

**STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS  
PRESIDENT ALBERT SHANKER  
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The American Federation of Teachers  
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I'd like to start with where our union has come from and where we are as a result of our efforts over the last two years. You know that most of the labor movement has been in decline, but the AFT is one of a handful of unions that year after year -- and this one is no exception -- is bigger and stronger than before. We just passed 850,000 members, and grew more than 56,000 since our last convention.

When you take into account the tremendous amount of turnover, the retirements, the people who pass away, people who just decide to leave teaching for some other job or profession, this means that to grow by 56,000 and to reach this number, we had to sign up more than 2,000 members every week over the last two years. That growth has taken place in all sectors: K to 12 teachers, higher education, school-related personnel, health care, state and local government workers, and retirees.

We had 200 representational elections all over the country since our last convention, and out of the 200 we won 164. This is a win rate of more than 80 percent, among the top one, two or three unions in the AFL-CIO. Our new bargaining units, as you know, start generally with a few active members and we go into an election, but within those bargaining units there are more than 27,000 potential members, again, in every sector. We're continuing to grow in states like Texas, Louisiana, West Virginia and Mississippi, which do not have collective bargaining rights by law, and we have to struggle much harder in those states just to have a union, let alone to get collective bargaining.

So, whether it's the hundreds of teachers and PSRPs who voted for AFT representation all over New Mexico to the point where we now bargain for more than 12,000 public school employees or 1900 PSRPs in Corpus Christi, 400 PSRPs in North Forest, two Texas school districts where without a bargaining law AFT locals fought and won the right to represent all school employees wall to wall; or 800 PSRPs in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, who like their brothers and sisters in Texas, joined with teachers for complete wall-to-wall AFT representation -- again without a bargaining law -- the more than 1200 part-time faculty at Milwaukee Technical Institute or 400 faculty at Pierce College in Washington, or more than 1600 health professionals at Rhode Island Hospital, that state's largest private sector employer, or 3600 fiscal staff state employees in Wisconsin, or more than 1600 workers in Baltimore County, all have chosen the AFT.

They've chosen the AFT because of the kind of organization that we are. First, they know that we're a union that pioneered collective bargaining before there was collective bargaining for public employees, and that we're experienced in effective contract administration; that we are a union that doesn't just come in and do things for people, but that we are committed to helping to improve the skills of members and leadership at the local level, and with all of our members, to

advance their careers so that they can make a greater contribution to the success of the institutions in which they work.

Third, given the strong anti-union and anti-public employee attitudes that are surfacing within our society, that we are cognizant of the fact that our institutions have shortcomings and that we are committed to improving the quality of the services within those institutions.

#### AFT/NEA MERGER TALKS

Now, we've also had something else that's happened over the last year within this two-year period, something that we, frankly, did not expect. At least two years ago we didn't. Last summer the National Education Association representative assembly voted to invite the AFT to participate in merger talks. Since merger has been a long-time policy of the AFT, we, of course, accepted. That acceptance was made easier, and I'm sure that the NEA's resolution was made easier by the fact that in recent years the conflict between the two organizations has very substantially subsided -- not that it's disappeared altogether, but certainly compared to some years back, it was very small -- and that we were already engaged in many areas of cooperation in different fields, political fields, legislative fields and others.

The talks began last fall. We had eight lengthy meetings, some of them going for two and a half days. Now, for the most part, these meetings involved sort of getting to know each other. Each side thought it knew the other side because back in the early '70s there was an effort at merger and AFT people thought that the NEA was still the same NEA it was then in terms of the way it functioned. We learned through these talks that there have been very, very substantial changes over that period of time. The same is true for the NEA representatives at these meetings.

The meetings have been very good. They have been very open in the sense that each side has very frankly admitted what are some of the shortcomings of their own organization, and some of the changes that they would like to see and some of the reasons why, perhaps, some of those changes haven't taken place. We haven't tried to keep secrets to ourselves, we don't think that a merger can be based on each side sort of holding its own cards very close to its vest.

Early on we sent a joint communication to all state affiliates to explore the possibility of cooperation in a number of areas. We also suggested that they make an effort to develop a no-raid agreement, because we felt that if there were a substantial number of new openings where one side was raiding the other, that it would poison the atmosphere for the national merger talks.

