

Buffalo Forum



Local Publication of the
U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization

Workers of all countries, unite!

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February 19, 2016

Vol. 20 #2

ELECTIONS 2016

Take a Pro-People, Antiwar Stand

The long spectacle of the presidential primaries intensifies in the coming weeks, as more than 30 states vote by March 15. Many of the larger states, involving more than 100 delegates, vote in this period. Delegates are assigned according to a complex formula decided by each party, with some states having a winner take all, and others dividing it proportionally, as New Hampshire did. Among the larger states voting are Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas.

Many consider that the Democratic primary will basically be settled by March 15, in favor of Clinton. The Republican primary will likely continue longer, with Jeb Bush still having large amounts of funds to pursue his campaign. He is expected to do well in South Carolina, which votes February 20 for Republicans and 27 for Democrats. Bush has a sizeable machinery

Elections 2016 • 2

FLINT AND BUFFALO LEAD POISONING

Safe Water and Housing Are Rights

The crisis in Flint has brought to the fore that safe water is a right that government is duty-bound to provide. Instead, Flint water that continues to be unsafe to drink and now government is threatening to shut off water to families who have refused to pay for poisoned water. Costs

for Flint water are among the highest in the country.

The Flint crisis is entirely government-made. The poisoning of the entire city is a crime to be punished, beginning with the Governor and his appointed financial

Safe Water and Housing are Rights • 3

Fighting for the Human Right to Water in Flint

Darcey O'Callaghan

The whole country is focused on what is happening in Flint, Michigan, where the entire city has been poisoned by lead and other toxins in the water. But this is no tragic accident; this is the very definition of a man-made water crisis.

Michigan (my home state) has a draconian, undemocratic law that allows the governor to appoint an "emergency manager" in cities with budgetary issues. Flint's emergency manager is the

Fighting for Right to Water in Flint • 4

CHILDREN IMPACTED ARE TRIPLE STATE AVERAGE

Government Responsible for Eliminating Lead Poisoning in Buffalo

Buffalo families contend with a serious problem of lead poisoning, which impacts young children most severely. It can cause serious and permanent brain damage, leading to mental and behavioral disorders, learning disabilities and more. The government can readily solve the

Eliminate Lead Poisoning in Buffalo • 3

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO:

Refuse State Tests and Receivership

Teachers, students, staff and parents are stepping up their efforts to refuse state tests and receivership. In doing so they are contending with efforts by the state and local officials to confuse and frighten those acting to defend the rights of their children.

State officials are promoting that there is a moratorium on "consequences" from

the state Common Core tests, which even the Governor now admits are invalid and seriously flawed. However, there is not a moratorium on the hours of tests themselves. Why not? Why force students to take hours of tests that are not valid and in the eyes of many students and parents harmful and developmentally

You Can Choose to Refuse • 10



Teachers Demonstrate : p.14-15

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in the state, as well as in Texas and Florida. As of February 1, Bush's campaign and the super PACs working for his candidacy had funds that totaled over \$155 million, dwarfing what the other candidates have raised. Even if he loses, he will remain a force in the elections.

One of the things already emerging from the primaries is the strong anti-establishment sentiment among voters across party lines. There is broad anger with the existing politicians, government dysfunction and a drive for representatives that actually represent the voters and do what they say.

The primaries are an effort by the rich to capture this sentiment and rein it back in to acceptance of the existing set up, rather than rejection of it. The issue presenting for those wanting to give expression to an anti-establishment stand is to find the ways and means to reject the existing set-up and break with both Democrats and Republicans. The discussion is not so much about who someone is voting for — which serves to pit people against each other and line people up behind candidates, thus drawing people into the establishment set up.

Rather it is how to pursue a stand of rejecting the establishment. How to give expression to the stand of the people, across party lines, which is a pro-people stand against the attacks on rights, such as in education, of immigrants, refugees and Muslims, of workers and their unions — pursued by Democrats and Republicans alike.

The stand of the majority is also an anti-war stand. Depending on the situation in each state and the existing movements of the people, an anti-establishment stand is one that rejects Democrats and Republicans and favors those who are pro-people and anti-war.

In a situation where Clinton secures the nomination, all those who have worked to oppose her, such as those backing Bernie Sanders, have the opportunity to continue to build the movements for rights by breaking with the Democrats. Serious consideration needs to be given to ensuring that the anti-establishment stand being expressed advances further by refusing to accept the establishment parties and fighting instead for empowerment of the people.

Upcoming Primary Votes

Super Tuesday, March 1: Alabama, Alaska (Republican (R) caucus) Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, N. Dakota (R-caucus) Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and Wyoming (R- caucus) vote.

March 5: Kansas, Kentucky (R-caucus) Louisiana, Maine (R-caucus) and Nebraska (Democratic (D) caucus).

March 6: Maine (D-caucus) and Puerto Rico

(Republican primary for 10 delegates, though Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico cannot vote for president)

March 8: Hawaii (R-caucus), Idaho (R-primary), Michigan, Mississippi (and Democrats abroad, 17 delegates)

March 12: DC (R-caucus)

March 15: Florida, Illinois, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio



I • SAFE WATER AND HOUSING ARE RIGHTS

managers. It is also a further example that solutions to problems of today cannot be found with state takeovers and use of executive powers, but with the people themselves. The people of Flint are the ones who not only identified the problem but acted to solve it and continue to do so.



