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ENLOW: No educrat let go

Federal bailout plan puts teachers before kids - again

By Robert Enlow

5:40 p.m., Friday, May 28, 2010



Illustration: Teacher S.O.S. by Alexander Hunter for The Washington Times

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Question of the Day

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During this recession, state governments are being forced to conduct long-needed reviews of their budgets. In some cases, this means eliminating personnel, something that is always difficult.

In public school districts across the country, teachers are facing layoffs, thanks to years of oversized budgets and recent shrinking revenues. But with the federal government's ability to print money, some people, including President Obama, want a bailout for public schools - \$23 billion in the proposed Keep Our Educators Working Act.

Obviously, educating children is critical to our future, but this irresponsible behavior begs the simple question of why moms and dads lose their jobs while school administrators, educrats and teachers get unlimited job protection. Maybe it's because the federal government can print money without considering what it will cost our children. And maybe it's because the education monopoly is once again in overdrive to protect the adults at the expense of kids.

For too long, education spending has been out of control - massive increases without corresponding results. In Washington, for example, officials claim the per-pupil expenditure is \$8,322 for the 49,000 pupils in its school system. Yet the Cato Institute says that if you do some honest math, the number is actually about \$25,000 per child, which is about the same as the cost in Newark, NJ. Yet both districts have some of the worst schools in the nation, and parents have lined up in droves to enroll in school-choice and charter school programs.

Here's the problem: Simply printing money to bail out teachers helps neither the kids nor the teachers, unless, of course, your real and only aim is job security. The teaching profession, not to mention children, would be better off if some teachers were in different jobs. It's always better to have a school full of good teachers than have the federal government prop up a system in which everybody gets to keep his or her job - with no regard to whether teachers are good or bad.

If this president and Congress really wanted to help children and benefit teachers, they would emancipate students so their parents could use their own tax dollars to obtain educational services wherever they wanted - at charter schools, virtual schools or with a voucher to transfer to the private school of their choice. But that's not really what they want. Instead, they want to maintain a status quo that is designed to benefit the adults rather than brighten the future of children.

Chicago and many other major inner-city school systems make national headlines because they are so violent that children are hurt or killed going to school or even while in school. The dropout rate continues to plague many urban areas and rural states, as does the achievement gap. And while per-pupil expenditures nationwide have increased 60 percent since 1985, academic achievement is not improving with it, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics.

None of this is going to change with yet another bailout or by doing the same thing we have done for the past 40 years. If Congress wants to print more greenbacks and push America closer to economic collapse through another multibillion-dollar bailout, it would be wiser to spend the money on those who will be inheriting our nation's debt and might make more rational decisions than we are making right now- our children.

Bail out the kids before giving another penny to the adults. Give them vouchers and a real chance to save our

bacon in the future. It might be our only chance.

Robert Enlow is president and chief executive of the Foundation for Educational Choice, the school-choice legacy foundation of Milton and Rose Friedman.

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Start with administrators! The county I live in has over 100 employees in headquarters, at least one for every seven teachers. And the powers keep creating new, expensive positions.

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It is the same all over. With few exceptions, teachers are not teachers anymore. They could care less about kids. All that they care about is fewer hours, more pay and we get uneducated kids. This has to change.

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First and foremost, abolish the federal Dept. of Education. Secondly, abolish public unions. Third, start at the top by firing most of your local "administrators" and work your way down. That's the formula if you really want to get serious about cleaning up the educational system in this country. Anything less will continue to further the destruction of any hope for saving our children. Last, but by no means least, stop all forms of support for America's colleges with taxpayer dollars. Colleges and universities who have done nothing to curb their out of sight expenses in the indoctrination of young minds should be forced into the market of reality.

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