Now, we knew that we were not in a position to tell our state or local affiliates, that this would be a good-faith effort, that we would urge and suggest and we would use our good offices, and furthermore, we knew that there were some places where campaigns were already at such a state that if you call it off, you could never call it on again and you would really be breaking faith with your members there. They felt the same way.

There was also agreement on a moratorium on state and local mergers because, again, it was felt that if we were having these discussions which might bring about a national merger or which might develop patterns for state and local mergers, that developing a series of patterns that were different might end up creating great problems, although, there were one or two mergers which were permitted because of special circumstances. So, in addition to the United Teachers of Los Angeles, which has been merged for a long time, and the United Educators of San Francisco, which

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has been merged for a shorter time, welcome to our newly merged affiliates, Dakota County United Educators and United Technical College Educators from Minnesota.

We're now prepared in these discussions, which I think will resume at the end of the summer, to begin to tackle all of the specific issues. We have explored most of them, but no agreements have been reached. We know where the problems are, and we're ready now to start dealing with specifics.

Two weeks ago the National Education Association representative assembly met again. We had a delegation there. I should tell you, and we welcome you, the NEA has a delegation here at our convention. At the NEA representative assembly, the leadership asked for permission to continue with negotiations for another year. That permission was granted overwhelmingly. The AFT Executive Council in May also agreed to continue.

Now, I should say that there is a desire on the part of both organizations, to have a single united teacher organization in this country. It would be an organization that would start with a membership of more than 3 million. It would have membership in every state and in every single election district. It would be unlike any other union that now exists in the country, or that ever existed. There is no union that has ever existed in the United States that had membership in every single state. The Auto Workers had Michigan and three or four or five other places where autos or the other things they work on are assembled. I guess there are some unions like hotels and restaurants that could have more of a national spread, but they don't.

This would be certainly very powerful in terms of numbers and in terms of money. I would predict, in terms of our experience in New York, that the 3 million would be a start and that the excitement that would be generated -- the newspaper and magazine articles that would be written about this new powerful monster would start predicting how this was going to control everything and run everything -- would be very appealing to lots of people who, up to now, haven't paid any dues to anybody. I would think that within a fairly short period of time, it would be an organization of 4 million if our previous experience holds true.

But there are questions that are unresolved. So, while we're going to try to make it happen, and I'm sure that the NEA side will also try to make it happen, don't get the idea that it has happened, or that it must happen, or that it will happen, because it may not happen. I think it's important not to get ourselves worked up to a point where we feel terribly disappointed. We will feel disappointed, but I mean disappointed to that point where we felt that it happened already and it was taken away from us.

We know what a lot of the differences are. We are affiliated with the AFL-CIO, and very committed to building a strong labor movement. The NEA is not. I don't think that there's any way in which they will compel all of their members to affiliate with the AFL-CIO. So something has to be worked out which is in-between not having the affiliation, which would be unacceptable to us, and their compelling everybody to go in, which is unacceptable to them. We've thrown out a lot of ideas, but there is not even the inkling yet of an agreement there.

We have members in health care and state and local and government sectors, and they do not. They feel very strongly about having an organization which is limited to people in education. So, that's a major item of disagreement.

We are an organization that is very heavy on urbans, large locals in states all across the country. We need to worry about the representation structure of the new organization. In the AFT urban America has a voice in Washington, D.C., but in many states when you have the whole state in an organization, it's very easy for the urbans to get swallowed up in a state organization, just as the urbans are neglected in the state legislature, because there is a dominance of rural and suburban interests.

So, the whole question of how to build a structure which provides an adequate voice for the urbans at least within elementary and secondary education, represents a large proportion of the people that we represent. It is not impossible, as New York state has shown they have done that successfully, but building that into 50 states and into a new organization is very difficult.

I think another question that we have to ask is, will one organization made up of three or four million people necessarily be stronger than two organizations? Well, it could be, certainly, no question about that. It could be. But not necessarily.

If the organization is viewed as a big monster -- and the NEA already is because of its size -- not by just the right-wing but some people who are sort of near-center, does that organization become a target? Do people in state legislatures who are anti-union gain new strength by saying: "Look, the public needs to protect itself against something that's this powerful because these people are just interested in their own self-interests and not in education and not in the children. Now that they've got so much money and so many members and so much power, we've got to level the playing field. We've got to take some of that power away in terms of bargaining rights or in terms of lobbying rights or other sorts of things." That's a real danger.