Their fight has also brought out that lead poisoning is a nationwide problem. For many cities, like Flint, it is in the water and outdated water and sewer systems. For others, like Buffalo, it is lead paint in homes. For all, government has responsibility to act swiftly to fully fund whatever is needed and organize to remove the lead.

The refusal to provide such basic necessities as safe water and housing is also a further indication that those in government are no longer fit to rule. The people of Flint have shown they could do a much better job. The people of Buffalo have long demanded that the more than 85,000 houses most at risk for lead poisoning should be immediately



inspected and fixed, by the government. It is a social problem that requires a social solution. It is not a matter for individual homeowners.

Safe housing and water are rights that belong to all as human beings! Funding can readily be found by refusing to hand out the billions to the rich and instead fund the rights of the people. Solutions can be found by removing those who are unfit to rule and empowering the people

I • ELIMINATE LEAD POISONING IN BUFFALO

problem through free home inspections and paying for whatever repairs are needed (such as new paint to eliminate chips and dust). Instead, on a yearly basis, less than 3% of the estimated 85,000 housing units most at risk for lead poisoning are inspected by the Erie County Health Department.

In Flint, 4.9 percent of children tested for lead had elevated levels. In 2014 in New York State outside of New York City, the figure was 6.7 percent. Children in Buffalo are testing positive for lead poisoning at more than triple the state average, the worst lead problem of any community in upstate. Neighborhoods on the city's east side especially and west side accounted for three of the four ZIP codes in all of Upstate New York reporting the most new cases. These involve children with blood lead levels

that are at least double the minimum that the Center for Disease Control says requires medical intervention.

In 2015, Erie County reported 295 children who tested positive for lead in their blood. That is a 14 percent increase from the prior year. Buffalo children account for 93% of the county total, 273 children. In addition, the number of Buffalo children who tested positive for higher amounts of lead needing medical intervention are up by 1/3 — 123 children. And these are just the numbers for children tested, about 10,000. There could be many others not tested.

The main source of lead poisoning, according to Erie County Health Commissioner Gale Burstein, is chipping paint inside and outside of Buffalo's old housing stock. Burstein considers lead poisoning the biggest health risk

facing young children in the city. Much of Buffalo's housing stock is suspected of containing lead because most of it was built before lead paint was banned in 1978. In fact, Census data shows Buffalo has the highest percentage of homes built before World War II than any large city in the country.

Even so, none of the city's 39 building inspectors is certified to conduct tests to detect lead hazards. This job has been given to the county, which has only a dozen inspectors, who have various other responsibilities in addition to testing for lead. Given the seriousness of the problem, it is a crime that state, county and local governance do not immediately act to eliminate this problem.

Safe housing, like safe water, is a right that government at all levels are duty-bound to provide.

America's Water Crisis Goes Beyond Flint

Jo Miles, Mary Grant, Food and Water Watch, February 16, 2016

The water crisis in Flint shows how badly we need to fund clean water. So why is the Obama Administration cutting federal support for our water infrastructure?

The ongoing crisis in Flint, Michigan, shines a spotlight on our nation's water woes. It is an indictment of our broken democracy.

Every day, we hear a new horror story from Flint: Lead poisoning. Brain damage in kids. Legionnaire's disease. Permanently damaged pipes that will cost millions to replace. Water shutoffs for families who refuse to pay for poisoned water, but still rely on it for basic sanitation. Officials who knew about the problem months before it came to light, and lied about it.

Flint's situation is appalling, and unfortunately, the city is not alone. The spotlight on Flint has brought to light other cities that are struggling with lead and other contamination in their water, most recently Sebring, Ohio. Cities across the country have aging pipes, and while spectacular mismanagement in Flint has worsened their situation, costly repairs are needed in many places to keep the water safe.

This is the time for the federal government to take action and provide the funding

that our community water systems desperately need, but the Obama Administration has failed to do so. In fact, the budget Obama delivered to Congress on Tuesday cuts the main source of federal funding for our water infrastructure by 11 percent. This is the latest in a long history of such cuts: federal funding for water infrastructure has been cut back by 74 percent since 1977 (In the 1970s, Congress passed the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act and began allocating more funding to fix our aging water infrastructure. But since then, federal funding went from \$17 billion in 1977 (adjusted for inflation) on our nation's water systems to \$4 billion in 2014.)

...The proposed budget provides a total of \$2 billion to the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Fund — a \$257 million decrease over what Congress appropriated for 2016.

When communities face tough decisions about maintaining their water systems, federal funding can make all the difference. The State Revolving Funds are the traditional and reliable source of federal aid for our water and sewer systems. These state-managed funding programs prioritize

the most needy projects to deliver the biggest public health outcomes.

