, you couldn't understand what they were saying.

However, on the opening day of school those teachers were sent telegrams and were hired because no one else was around. In one district those teachers were required to go to school at night to take courses in how to read and write at the same time that they were teaching their students how to read and write.

Now this would be unimaginable in any other profession. There are sometimes shortages of doctors in rural areas, but no one hands out substitute emergency doctor certificates in those areas. It may even in some times and in some places be difficult to get a lawyer or a pharmacist or an architect or an accountant or somebody else, but nobody goes around lowering standards. If you can't find someone who can do it who is licensed, you may have to go to another city to get it, or you may have to wait until the one who is there has time. But under no circumstances do you allow this shortage to determine what your standards are.

And that clearly would be exactly the practice in education if we were mostly interested in the

education of children. But this practice does make sense, because if you're mostly interested in custodial care, then this makes a lot of sense.

We need a changing of priorities. We need to -- we need to say, how would a school be organized? The purpose of the school is not to do babysitting and not do custodial work, the purpose of the school, the central purpose, the only purpose of the school is to educate those children so that they can be citizens, so that they can have jobs, and that is the central function. Everything we do in that school will be geared to that function and that one alone.

(Applause)

Now the -- our schools provide no time for teachers to work together as other professionals have to work together.

If you think about it for a minute, if we were to enact or adopt, if we were able to do all the things that all the reports of the last three years told us to do, let's say now we found the math teachers and we found the science teachers and we find the other teachers and we put in all the requirements in those reports, what would the schools look like?

Well, the schools would look something like the schools I went to in 1940. They were pretty good schools for a handful of kids, but according to one set of very reliable figures in 1940, 70 percent of the students of the country dropped out.

In other words, they were good schools for the kids who had some sort of an advantage, they were good schools for a handful of very highly motivated kids whose parents were pushing them or who had perhaps some extraordinary abilities, they were good schools for elite groups who could hire tutors and do some special help, but the overwhelming majority of American kids did not make it at a time where we had outstanding teachers because of the great depression of the 1930s, and we forced the kids to read Silas Marner and William Shakespeare and take foreign languages, and we didn't promote them automatically, we left them back, and we tracked them and streamed them, we did all these things to push for excellence and 70 percent dropped out.

Now what would be the results today when a family is not as strong as it was in 1940 if we were to adopt the standards of 1940? What would be the success rate?

Now that's one of the underlying fundamental reasons why it's not enough to just go back to something that we think was great years ago. It was pretty good, gave a lot of people opportunity, but in those days if you dropped out of school, you could get a pretty good job in a factory.

As a matter of fact, a lot of kids dropped out of school, and the day they dropped out, they were making a hell of a lot more than their teachers were, working at an auto plant or in a steel mill. You don't have that opportunity today.

So when we have dropout rates today, perhaps one-third of what they were at that time, today's dropout rates represent a disaster, whereas the dropout rates of those days were just sort of -- nobody noticed them, nobody really talked about them. So we've got to do something that's very, very different.

Well, how should schools be organized? Teachers don't usually think about that. That's supposed to be the job of the principal or of the superintendent. Teachers are just supposed to do the work.

Now in law firms, it is not the job of just one lawyer to think about how the firm operates. Every

other lawyer takes his cases and one lawyer thinks about how the firm operates. Not so, not so in any other form of professional partnership or practice.

Lots of people in each of those institutions are supposed to think not only about their own cases and about their own practice, but about how the entire operation is working.

What we have got in the last few years is a very interesting and, I think, idiotic and insulting kind of slogan, and the slogan is that in an effective school, the principal is the instructional leader of the school. That is what they say. How many here are in schools where the principal is the instructional leader of your school?

(Laughter)

Then we can't have very effective schools in this country.

How many law firms say that one member of the law firm is the legal leader of the law firm? A good law firm is one which has the whole bunch of lawyers, some in criminal work, and some in real estate work, and the same thing is true of an architectural firm.

No one would dare say that the president of a university is the intellectual leader of the university, otherwise it is going to be a lousy university. There are many intellectual leaders in professional fields.

If you have a school that is run like a dictatorship, if only one person makes the decisions and if that person isn't smart, it is a disaster. The slogan means our schools are run on an authoritarian basis.

If the person at the top who makes decisions is not good, he won't let anyone else make decisions. Teachers are viewed as mere followers. We have to move to a school system where it is recognized that the only way to have an effective school is if many, many teachers in the school are the effective instructional leaders in the school. It is the only way to make the school work.

(Applause)

What Carnegie proposes very simple, and yet very complex. It says that the teachers ought to redesign the schools (applause) and not just redesign them one, but the teachers ought to sit there and figure out what is wrong or they should have the power to redesign or to reallocate, and if what you have redesigned doesn't work well, do it the following year again.

A good institution is one in which large numbers of bright people are constantly looking at what problems they have and finding ways of getting answers to those problems and not having just one person at the head. We have fortunately a number of locals who have started on this road. You know some of them. I will probably leave some out I am sure, but I would like to mention

Toledo had, for a number of years, a peer assistance program and internship program. Hammond, Indiana, developed a terrific process through collective bargaining of involving teachers in decision-making within the schools.