So, the whole question is what is the mission of the new organization? Can it be put together in such a way that it clearly is not a narrow focus, self-interest organization, but is clearly committed to a broader public interest? If not, there would be great problems.

Then, of course, there are policies, some of which I'll be talking about later in my remarks here, but there are very major differences on a whole range of policy issues. Of course, those will be decided by the new organization. But we need to ask ourselves as we go into this whether the country and education hasn't been better off because there has been more than one voice, and there's been a different voice, and in the case of the AFT, a politically incorrect voice; an organization willing to state things that were somewhat unusual and unpopular. Not unpopular with the mass of parents and people, but unpopular with a good part of the education establishment.

Well, very early in these merger talks, what we set out to do was to try to create a new organization which would be better than either of the two organizations. That's what we aim to do.

We look forward to meeting with Keith Geiger very soon. We do have a substantial number of states which already have developed no-raid agreements, and all sorts of cooperative relationship in terms of legislation and political action and joint conferences and training on professional issues, and even some joint organizing campaigns. These states represent more than 650,000 members of the two organizations. It might be that a framework would be developed for state mergers in which some of these states could take the lead.

So, this is going to be an exciting year. Both sides have decided that if it doesn't work this year, that we would not continue negotiating indefinitely. That doesn't mean that we would go

back to being nasty, or to a full-scale war. It doesn't mean that, short of merger, that we could not develop some agreements and areas of cooperation and formalize those. All kinds of things are possible.

But this will be a year in which we will try to put it together. If we do, we will need to think of a time table. Possibly, if it gets put together, there would even be a necessity for a special AFT convention since we don't have one every year. If we entered into an agreement in one year, and the NEA were willing to ratify it next year, it would be kind of, I think, impractical for everybody to sit and wait a full year for the next AFT convention. So, if we have something and that's the kind of timetable that it turns out to be, that's a possibility.

#### THE CLINTON RECORD

Now, we've had a very different two years. Two years ago we came to our convention and many delegates as they spoke to me and to other leaders of the AFT were very skeptical about Bill Clinton. We had watched television and watched all the candidates and a lot of people were very unsure about whether we should support him. But Bill Clinton came to the convention, and by the time he finished speaking and went through the crowd and shook hands with a lot of people and took pictures, there were no doubts. The convention overwhelmingly -- and I think unanimously -- voted to endorse him.

And we all know the election was so close that everybody made the difference. We did too. Without us, he wouldn't have made it, and without every other significant group he wouldn't have made it.

There are ups and downs in the President's popularity and when we read the newspapers these days, right now the downs are there, and sometimes we and our own members are affected by these things. We watch a headline on television each day say something about "today the President did this or did that" and over a week or two or three we get an impression and we start feeling that way, too. But each time we do that we ought to remember that this is a very short period of time that he's been in office, because two years ago he wasn't even elected, and even after he was elected he still wasn't President. He had to wait for Inauguration Day. So we're talking about a period of less than two years, about a year and a half.

During that period of time we have the Family and Medical Leave Act which was previously vetoed by President Bush.

We have the Brady Bill, the first breakthrough on gun control.

We have the National Service Act, which we all stood and applauded when he talked about youngsters doing something idealistic for their country and communities and being enabled to pay their college tuition as a result of performing that service.

He has appointed a Dunlop Commission, chaired by former Secretary of Labor, John Dunlop, an effort to get a revision of the labor laws in recognition of the fact that the laws as they now are tipped against labor and are a major part of the reason for the decline in the numbers of the labor movement.

Also, he appointed the Florio Commission, under former Governor Florio of New Jersey, to look into labor relations for public employees.

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One of the things that the President did was to lift the ban on rehiring all the fired PATCO air controllers.

The School to Work legislation was passed. Goals 2000, which I'll talk about a little more later.

The economic stimulus package, which had a lot of money in it for all kinds of public services, and especially education, unfortunately did not go through.

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

And then I think the last, but not least, last but perhaps most, is the fact that this president has had the courage after 40 years -- nobody since Harry Truman has really raised the issue of national health care for all Americans.

Now, you know, this is one of these things where we in the AFT by and large, we're not out fighting for this because it's going to do something for our members tomorrow. We are among the fortunate ones. Most of us have very good health plans. We have among the best health plans in the entire country. So we're not out there campaigning for this because we're among the people who don't have it.