Whether it is kids poisoned by lead in Flint and other towns, water service shutoffs in Baltimore and Detroit or water contaminated by factory farms in Ohio and Iowa, we face a growing water crisis that requires real, long-term solutions that keep water clean, affordable and democratically controlled. That is why we need a dedicated funding source for water infrastructure to ensure that communities receive the money they need to protect the health of their residents.

Safe water is non-negotiable. Access to affordable service is non-negotiable. Clean drinking water is a human right, and in the United States, people should not have to worry about whether their water is safe to drink.

That is why we are calling on Congress and President Obama to fund our clean water infrastructure.

Lessons from Flint and the Price of Water Privatization

U.S. communities are shifting toward keeping their water infrastructure public, **Water Crisis Goes Beyond Flint • 5**

I • FIGHTING FOR RIGHT TO WATER IN FLINT

one who decided to change their water source in order to save money (in April 2014). Flint's democratically elected City Council voted 7 to 1 in March 2015 to "do all things necessary" to return to purchasing clean water from Detroit, but the emergency manager vetoed the measure as "incomprehensible" because he considered the water safe and believed it was more important to save money.

That plan backfired disastrously, with Flint's residents suffering the consequences. Flint will need as much as \$1.5 billion in improvements to reverse the damage done to its water system, while residents face a lifetime of healthcare costs from lead poisoning. [The emergency manager, Darnell Earley, largely responsible for the Flint disaster, was then appointed, by

the Governor, as emergency manager for the Detroit public schools and its 50,000 students — BF Ed. Note.]

It is Governor Rick Snyder who failed the people of Flint and must be held accountable. He appointed the emergency manager who switched Flint's water source to a polluted river in the name of cost cutting. His administration dismissed the water concerns of Flint residents. Worst of all, his administration knew about the city's water problems for months but told Flint residents it was safe to drink...

Most recently, on January 15, I joined [others in] Michigan to deliver over 27,000 petition signatures to the Department of Health and Human Services, urging them to provide the help Flint

residents need.

It is great that the truth is finally coming to light and that several state and federal officials have already resigned, but we are a long way from justice. Flint's story is a case of environmental racism at its worst, where money was prioritized over human rights and democracy.

Unbelievably, the city of Flint is threatening to shut off water to those who are behind on their bills, even though people still depend on this undrinkable water for basic sanitation like flushing the toilet and washing hands. We have called for a moratorium on billing until the water is safe to drink and urge people to sign the petition demanding no shut offs for Flint residents who refuse to pay for poisoned water.

PETITION

Demand Clean Drinking Water for All!

Access to safe drinking water is a human right. But too many communities across the country have aging infrastructure without enough resources to fix problems.

Funding for public water systems has been slashed time and again. As a result, cities are forced to make decisions about how to get the funding they need — like by selling the water system to a private company, increasing rates to levels so high that residents cannot pay, or in Flint,

Michigan's case, switching the drinking water from a safe source to a very polluted river to save a buck.

No family should ever be put in the situation that Flint families are facing, period.

The federal government should continue to provide funding for water infrastructure so that everyone in America can have access to locally managed, safe and clean drinking water. With many systems advancing in age

(some more than 100 years old), we need this funding more than ever. We must renew our commitment to public water.

Sign the petition to ask your lawmakers to support access to safe and locally managed drinking water for all!

(To sign petition go to:

https://secure.foodandwaterwatch.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=2487#_ga=1.123620104.2066042307.1454837899)

4 • WATER CRISIS GOES BEYOND FLINT

and that is a good thing. But stopping water privatization is only the first step.

As new information comes out every day about the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, the state of our country's water feels dire. Flint children will suffer the lifelong consequences of lead poisoning after the state took over the city's water system and switched the city's water source from the safe Detroit water system to the polluted Flint River all in the name of cutting costs.

Flint's situation is appalling, outrageous and frightening. It is a warning about what is at stake when communities lose local control of their water and outside officials come in and run water systems like businesses, putting money before public health and human lives.

Although we still have a long way to go to get justice for Flint, the good news is that more and more communities recognize the need to protect our water and run water systems like public services — not profit centers. Cities are moving in the right direction: toward local, public, democratic control of our water.

Food & Water Watch conducted a comprehensive survey of the 500 largest U.S. water systems — the largest survey of its kind — and found that private systems charge 58 percent more than public systems on average. That is an extra \$185 a year for a typical household. The survey found:

- In New York and Illinois, private systems charged about twice as much as their public counterparts.
- In Pennsylvania, private systems

charged 84 percent more than public systems, adding \$323 onto the typical household's annual water bill.

- In New Jersey, private systems charged 79 percent more than public systems, adding \$230 onto the typical household's annual water bill.

Locally controlled public water systems tend to be better all around for residents than privately owned systems. We have seen that when communities privatize their water systems, they frequently experience problems. Privatized systems have:

Worse service: private companies may cut corners, respond slowly to service requests, and let existing infrastructure deteriorate in order to improve their short-term profits.

Increased costs: when companies have state-sanctioned monopolies on water service, there is little incentive to keep costs down.

Profit-motivated decision-making: companies can expand and improve service where it benefits their bottom line, not where people need it most.

