

COLUMN LEFT

Thanks, But No Thanks

By LARRY CABALLERO

As a veteran public school teacher for 38 years, it's really laughable to read last week's Column Right when the writer, who is the president of the Cerritos Republican Club, is feeling sad for us poor teachers because "so many teachers who give themselves to our nation's youth are being distracted from their mission by having to fight their own unions."

Nonsense.

He says that "many" teachers are expressing their opposition to recent actions by their unions to raise fees for political purposes. He mentions the California Teachers Association as one of the major culprits. I would like to know how many is "many."

First of all, teaching is a very difficult job, and that's why 50 percent of us leave the teaching profession after the first five years. If it were not for our teacher associations - unions, as the writer calls them - the percentage of teachers leaving would probably be higher.

I can assure the writer that we are not being distracted by our "unions." We know that if it were not for those professional organizations, who work day after day to protect our rights, we would have a difficult time indeed just to survive. As it is now, most new teachers are unable to afford a home or raise a family. And that's after five years of college!

If it were not for the "unions," we teachers would not be able to afford decent health care for our families or be eligible for liability insurance in case we

are accused of some alleged wrongdoing. If it were not for the "unions," I doubt any teacher would be able to retire with the hope of living a decent life.

Thank you, but no thanks to the writer who is so interested in our welfare. As a member of the California Teachers Association state council that represents 345,000 teachers, I can also assure the writer that we were more than happy to pay a few dollars more a year to have our professional rights protected by a governor who call us "special interests."

I guess I shouldn't complain since the last Secretary of Education called teachers "terrorists."

Since the writer seems to care so much about us, perhaps he should be writing to the governor to ask him to repay the two billion dollars he took away from us after promising to give it back to the schools this year. The writer is correct - we are expressing our opposition as never before, but it's not against our "unions," it's against the governor who lied to the schools and the children of this state.

And now he wants the voters to support Proposition 74 that would extend the period before teachers are eligible for due process under the law. Proposition 75 would require loads of paperwork in order to make it more difficult for employee unions to make political contributions that would benefit their employees, and Proposition 76 would give the governor the power to cut the budget on his own without discussion with the state legislature. What a guy.

As for the writer, don't be so worried about us being distracted by the "unions." We know who is out there caring for the needs of parents, teachers and students, and it's not the governor, or some bogus legal defense organization.

Text of Article

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Larry Caballero
Newsletter Editor, Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

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