Why are we doing it? Well, for a lot of reasons. As Secretary Riley pointed out, most of us walk into schools every morning and we see a bunch of kids who are not getting proper health care. We know the fact that they aren't getting it has something to do with the way they behave in school and their inability to do the things that they should be doing in school. We look around at our own negotiations and we see that each time we sit down we get places that have not had an increase in salary for a long time or negotiations that say that we ought to have a higher co-pay or a higher deductible or that we should move away from covering dependents, that dependents ought to be covered by somebody else. So we are in a process of kind of renegotiating what we have right now, and we all have a sneaking suspicion that we may not be able to hold on to what we have forever.

Of course, some of us won't. We'll fall ill and we won't have our jobs any more, and as soon as we lose our jobs we don't have our health insurance -- not much longer anyway, or even if you have it you can't afford to pay for it yourself if your employer isn't paying for most of it.

And, of course, we're also concerned with all those who don't have it.

We're concerned with the fact that instead of improving salaries, we're paying more for the same health care or reduced health care coverage. We're concerned with the fact that while this president and this administration are reducing the deficit -- and if they keep working at it, within a couple of years there actually will be money that they'll have for things like education and for health and other things -- that after a few years of reduction, the new increases in Medicare and Medicaid costs will go up to the point where the deficit starts rising and rising very, very fast unless there is some sort of a health care system that controls costs. So without doing anything, all these savings and all this belt tightening that is taking place now is going to be for nothing because it's going to go right back up again.

But most of all, this thing is not about a lot of technicalities. It really has to do with a sense of decency. Some societies allow people to just starve to death on the streets. In other societies

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when people get too old to work, well, that's just too bad. Your children take care of you or if they can't or won't take care of you, that's it. That's what we had before Social Security. The largest group of people in poverty in the United States used to be senior citizens. Thank God that's no longer so, because we decided in the 1930s that there should be an employer mandate and that employers and employees should contribute a certain amount of money so that when we get to be senior citizens, we can live in dignity and have a certain amount of money to support ourselves.

Practically nobody today would recommend getting rid of the Social Security system, even though it's based on employer mandate; and yet what we get now is this thing that you can't have employer mandates because it's going to drive small businesses into the ground. On television I saw three times that man who owns Godfather Pizza, and the man who owns Godfather Pizza said that if he has to pay these costs, he's going to have to go out of business because he won't be able to compete. Well, of course, what he didn't say is that if we do this, every other pizza parlor in the country is going to have to pay this tax as well, so they're all going to have it. He will have to do it and all the competitors will, and they will all add the few cents on to the price of pizza and we'll all pay for it, and people in that industry will be able to have the dignity of knowing that they have health care coverage.

This campaign is not over. It's very difficult. The House is working on a good bill. The Senate has a whole bunch that are not good, but they really are still writing it and the President is talking to them and the leadership is talking to them, and there are efforts to put together something that's better. The next few weeks will decide, and we will be part of that campaign.

I want to use this opportunity to congratulate all of you. You know, the other side does a terrific job. I know that I've gotten quite an education on health care because I've seen a lot of doctors and been in a lot of hospitals. And every time I sit in a hospital waiting room, there's some literature that sort of tells me that the service you're about to get you wouldn't be able to get if they pass this health care bill and, you know, you're lucky you got sick early.

So they're working at it, and the majority of the American people haven't been heard from. The polls are very good. If you ask people on the polls, "Do you like the Clinton plan," they say no, because they've now been brainwashed that this is going to be socialized medicine and somebody is going to be telling you who your doctor is and everything else. But if you're given the specifics of the plan, if you said, "Do you think employers ought to pay part of the cost," over 70 percent say yes. And if you go through each part of the Clinton plan and ask, "Do you like it," these are all up in the 60s and 70 percent. So the public supports it, although ask the question, "Do you support the Clinton plan," the answer is no, but if you give them all the parts of it, they do. We will need to do some campaigning on this in the next couple of weeks.

#### CLINTON AND LABOR

Now these two years working with this administration has really been very different from the lean previous years. We don't get copies of the legislation when it's too late. As soon as people start thinking about something, we get called in. "What will be your difficulties? What are the problems?" They get worked out. The kind of partnership, the kind of access, the attitude that, "look, don't worry, we're not going to do anything here that's going to hurt you, we'll find some way of working this thing out." So whenever you watch these headlines and whenever you think that,

well, maybe the President has done something today or this week that you don't like so much -- and I must say there are times when I feel the same way, not everything he does are things that I like and sometimes I agree with the headlines -- whenever that happens, I think through this list of accomplishments and I think about the fact that we know that there's somebody in the White House and somebody in the Department of Education and somebody in the Department of Labor who does not want to hurt us and who wants to work things out and who wants to know what our problems are and what are our difficulties and that, basically, on most things they just won't go ahead until those things are worked out. We have a tremendous partnership there; and we should keep talking to our members so that when election day comes around this year and when it comes around two years from now, they don't vote on some silly little spot commercial instead of what their interests are and the interests of America's teachers and the interests of the entire country.