Less accountability: Because private companies aren't accountable to voters the way public systems are, when problems occur, people have few options.

Local governments often try to auction



off their water or sewer systems to raise money during a budget crunch. But water is one of a community's most essential assets, and one that ought to be protected. Once leaders make the decision to privatize, the damage can be difficult to reverse.

The data shows that more and more communities are opting — and fighting when necessary — for public water. It is a critical step, but local efforts are not enough to protect our water for the long term. We need to invest in keeping our water service clean, safe and affordable for everyone.

Cities across the country have aging pipes and need expensive updates to their water systems. Much of our water infrastructure was built around the same time that Henry Ford developed the Model T. We need to fix and replace our pipes, upgrade our treatment plants and make sure that no more cities suffer the way Flint is.

U.S. Military Spending Continues to Soar

U.S. President Barack Obama said in his final State of the Union address on January 12 that the U.S. spends “more on our military than the next eight nations combined.” In a February 12 commentary entitled, “Military Spending and Profit” for the Strategic Culture Foundation, Brian Cloughley calls it “a startling and yet repulsive boast.” Cloughley says, “What is less surprising is the U.S. decision to refocus military spending, thus boosting shares in military industry companies.”

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) calculates that in 2014 (the most recent year for full figures), the U.S. spent three times as much as China and more than seven times as much as Russia. It also says that U.S. military spending was higher than the next seven countries combined, rather than eight, “but the message is still there,” Cloughley points out. According to SIPRI, in 2014 the U.S. was responsible for 34 per cent of the world’s military spending.

On February 2, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter gave a speech on defense affairs at the Economic Club in Washington, DC. The Economic Club says, “For over 25 years [it] has provided a forum for prominent business and government leaders who have influenced economic and public policy both here and abroad. Members represent over 600 businesses and organizations [in Washington, DC] that are at the forefront of the private sector economy.”

Carter told the Economic Club “the Pentagon would seek a \$582.7 billion budget next year and reshape spending priorities to reflect a new strategic environment marked by Russian assertiveness and the rise of Islamic State.”

“It is Mr. Carter’s own country that is indulging in confrontational military ‘assertiveness’ all around the world, in every region and ocean, using hundreds of military bases that are thousands of miles away from its own borders,” Cloughley writes.

He says Carter was reported as saying that “the Pentagon would ask for \$3.4 billion to boost military training and exercises aimed at reassuring European countries

concerned about Russia, which seized Ukraine’s Crimean peninsula in 2014 and has worried NATO allies with its strategic bomber flights,” and adds:

“He ignores his own spokesman’s declaration that ‘We conduct B-52 [strategic nuclear bomber] flights in international air space [around China] all the time,’ and that the US operation Polar Grawl of B-52 jaunts is aimed specifically against Russia in ‘demonstrating the credible and flexible ability of our strategic bomber force.’”

Polar Grawl “saw B-52s complete simultaneous, round-trip sorties from Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, and Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, to the Arctic and North Sea regions,” Cloughley says.

“Obama said the request, a four-fold increase from last year’s \$789 million, would enable the United States to strengthen the US military posture in Europe. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg called the move a ‘clear sign’ of the US commitment to European security,” Cloughley reports.

Defense Secretary Carter was reported to have said in his February 2 speech “the Pentagon plans to spend about \$2 billion over the next five years to buy more Raytheon Company Tomahawk missiles and upgrade their capabilities, bringing the US inventory of the missiles to above 4,000.”

At midday on February 2, Raytheon shares were valued at \$123.47 each. By 4 pm the next day they had increased to \$128.07.

This is an example of the politicization of private interests. It is no coincidence that the U.S. Defense Secretary was previously a “a consultant to defense contractors and when he went back to the Pentagon in 2009, he had to get a special waiver because of his work for companies like Mitre Corp, and Global Technology Partners, a defense consulting firm,” Cloughley points out. Carter was also a Senior Partner in Global Technology, “a specialized group of investment professionals who have formed a strategic relationship with DLJ Merchant Banking Partners to acquire and invest in technology, defense, aerospace and related businesses

worldwide.”

Reuters reported that following his speech to the Economic Club, Carter then “flew to the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake in California to get updates on new high-end weapons being developed

and tested there, including precision Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles built by Lockheed Martin Corp. He said the [defense] department would spend nearly \$1 billion over the next five years to buy the new missiles.”

This announcement had an effect on Lockheed shares as well, Cloughley writes. “At 10 am on February 2, just before the Carter statement, they were at \$208.87 — and by 2:30 pm on February 3 they had shot up to \$213.53. It’s interesting to reflect on who might have made a profit.”

In conclusion, Cloughley argues, “Russia wants to trade with Europe. It wants mutual prosperity. Russia wants to flourish and thrive, economically and socially. Its government knows that it can’t achieve this objective for its people if it doesn’t have full, open, mutually beneficial trade with surrounding countries and with all of Europe. [...]”

“U.S.-NATO warnings about threats to ‘European security’ are a bogus justification for the war drums to be pounded and for the armed forces of U.S.-NATO to be given even higher priority in their confrontational stance against Russia. And this is welcome news for the big spenders on military equipment in Washington, where members of the Economic Club will be rejoicing in their wealth and ever-increasing profits. But they and the other warmongers had better be careful: what goes around, comes around.”



