

# THE Center for Education Reform



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## ALLEN CALLS NEA POLL "BUNK"

Jeanne Allen, President of the Center for Education Reform today sharply criticized the National Education Association (NEA) for its "transparent ploy to convince the media that the public opposes school choice and supports the NEA's liberal, labor union agenda of more federal spending and control of schools."

"If it weren't so dishonest, it would be laughable," Allen said. "The NEA buys a noted political pollster to ask loaded questions that are specifically designed to elicit the response the union is looking for. Then they wave it around to show how mainstream they are. It's bunk and they know it."

Although the NEA's survey purports to be a scientific sampling of 1,000 Republicans, 69 percent of those surveyed did not have children in school. In addition to the skewed sampling universe, the wording of the survey's questions further biased the results. For example, interviewees were not asked if they supported school choice scholarship programs for low-income families, but instead were asked whether the public should subsidize private schools.

A summary of the survey results also seemed to indicate public support for the federal government's role in public education, when in reality, in answering the question "Do you think the federal government should have a major role in education?" 70 percent of respondents said the federal government should have a minor, or no role in education.

"It's biased, skewed data," Allen said of the survey results. "Linda knows better than this. She even admits that asking the survey questions differently would have yielded different results. All you have to do is look at the way the 'facts' were presented and you can see how skewed the information is." (Linda DiVal is the Republican pollster hired by the NEA to conduct its survey.)

Allen said that the NEA's polling effort was indicative of just how out of touch the union is with the desires of the public and the needs of children. "What has been shown in numerous state and national polls over the last several years," Allen said, "is that the public supports giving parents the opportunity to choose where they send their children to school. And that support includes allowing parents, particularly poor parents, to use *their* tax money to send *their* children to the schools, including private schools, of *their* choice."

The Cleveland school choice program, which provides publicly-funded support to low-income parents who want to send their children to private, including parochial schools, attracted more than 6,500 applicants, and the Milwaukee school choice program has received similar support as an effective means for giving parents the best opportunity for ensuring a quality education for their children. A Franklin County, Ohio Common Pleas Court recently upheld the constitutionality of the Cleveland program, which will begin this fall. The Milwaukee program remains on hold pending a court ruling on its constitutionality.

"This is about helping children," Allen concluded. "It's not about polls and political gamesmanship, particularly biased polls designed to score a partisan victory."

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