But in spite of that good news, the threats continue. First there are the attacks on unionism. We see more and more companies using striker replacement. Just the other day the Senate maintained the filibuster so that even though the bill was passed in the House of Representatives and we had enough votes to win in the Senate, we could not get the vote on it because we could not get the 60 votes to break a filibuster. Now, this affects not only unions like the United Auto Workers, but our own health care workers in New Jersey had a three-and-a-half month strike, and even though that strike was settled four months ago, some of our members are just returning to work because they had to wait for these permanent replacements to leave. So let's just ask ourselves what kind of weapons does a union have if the law says you can't be fired for going out on strike, but you can be permanently replaced.

There is no other industrial democracy in the world that does that. We've seen further erosion in collective bargaining in the state of Michigan this year where the governor and the legislature pushed through public employee anti-strike legislation, penalties against strikers, and the ability of school boards to impose settlements unilaterally, something that's been happening in Florida as well, more and more of that.

Smaller and smaller parts of private employees in the United States are organizing unions. I made this point in previous years, but we have to keep asking ourselves, could something like this, which just happened in Michigan, have happened 20 years ago? It would have been unthinkable because the labor movement in the private sector was a lot stronger. There is no governor or no legislature who even would have tried to do it. As the private sector unions get weaker, public employees are weaker as well. We're not as strong in being able to hold on to what we have.

#### SCHOOL VOUCHER SCHEMES

Vouchers were defeated in California and defeated overwhelmingly, but they're not gone. They were defeated because there was a good campaign. Both teacher organizations and others contributed a great deal to it, but mostly it was a very poorly written piece of legislation. They were putting something in the constitution permanently which was unchangeable and it was possible for us to go around and sort of say to people, "Hey, this is kind of stupid, you have not tried it, you haven't experimented with it, there are all sorts of experts who say it means this or it means that, you don't know what it means, the experts don't know what it means, and you're about to put it in your constitution and it can't be changed." It's going to come back and they will learn

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from their past mistakes. It's going to come back in smarter form. So we can't just be smug about it and say we defeated it and we killed it and it's gone away. If it's killed, it has at least more than one life and will be back.

#### PRIVATIZING SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Then we have the private management of public schools, something new which has come up. Now, I'm not opposed to the idea in principle. Maybe some day there will be one or two or three companies that get put together which have good managers and are able to come in and eliminate some waste and make some reasonable profit by doing that and running an efficient school system. Maybe. Maybe not. Nobody's done it. But what we do know is that what is out there now is really a disaster. The biggest example is EAI, Education Alternatives, Incorporated, and Lorretta Johnson and Irene Dandridge have had their hands full combating this outfit in Baltimore. Here's an outfit that claims that it's going to manage the schools for the same amount of money that the schools spent, but they went in and were very clever. They negotiated a sum of money for these nine schools considerably more than any other school in Baltimore gets. So they start with more money. Where did that money come from? Well, of course, it's taken away from other schools.

How are they making their profit? Well, they eliminated special education, put the kids in regular classrooms, fired the paraprofessionals who should have been with those kids, raised class size, went out and hired to replace the paraprofessionals recent college graduates at \$7-an hour with no benefits, and claimed that these were intern teachers. So now you have the regular teacher in the classroom and the \$7-an-hour intern. Of course, these interns don't want a \$7-an-hour job with no benefits, so they stay for one week or two weeks or five weeks or eight, whatever time it takes for them to find a job that they really want.

They promised that within one year test scores would soar, that all the kids would be way up there. Instead, test scores are below what the kids were at when EAI came in. They've gone down. EAI tried to take care of this by issuing test scores showing that the test scores had gone up, but they got caught. These were test scores of kids whose scores had gone up -- that is, they were selected youngsters, selected in such a way as to make EAI look good.