Navy Uses U.S. Citizens as Pawns in Domestic War Games

Dahr Jamail, Truthout

Beginning in mid-January, Navy SEALs practiced unannounced and clandestine combat beach landings across Washington State's Puget Sound and many other coastal areas of that state.

The simulated combat exercises, which included the use of mini-submarines and other landing craft, deposited Navy SEALs carrying "simulated weapons" on 68 beach and state park areas in Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Washington's west coast, unbeknownst to most of the relevant government agencies.

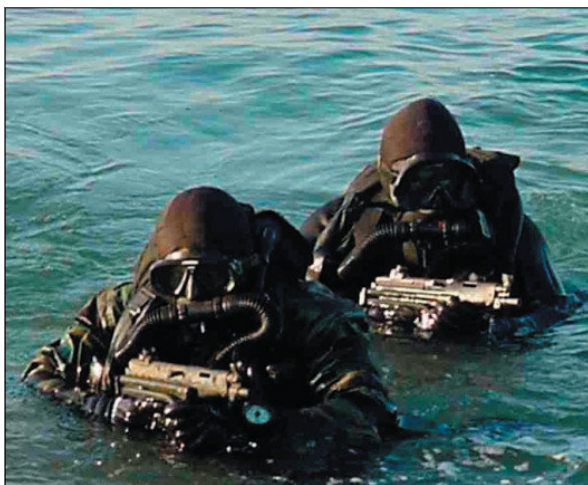
Internal Navy emails, two slide shows and other documents reveal the vast extent of the operations. They also reveal the fact that the Navy labeled the relevant files as "For Official Use Only" and emails as "Attorney-Client privilege," a move that exempts such documents from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public concern for what is clearly an ongoing domestic military expansion is growing.

In the new scenario, which the military calls "realistic military training," Navy SEALs carrying "simulated" weapons may also travel across public and private property within city limits, and may swim through public and private marinas occupied by people living on boats. They could conduct war game patrols on roads through residential communities. In addition to public tribal, state, federal and county lands, there are many properties on the Navy's list of training sites marked as private.

Naval plans include the use of special reconnaissance teams conducting patrols, which are authorized to go on simulated "direct action" missions. The definition of "direct action" is "short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets."

War Games in Peace Parks

Across Washington, the Navy's war game



exercises will be carried out across 68 beach areas around the state, many of which lie within the boundaries of state parks.

Many of these beaches are popular with the public and contain campgrounds and marinas. Navy SEAL activities will also occur well inland from the beaches. Each site for the exercises will be "utilized" two to eight times per year, and "events" can last between two and 72 hours.

Naval maps of the areas where the exercises will occur show large areas where "surveillance and reconnaissance" will occur, along with "direct action" areas and "insertion and extraction" zones.

According to the documents, a "safety" buffer of 500 to 1,000 meters will also be maintained by a Navy support team in boats, vehicles and on foot, which will prevent bystanders from entering the areas.

This amounts to periodic closings of public land, including state parks and fishing areas, with no public comment periods or government oversight. Given that some of the exercises will entail Navy SEALs swimming through marinas where people live on their boats, along with exercises and patrols through residential neighborhoods and private land, maintaining a "safety" barrier of 500 to 1,000 meters simply does not seem possible.

One of many areas slated for direct actions in the Navy's plans is Fort Worden State Park, on the northeast tip of the Olympic Peninsula. The Navy has designated a large area atop a hill there — a place that

contains popular public trails and picnic areas — for its war exercises.

The hilltop location includes a seating area for quiet contemplation, called Memory's Vault, which is referred to as a "peace park." The public in the area will likely see the Navy's use of this part of the park as another of the many gestures of contempt they have seen from the military.

According to Karen Sullivan, former assistant regional director at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of External Affairs and a retired endangered species biologist, the Navy's actions are also illegal.

Sullivan is part of the West Coast Action Alliance, one of two large multi-state and international citizen groups that have tasked themselves with watch-dogging the Navy, due to what they believe are ongoing violations of the law, blatant acts of disrespect toward human and environmental health, and ongoing bellicose behavior by the military branch.

According to Sullivan, the Navy's actions are a violation of several laws, including the *National Environmental Policy Act*, *Administrative Procedures Act*, *National Historic Preservation Act* and possibly others, as well as a violation of the public trust doctrine.

"They have exempted themselves from disclosing to the public, and even to state and federal agencies, the full scope and nature of their actions, in order to segment them into smaller pieces that individually may look harmless but cumulatively have big impacts," Sullivan said.

In one example, the Navy, without any consultation with the State of Washington, recently concluded that the war games would have no effect on historic and cultural properties — including those belonging to Indigenous tribes — and therefore there was no need to consult with the State or with tribes on the new sites for 2016. [...]

"Having Navy SEAL kill teams in battle gear conducting war games around private homes and public beaches, parks, campgrounds and marinas is going to have a

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7 • NAVY USES CITIZENS AS PAWNS

big effect on the people living and recreating there,” she said. “Besides potentially creating public fear and confusion, the Navy will close off the areas they are war gaming in. Doesn’t that require a public process?”