There is Cincinnati, Rochester, Pittsburgh, Dade County, Hartford, Dearborn -- and many of you just have not told us what you are doing, but this is the movement of the future and the main aspect of the Carnegie Report is that it puts the stamp of approval on all this. We will need to work through collective bargaining. We will need to work with our friends in higher education because there are major changes in teacher education which will have an effect on teachers in schools and our associates in colleges. We will work with them and we will work cooperatively and do it together.

As to the kinds of questions that we have to ask, we really have to examine everything. There is very strong research on this matter. We bring all the kids to school on the same day when they are five or six years old. Some are one year older than the others.

It's because their birthdays fall at different times. Research shows that older kids who are older do better and they do better all through school. -- not all of them, but the statistics show that most of them do. Why?

If you are in a room and everyone is six years old and one is five years old, you will see that the six year old is bigger. He is taller and he is smarter. One year's difference when you are five or six years old makes a terrific difference. The older kid feels terrific and he or she is always the winner. Is there a way of designing schools so that it is done differently? A lot of kids drop out because they enter in September and the payoff isn't until next June. They will not work if it is that far ahead. Do schools have to be organized on an annual basis? Can schools be organized so that the payday is sooner?

If a kid drops out today, he can't drop in until next year. If there a way to organize school so if a kid makes a mistake he can come back any day of the week and we will be ready for him?

How do we involve students and parents more? That is a disaster. These are things that very

few principals are talking about and very few superintendents are talking about. Teachers can't talk about them because nobody will listen to us and we have no time to do it without colleagues. These are the issues that Carnegie puts before us.

I would like to conclude by giving my reasons for being so enthusiastic about the report. First, I would like to say that we as leaders in the AFT and in our locals all know the commitment which we enjoy and have had as union leaders. What does that consist of? It consists of being able to dream, sometimes dream the impossible. It consists of being one of a handful of people thinking about collective bargaining or thinking about bringing teachers into the union movement or thinking about uniting all the employees in Chicago who work for the school system who have been killing each other.

It consists of thinking about something that hasn't been done and ought to be. It consists of working hard as all hell to make something worthwhile happen. Why shouldn't the teachers of America be as involved in being able to dream their dreams, plan their dreams and work like hell to make those dreams happen because they are there, they are doing what they want to

do and believe in and not fulfilling someone else's plan which they may very well know are dead wrong.

(Applause)

That is the key issue. We may not agree. I don't agree with everything in the Carnegie Report, but I think it would be a great tragedy if we didn't know how to make a deal. I have never signed a contract in which I liked everything that was in it. There are always some things in it that I rather weren't and there are things that should have been in it that are not, but there has to be a time when you have to sign a contract even though it isn't the one that you would have written.

The first contract in the United States in New York was almost never signed and collective bargaining might have had a totally different path if a certain line of reasoning had been followed.

A contract was negotiated which had a very large salary increase, a good grievance procedure. It was quite thick for a first contract. It was 60 or 70 pages long with all sorts of goodies. There were two things that the board of education insisted upon having in the contract which a large number of union leaders and members objected to. One was that the contract had

a no strike clause in it, and the teachers said, "Like hell. We will not sign a contract with a no strike clause in it. We have to be able to strike whenever we want to."

The other things it that it had a termination date on the following June 30th. The teachers said that a termination date on June 30 is no good because you can't effectively strike on July 1st. That that contract was withheld from May until September while over that summer the members and leaders of the union debated whether it is better to live without a contract.

Well, we didn't know what we had. We didn't know what a contract was. We didn't know how you could hold the other side to a deal if you had it and how you couldn't if you didn't have it, and we almost didn't take it because we wanted it to be perfect.

Now, I could give you a lot of other ones. That was just the first and could have been the most disastrous because wherever we got collective bargaining, they could say that they don't even have a contract in New York where all the flaming liberals are, so how can you have one here?

(Laughter and applause)

So let us not make any mistakes.

I want to thank you for giving me a very, very, very rare opportunity, and that is the opportunity to be a leader and not just a president or a chairman. I would like to conclude by reading a little statement by someone else, but it expresses, I think, very well, what I believe is the function of a leader in an organization like this or any other creative organization and it will perhaps explain to you who have asked the question why does he do that, or why does he say that, and I know from time to time you have.

I believe the most important job of top leadership is to create a vision of the organization, a sense of purpose and then to share that vision with others in the organization so that everyone knows what it was that made the organization successful in the past and what it will take to insure the continuation of that success in the future.

"All of us want meaning in our lives beyond the paycheck and beyond daily sustenance. We want the opportunity to share great values and great visions, and to have a real part of turning these values and visions into reality. I think this is the essence of leadership,

this sharing of the vision, and we must share it because there is precious little that any leader can accomplish by himself. Without the active support and participation of the people at every level of the organization, these dreams and visions are nothing."

(Standing ovation.)

(The opening session of the 69th Convention was adjourned at 12:20 P.M.)

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