One of the outrages of this whole thing is the behavior of the superintendent of schools. Now, we all have at times hired some contractor. You hire somebody to redo your kitchen or to build a garage or to put a swimming pool in, and they say they're going to put in this sort of floor and these cabinets and this sort of sink, and so forth. And you pay them a certain amount up front, then you pay them a certain amount later, and then you pay them a certain amount at the end. And what do you do during this whole period? Well, you watch them very carefully, because if you don't watch them very carefully, you're not going to get what you paid for. If they can substitute cheaper cabinets, if they can substitute a different type of floor or different lighting, they walk away with the money and you've paid for something that you didn't get. Well, in Baltimore instead of a superintendent watching EAI, you've got a superintendent who sounds like he's the president of the company.

He's flying all over the country telling you what a great company it is, so nobody is watching the store. There is no limit on the profits, so the higher the class size or the more

experienced people they fire and replace them with inexperienced people, the more money they get. There's a built-in conflict of interest in the whole relationship.

There is a scandal brewing there, there's no question. When you've got that sort of relationship, something is going to happen, and it's getting very close. But that doesn't stop other school districts. Hartford, Connecticut, over the last month and a half is considering hiring EAI not just to run nine schools or three schools, but to run the entire school system. We don't know how the school board is going to vote, but there we are.

So we now have a new threat to education. EAI is not the only outfit in the business. Edison Project is another one. That's run by Chris Whittle. Much more sophisticated. We can't tell you yet how it's going to work because they haven't managed any schools yet. But, again, both of these outfits kind of run on an antiunion program. The idea is the bureaucrats can't run it and the union is in the way. "Bring us in there and we'll be able to do things that traditional school systems can't do."

### CHARTER SCHOOLS

We have another threat or potential threat, and that's charter schools, and these are sweeping the country, the idea is sweeping the country. Legislation has been passed in a number of states and it's ready to go in a number of others. But this is a lot more of a mixed bag. Charter schools could be a good thing or they could be a disaster. Charter schools are supported by some people who feel that if you had this sort of thing, you'd reinvigorate public schools and we could get rid of vouchers, that it would be a protection against vouchers. You have other people who feel that charter schools could be a substitute for vouchers, that it could be a handy way of giving money out to private schools.

As a matter of fact, in Michigan, where they just passed a charter initiative, there is a fellow who put together a school. In Michigan every public school district is allowed to charter a school. So there's an outfit that put together hundreds of students who are in home study. Their parents are educating them at home. They don't go to school. This fellow put all these kids together and he called it a school, and he went to a little school district that only has a handful of students and is in financial trouble and he said, "If you will charter us for 99 years, we will give you 40,000 a year," and that district did it. They needed the money. So now this home school outfit is going to get \$4 million a year from the state of Michigan for kids who are already being educated at home by their own parents. Now, that's one indication. By the way, \$4 million a year, every year, and if this goes, for the next 99 years -- that's a lot of money.

Some people see charter schools as a basis for a new type of school organization, getting away from the factory model. What should our position be? We have maybe more calls and more people writing to us on this because there's a lot of confusion around it and lots of times when these charter proposals are going through, there's a little bit of each of the problems connected to it.

Well, first, the idea behind charter schools is a good idea, the general idea behind it. It sort of says, look, every organization, every good, effective organization of any size, is organized in a certain general way. For instance, if you have Coca Cola, it's got 150 bottling plants around the world. The central office decides what they're going to make, Coca Cola, and they decide how they're going to check to see whether it's really Coca Cola or whether it's something else that

doesn't meet their standard. And each of these separate plants can decide on how many days a week they're open, how many hour shifts there are, how they advertise. Each of these plants has a tremendous amount of autonomy in deciding how to fulfill the mission of the central organization.

Now, one of the basic things that's wrong with charter schools is that we haven't decided yet what the mission of public schools will be. That's part of what Goals 2000 is. And so what is happening is they're about to have a lot of schools go out and do their own thing. This is being used as an excuse to say, well, look, if we're going to have a lot of schools that are operating on their own, that are independent, then we've got to get rid of union rules, because if the teachers in every one of these schools have to be bound by union rules, then they're not going to be free and creative. And this is being used as an attack to try to weaken or really in many cases to try to say the union contracts ought to be eliminated.