Connie Gallant is the board president of the Olympic Forest Coalition, a group that promotes the protection, conservation and restoration of natural forest ecosystems and their processes on the Olympic Peninsula. Like Sullivan, she agrees that while the military needs to train, the methods the Navy is employing across Washington are unacceptable.

“Navy SEALs must be well-trained for any situation,” she said. “However, given the fact that there are already many beaches throughout the country where they are currently training, in addition to having a new 60-acre Pacific Ocean complex in San Diego County that adds 1.5 million square feet of coastal development, I question the need to add our pristine beaches to their inventory. Landing on the beaches is only the first step; combat training typically includes the use of ordnance weapons.” [...]

The Navy is poised to move forward with its exercises, and according to Sullivan, it is doing so using nefarious, illegal methods. “The Navy will retrofit an environmental assessment [EA] for the places where they’ve already done their war games all around Puget Sound, but eight new sites for 2016 will likely be exempted from the EA via a self-declared ‘categorical exclusion,’” she said. “This is illegal because the new sites are a part of the big picture and cannot legally be separated from them.”

Categorical Exclusion

The Navy is using an exemption process called a categorical exclusion (CATEX) as a means of sidestepping federal regulations that could prohibit its use of these areas for exercises.

By definition, a categorical exclusion is “a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment, and, for which, therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required.”

The Navy intends to issue its own CATEX on some of the SEAL activities as

a means to segment and hide the full scope of its actions.[...]

“Realistic Military Training”

The Navy defines realistic military training (RMT) as training that is “conducted outside of federally owned property.”

Hence, according to that definition and according to the U.S. military’s Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the RMT process is theoretically designed to ensure coordination between U.S. Department of Defense representatives and local and regional officials in the areas where their exercises are to be conducted.

Steps like risk assessments, medical plans, surveys of training areas and coordinating their activities with local, state and federal law enforcement officials are supposed to be mandatory.

However, in the Navy’s coastal exercise, not one of the measures listed by SOCOM has been offered to the public or to local or state officials in Washington, and no publicly available documentation exists that such measures have ever been considered.

According to SOCOM, the purpose of RMT is “[t]o hone advanced skills, [and] the military and interagency require large areas of undeveloped land with low population densities with access to small towns.”

Yet, many of the areas outlined in the Navy’s documents for their exercises take place in populated areas, on developed land. Well over 100,000 people live on the Olympic Peninsula alone, and Olympic National Park hosts 3 million visitors per year.

“This is particularly galling with Navy SEALs conducting insertions, extractions, launch and recovery, special reconnaissance and other activities with ‘simulated weapons’ in populated areas without the knowledge of the public,” Sullivan said. “Training like that cannot be considered anything but RMT. The fact that the public is completely unaware of it because the Navy has not notified them, despite legal obligations via NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] and policy obligations as described in the SOCOM presentation, is further evidence of its intent to deceive the public and circumvent the law.”

There are numerous other RMT-type

events that have occurred around the United States in recent years, including “urban” training events in various communities around the country.

A December 2015 U.S. Army report titled “Intelligence Support to Urban Operations” addresses challenges facing military action in an urban environment.

“With the continuing growth in the world’s urban areas and increasing population concentrations in urban areas, the probability that Army forces will conduct operations in urban environments is ever more likely,” the manual states.

Clearly, the Navy’s training in Washington is also focused along these lines as well.

“The enemy situation is often extremely fluid — locals friendly to us today may be tomorrow’s belligerents,” the manual continues. “Adversaries seek to blend in with the local population to avoid being captured or killed. Enemy forces who are familiar with the city layout have an inherently superior awareness of the current situation.”

Military training for combat in urban environments, like the Navy’s exercises in Washington, has been ongoing at bases around the country, with the goal of preparing soldiers for close-contact engagements within urban environments. As recently as March 2015 in South Carolina, Operation Vigilant Guard saw large deployments of troops in civilian areas for training. [...]

Sullivan believes the general public needs to be concerned about the Navy’s actions, along with the ongoing domestic military expansion as a whole, because they both present “an unprecedented and unlawful taking of public and private space for military activity.” She points out that there is no plausible justification for the Navy’s incursion into urban areas.

“The Navy has millions of acres of Defense Department land to train in,” Sullivan said. “Now they’re using and closing portions of our national forests. Why do they need to invade our neighborhoods, too?”

She also sees another threat from the Navy’s exercises in state parks and private lands: the normalization of military activity “in our lives and in places where it has historically never been.” [...]

DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Thousands of Students, Teachers and Parents Organize School Walk Ins

In the early morning on Wednesday, February 17, in school parking lots and playgrounds at 838 schools in more than 30 cities across the country, tens of thousands of teachers, students, staff and parents rallied side by side, demanding smaller classes, more music and no state takeovers. Together, as part of a nationwide action they stood up for full funding for public schools, an end to testing, restorative justice and equality and local, public control of public schools. Actions took place in cities coast to coast,

like Boston, Philadelphia, Paterson, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Denver, San Diego, Los Angeles and Oakland. The actions served to unify the fighting forces demanding the quality public schools all have a right to.

