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*file  
Shanker*

*JUL 11 1983 June 29/83*

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TIME: 10:30PM  
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STATION: ABC AFFILIATES  
AUDIENCE: 11,700,000  
STATION AUDIENCE

AMER FEDERATION OF TEACHERS  
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M506

TED KOPPEL REPORTING: AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

If the issue of tuition tax credits is one that leaves you slightly glassy-eyed, hang in there. It is one of the more fascinating and therefore, emotional issues of our time. An issue on which intelligent men and women can and do disagree with some heat. What does today's Supreme Court decision mean? It depends very much on where you're coming from. We have four people coming at this issue from four distinct vantage points. Rabbi Menachem Lubensky is director of an Orthodox Jewish social action group which has lobbied in favor of a tuition tax credit.

KOPPEL: ...succinctly, Rabbi, why?

LUBENSKY: Tuition tax credits is just... tuition tax credits is freedom of choice in education. Tuition tax credits says that there can be two strong school systems in this country, one public and one private.

KOPPEL: Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers opposes the tax credit.

KOPPEL: Because, Mr. Shanker...

SHANKER: Public schools in our country have served to bring people of very diverse backgrounds together. We're not Germany, we're not Japan, we're not a single people, we come from many different places. The public schools have brought us together. Now with this decision I think that what's threatened here is the possibility that we'll have separate schools for all of our new immigrants and for people who have been here before and it could very well tear the country apart in the long run and bring what Quebec has done to Canada to the United States.

IN ADDITION:

RON MILLER: The ultimate question about tuition tax credits is are they fair?



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SHANKER: Nobody can come to me as a taxpayer and say, 'I don't like your public facility so give me the money to get something else.' If I don't like the drinking water I can't ask you to pay for my Perrier.

MILLER: But a Perrier diet isn't what most parents are looking for in a private school. These children at Holy Angels are singing Fame, a song of self-worth. And that's really what all parents want their youngsters to get from their education, public or private. A sense of self-worth. And if not fame, at least a chance.

IN ADDITION:

KOPPEL: Joining us live once again now from New York, Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, and Rabbi Menachem Lubensky, representing Hebrew private day schools in the United States. From Chicago, Sociologist Father Andrew Greeley and here in Washington, Dr. Mary Frances Berry, a member of the US Civil Rights Commission and a former Assistant Secretary of Education.

KOPPEL: Mr. Shanker, let me begin with you since you're representing the teachers. What are you scared of?

SHANKER: I'm scared about what's going to happen to American public education. We're going to organize the teachers wherever they are, whether they're in private schools or public schools. We do that now. Wherever they're working they're going to want higher salaries, they're going to want pension, they're going to want job security. I don't think the teachers are the issue here. I think the real question is that just before the Supreme Court decision, this country was on the road to rebuilding its public schools. We were talking about excellence in education. We were talking about standards in education. And all of a sudden with this Supreme Court decision, the issue is going to be in the Congress and in 50 states and the 16,000 school districts, not the

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quality of our public schools, but the question of whether the 10% of the parents who can already afford to send their children to private school should get taxpayer's money to help them do that.

IN ADDITION:

KOPPEL: Mr. Shanker.

SHANKER: I want to forget about this business of whether it goes to higher or lower income people. I was a teacher for many years in New York City's public schools and I can tell you that the toughest kids I had to handle were kids who were kicked out of parochial schools because they couldn't handle them. We in the public schools didn't have that choice. If you really want to create competition, I'll make a proposal to Dr. Lubensky and to Rev. Greeley and that is instead of picking off the best kids, the kids who are making it in public school and taking the tax credit and moving them over to private schools which will even lower the grade averages and learning atmosphere in public schools, why don't you try something like this? Why don't you take those kids who are three or four years behind in reading and math, who are terrible in terms of attendance, and who have a terrible discipline record? In other words, the kids who are really failing in public schools, and let's give them a scholarship and let's send them to your school, Dr. Lubensky and let's send them to parochial schools. Let's take the kids who aren't making it. That's not what's being proposed. They don't want real competition. Real competition means that they would be working on the same kids, with the same kids, that the public schools are working on.

IN ADDITION:



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KOPPEL: A couple of minutes ago Albert Shanker issued a interesting challenge to Rev. Greeley and to Rabbi Lubensky, namely take some of the rough problems that we've got in the public schools and handle them in your schools. What about that? Take some of the kids who are the educational problems, who have reading problems, who have attendance problems.

KOPPEL: What would you say, Rabbi?

LUBENSKY: I would say first we're doing it. We're setting up special programs, we have models in all our schools, in all different denominations. But secondly, I can't understand how it is that Mr. Shanker can't see his way to a \$300 tuition tax credit, but suddenly he's offering us full scholarships which amounts to about \$2,200. And let's not forget the fact that private school students save the taxpayer \$11 billion by not going to the public schools, at a time when public education is receiving about thirteen and a half billion from the federal government alone.

KOPPEL: Father Greeley.

GREELEY: If there was a full tuition for a Catholic school student it would only be a \$400 a year scholarship. The results of our research show that it is precisely among the very poor and among those that have the worse educational backgrounds that the Catholic schools have the highest effect. If your father went to college or if you're in the academic course, you might just as well be going to the public high school. It's the young people whose parents didn't go to college and whose own educational background is weak that benefit most in the Catholic school. And to repeat my earlier point, they are not isolated from the rest of society as Mr. Shanker suggests. The evidence against that nonsense is just overwhelming.

KOPPEL: It seems to me that both you, Father, and Rabbi Lubensky are ignoring the central issue in Mr. Shanker's challenge and that is you can throw them out of school. They can't. What do you do about that?

LUBENSKY: It's a theoretical question, it's not happening.



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GREELEY: First of all, the number of people that are thrown out of the Catholic schools, and I did not research on this, each year is very small. The Archdiocese of Chicago was less than 40 a couple of years ago. So there's not that many thrown out and I suspect that the disciplinary problems in the public school take care of themselves eventually, too. People simply drop out. Finally, there's an upper limit to how much you can accept in a classroom and expect the educational process to go on.

(These Teleclips are extractions.)

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