That's something that we're not going to tolerate. This system is not going to be used as a way of breaking the hard won rights that we have fought for. We say first put in a system of standards and assessments and stakes for students. Then create charters. And at that time, if we do need some changes in union rules, we as a union have been very generous in granting waivers if something does stand in the way, we'll take a look at it, but certainly nothing in general and nothing blanket. Members still need rights, and there's no evidence that a lot of the administrative and bureaucratic abuses that take place in regular schools will not take place in charter schools.

There will during the course of this convention be a special order of business on that and there will be an extensive discussion on that during this afternoon's K to 12 session, which I urge all K to 12 delegates to attend.

### GOALS 2000

There is now an answer to these threats, and the answer to these threats is essentially Goals 2000. We can turn to the public and say, look, stop dealing with private schools, stop dealing with the voucher question. We now have a framework. For the first time in the history of this country we're going to decide on what is it that students should learn. Secondly, we're going to decide on what assessments we should use. And third -- and that's not part of the system yet -- we're going to put in a system of stakes where kids know that if they work hard, they're going to succeed and will be rewarded for it, and if they don't work hard, that's different from working hard, that they will not be rewarded for not coming to school or for not doing the work that they're supposed to do.

But Goals 2000 is not a finished product. It's kind of a do-it-yourself kit. Every state has to put together the goals, has to put together the assessments, and that means that this thing could go terribly wrong. For example, you could get standards that are not real standards at all. You could get these very mushy standards that deal with students shall have self esteem when they graduate, instead of talking about whether students are able to read and to write and to do mathematics and know history and know science. We could get a lot of these very mushy ones. So it's very important that we be there to make sure that the standard is set properly.

Secondly, there's this notion that there should be one set of standards for all kids. If there's one set of standards for all kids, it's going to be a very low set of standards, because they're not going to be world-class standards, they're not going to be the standards that other countries use for college entry. We have to accept the idea that there are differences among kids.

If we're going to have the same set of standards for all kids, the whole thing will be a joke. We've got to have different standards. We've got to motivate all kids to work hard to meet the standards that apply to them, and we've got to help the movement to higher groups, that is, don't keep them locked into one group so that they have second chances and third chances. But you can't have one set of standards for everybody or, otherwise, it's not going to work.

World-class standards -- what does that mean? In most places people will sit down and say, 'Well, here's what we want them to do now, let's just make it a little bit harder,' and that's world class. Nonsense. If you want to know what world-class standards are, go to other countries in the world and see what they do. What are their kids learning in the third grade? What are they learning in the fifth grade? What are their college entry exams? What are their graduation exams for middle school? And we can take a look.

You know, when an automobile company wants to become world class, it looks at what other automobile manufacturers are making. They engage in industrial espionage. We need to engage in educational espionage and take a look at what others are doing.

I'm going to quickly rush through some things because I was too ambitious in the number of things that I put down here, and I don't want the person who said a two-hour speech to win the pool.

We've got to work in our states to make sure on the assessment issue. There's a lot of new fangled stuff that's kind of interesting and that ought to be experimented with, like portfolios and performance assessment, but portfolios and performance assessment probably won't be ready for 10 or 15 or 20 years. They're just not developed. And so if we have states that go for these things, we will have a state that does not have an assessment system. We need to do what every other country in the world does, and that is, you have a certain number of short answers, but mostly essay examinations and problem solving.

There will be an effort to make teachers accountable. We need to stand up and say that in every other country in the world the students are accountable. If the students do the work, they get the rewards, and if they don't do the work, they don't get the rewards. And we need to say that over and over again to the public.

#### THE 'FULL INCLUSION' FIGHT

Now, we've taken on a politically incorrect fight this year, but it's all part of this thing -- that's full inclusion of disabled youngsters. There's a big movement in this country that every single youngster, no matter what the disability, must be included in a regular classroom. Now how are we going to achieve Goals 2000 with that? I'm not saying that there aren't lots of youngsters who can be included. I think there are and I think that there should be. But there are some youngsters who are so emotionally disturbed, who are so violent, who are so impossible to deal with, that to tell teachers that you're going to meet world-class standards and you're going to do things which right now look like they're impossible -- they're not impossible, because kids all over the world are doing them, so our kids can do them too. But at the same time that you've got to do these very difficult things, we're going to give you a kid who spits, who defecates in classroom, who licks other kids' faces, who stabs himself with pens and pencils, who does every sort of thing so that every other minute of time you have to be concerned with the safety of that particular

youngster and other youngsters, this is not education reform. This is just the height of insanity, and somebody has to turn to the public and say this.