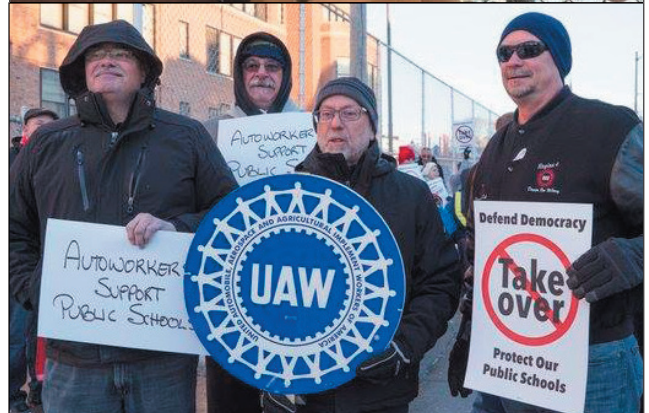
In Milwaukee, where a state school takeover plan calls for turning one to three neighborhood schools into privately run charter or voucher schools, thousands of educators, parents, and members of community groups including NAACP, Voces de la Frontera, and Opt-Out Milwaukee, linked arms to walk into a 111 of the 132 public schools. They were sending a serious message to Wisconsin lawmakers: We want local, public control of public schools! As in Philadelphia, Newark, Buffalo, Detroit, New Orleans and other cities where the state has taken over, public schools have been denied needed funding, leading to larger class sizes, and lack of access to art, music, physical education, libraries, nurses, and more. As they firmly stated in Milwaukee, "We're not going to become New Orleans. We are not going

to become Flint."

In St. Paul, Minnesota, actions took place at more than 50 schools, where demands for smaller class sizes and increased staffing among school librarians, social workers, nurses, and education support professionals were made.

In San Diego, as in other cities, emphasis was given to "More time for learning, less time on testing!"

Everywhere, protesters rejected the brutal attacks taking place on public schools and stood for the public good, demanding full funding now for public schools and affirming the equal right to education for all.



Top: Los Angeles, Oakland; Bottom: Detroit, Milwaukee

I • YOU CAN CHOOSE TO REFUSE

inappropriate? Yet parents are being told they cannot refuse and to do so could mean their schools lose funding and could be put in receivership. This is untrue. No school has lost funding as a result of parents and students refusing the tests — which more than 200,000 did last year. Indeed the more students who refuse, the more invalid the test results become, even according to the state. If 5 percent or more refuse, according to government officials, the results are considered statistically invalid. So choose to refuse!

The state education Commissioner can put schools in receivership whether or not students refuse the tests. It is her decision alone, it is an arbitrary one and she is not accountable to the public for such decisions. So the threat about receivership is just one more means to force parents and students to submit to what they know to be unfair and invalid tests. We are not drones following the dictate of a single appointed individual. We are thinking human beings who can choose to refuse!

What the Commissioner should do, and the Buffalo School Board should demand, is a moratorium on all state testing and receivership. That is the only way to implement their own recommendation that there to be *no* consequences for students, parents, teachers and schools.

No Evidence Receivership Raises Quality

A main concern of students, parents, staff and teachers is to raise the quality of education and affirm the equal right to education for all. Receivership cannot do either one. In fact it worsens quality and inequality.

It worsens quality directly by further narrowing curriculum to teach to the test. Concretely this has meant more blocks of time devoted to English and math, which are tested. Far less teaching time is devoted to social studies and science, while music, art, and physical education



are cut or eliminated, as are broader issues like African American and Puerto Rican studies. It also worsens quality because it narrows assessments of students, teachers and schools to test scores, the main way in which both “failure” and “improvement” are to be decided. The best features of schools, such as sports, student performances and projects of various kinds in art, music, the sciences, their creativity and cooperation, their collective efforts and those of their teachers, all are eliminated in favor of test scores. Receivership, and the testing regime it relies on, also worsens quality because of its attack on thinking. All are supposed to accept state tests as valid and useful, when they have proven to be harmful and anti-education. All are supposed to accept elimination of basic requirements for learning, like smaller classes, music and fully staffed and stocked libraries, in favor of tests that for years have not improved learning or

teaching. Because they are not meant to. They are meant to block learning and thinking and instead produce drones that obey and submit. You can choose to refuse!

We parents, students, teachers and staff are the experts, the ones who can find solutions and govern far better than an appointed state Commissioner. We are the ones actually fighting for the equal right to education for all. Receivership increases inequality by imposing worse working and learning conditions on schools that are majority African American and poor. It discriminates against teachers in receivership, and thus parents and students in these schools, by allowing for involuntary transfers at any time, and for wholesale firing of the entire staff. And because state tests and “improvement” on them is the top priority in these schools, students get far less learning time and teachers less teaching time as everything is devoted to testing time — pre-tests, post-tests, prep-tests, and all the associated time to prepare. Teachers and students are forced into a grind that is anti-educational and certainly not contributing to creativity and thinking.