### SCHOOL SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE

Now, the same is true of the discipline issue. John Cole of the Texas Federation of Teachers started something when a year or two ago he coined a phrase "zero tolerance for violence," but it's not just violence. It's disruption as well. And Tom Mooney has been waging this battle recently in Cincinnati. It's very interesting. It's very interesting that in Cincinnati, where they have a very good discipline procedure, the courts have come in and said, "Look, there's a disparity between the white youngsters and the nonwhite youngsters who are being disciplined and therefore you've got to throw this thing out or you've got to report separately the ethnicity of the kid and the ethnicity of the teacher, and so forth."

One of the things that Tom did was to take a Peter Hart poll of parents and other people in the city of Cincinnati, and what he found was there was overwhelming support, especially from parents in minority communities, for strong discipline in the schools. They want safety for their kids. They're no different from other parents.

Now, of course, we have to provide alternative schools. We're not just kicking youngsters out of school and denying them an education. But, you know, a few weeks ago I read a story which I wrote a column about, a story in the *Wall Street Journal*, of a high school in Washington D.C., where an Afro-American youngster, very bright youngster, had to kind of secretly go to his teachers to study, because the whole school was made up of kids who if they found out that you were studying and learning, they would at the very least beat the hell out of you and they might actually kill you, because the whole notion of the school was that you don't cooperate with the teachers. Now, to think that a youngster in a public school in America would have to secretly go to teachers to get instruction just makes you shiver. It made me want to cry as I read it, to think that we didn't provide a safe place for a youngster like that.

There is no doubt in my mind that if we decide to have tough disciplinary standards, there will be fewer and fewer youngsters who misbehave in ways that they misbehave now. They're doing it because they know that they can get away with it.

When we take polls of parents in Hartford as to why they're thinking of EAI, or when we take polls of parents elsewhere where they're thinking of vouchers, the first thing they talk about is student violence and student discipline, because their kids come home and say here is what happened today. They talk about some other kid and how he threatened the teacher or threatened some other kid, or how they felt threatened in the hallways, or how they can't do their homework because they'll be beaten up because they'll be considered the teacher's pet and cooperating.

We all know that students are workers and the school is a workplace. A workplace is not a place where you can come and just wreak havoc without there being consequences. One of the most important workplace skills that we can teach all of our students is that in this world there are rules as to how one behaves and how one does not behave and that there are serious consequences if you violate those rules.

Now, what I'm asking is, that in the year or two to come, that all of us and the active members, that we involve ourselves in Goals 2000 in our state and our local. Make sure the

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standards are good, not mushy. Make sure they're realistic. How much can you accomplish in 45 minutes a day, five days a week? Don't throw in everything and make it look good, but make it impossible.

Make sure that there are assessments that exist and can actually be administered, not some pie-in-the-sky thing that will look good on paper but doesn't exist and the whole thing will just fall on its face within a very short period of time.

Talk to parents and administrators and politicians within our communities saying that if you tolerate this type of discipline and violence, you might as well throw the whole thing out because you cannot have this sort of an educational program with this sort of turmoil.

We can put this together. Furthermore, in doing this, we will have the support of our communities. The great reason that people are thinking of non-public schools and vouchers and outside outfits, they're angry because all they want is a safe place for their kids. They want a place where they can feel that their kids are getting a fairly traditional education. They're not looking for things that are very new and very fancy. They want their kids to be able to read and to write and to do mathematics.

That's why so many minority parents in our cities take a second job or a third job and save their money to be able to send their kids to a local Catholic school where that sort of an education and that sort of safety is provided.

By the way, we also have a delegation here at this convention from the National Catholic Education Association.

I would like all of you to write letters to the editor, write op-ed pieces, appear on radio, talk to local ministers, talk to business people. This is common sense. This is not some sort of fancy theory. It is something that we can get a tremendous amount of support on. We can create a Goals 2000 that means something. We can create a Goals 2000 that works.

Now, sure, it's politically incorrect. It sounds like you're against youngsters with disabilities when you speak out against total inclusion, but those kids need the right kind of an environment and the right environment is not always the regular classroom.

So, the job, as the Secretary Riley started with Goals 2000, is something he started, and we helped pass through the Congress. But the way to make it work is that each and every one of us, and those we represent, have to make it work in our school districts, in our states. The stakes are very high, and I know that we'll win.

Thank you.

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