There is no evidence, data or research to show state takeover and state testing improves quality and lessens inequality. On the contrary, whether in Buffalo, Detroit, Newark, New Orleans, Memphis or Philadelphia, state takeover has lowered the quality of education and teaching and learning conditions.

Buffalo has shown the way forward, with significant experience not only in refusing receivership and testing but in advancing an alternative: Our Schools, Our Rights, We Decide! We have stood up for public control of public schools, with a public authority that unites and empowers teachers, parents, students and staff to decide. Our experience is a positive example for all statewide. And let us take it further by strengthening and broadening the fight so that all can choose to refuse testing and receivership.

The Tyranny of Standardized Testing

Jamaal Bowman, Principal, Cornerstone Academy for Social Action Public Middle School, Bronx, New York

Public school high stakes standardized testing is a form of modern day slavery, and is designed to continue the proliferation of inequality in our society.

I have known standardized testing my entire career. From the very beginning, how well students performed on standardized tests determined our worth as teachers and the worth of our school. A level 3 on the test was proficient. Level 4 was advanced. Level 2 was “almost” proficient and gut wrenching for a teacher. And level 1 was hopeless for the parent, teacher and student.

I have been a New York City educator for fifteen years, and I absolutely love what I do! I have had the pleasure of teaching students from kindergarten through twelfth grade in mostly “low income” schools. I am now entering my 7th year as the founding principal of Cornerstone Academy for Social Action (CASA) Middle School in the Bronx, and unfortunately, standardized testing continues to dominate the narrative. I say unfortunately because I believe standardized testing... to be a major part of an oppressive form of education. And if we do not reverse course soon, the health and innovative spirit of our country will continue to suffer, while our economic and opportunity gaps fortify to the point of being irreversible. [...]

As a classroom teacher, the state test jargon became part of the lexicon. We were told to focus more on “non fiction” reading passages because that was on the state test. “Be sure to practice multiple choice questions, so students get used to them,” administrators would often say. Practice exams occurred at least once a week beginning about two months prior to the real thing. These practice tests took at least two hours to administer and another two hours to grade. All of this time could have been used developing and implementing truly rich and authentic curriculum. Because of this obsession with testing, our kids did not have art, music, theater, or any truly aesthetic course to enlighten their varied



intelligences. They also did not have nearly enough science, as math and language arts were the only subjects tested. [...]

Every year our test scores would creep up annually. Our school never saw exponential gains, but we saw improvement. We were totally a test prep school, focused more on the test than meeting the holistic needs of children and preparing them for a 21st century economy. The test controlled us.

The incremental improvements were not enough; especially not during the *No Child Left Behind* era (NCLB). Under *NCLB*, which was enacted in 2001, all students were supposed to be “proficient” by 2015. Under this sort of pressure, four years after I left the school, it was closed down. The school was restructured into two new schools with smart and ambitious new leadership ready to take the children to the Promised Land — “passing” the state exam.

Role of Charter Schools

What also increased the pressure was the recent influx of charter schools. Some charter schools were crushing the state exams. They were “out performing” traditional public schools and even out performing public schools in white upper middle class communities. These select charters were better at analyzing the exams than we were. They administered interim assessments and used data driven instruction where we did not. They worked longer hours and longer school years. Bottom line, they “got it done!” The country rejoiced at the results. There was proof that poor black and brown children could learn! It was time to celebrate

and pour billions of dollars into charter schools all over the country. For many, charter schools were the answer they were looking for, and the future of public education.

But as time went on, and the data continued to roll in, new narratives about testing, charters, standards, and American society began to present itself. [...]

The “American Dream” was being replaced with the American reality. A reality that annual testing and charter schools have not closed the achievement gap between blacks and whites, nor has it closed the gap between America and the rest of the developed world.

Therefore, the charter school regime cannot be the future of public education. They are privately funded, anti union, test prep factories with draconian behavioral policies. They have mostly white staff with mostly black and brown students who are not allowed to speak during breakfast, lunch, or hallway transitions. A student from a New Orleans charter school stated, “I hate going to school. It feels like prison.” Charters argue that their “learning” environment contributes to their good test results. Well of course it does. That is the point. Oppressive assessments, lead to oppressive schools, and oppressed students.

I believe the future of public education should be rooted in the principles of democracy, and the needs of the people....

Instead of oppressing families with a barrage of standardized exams, our government should collaborate with educators, health care professionals and community based organizations to provide a holistic education that uplifts and nurtures healthy and happy communities. [...]

Let’s reflect briefly on the fact that public schools were designed for a different age and a different time. Public schools were designed for the purpose of indoctrination and for the maintenance of empire; particularly, the sustenance of western empire... Public education has always been designed to create an “assembly line” mental model,

Tyranny of Standardized Testing • 12

A Parent Explains Right to Refuse the State Tests

School officials are telling many parents that they do not have the right to refuse the state Common Core tests and related pro and post tests. Some are being told that to do so will harm their school or force it into receivership. Both are untrue. No school has lost funding as a result of parents and students refusing the tests. And the decision to put a school in receivership is an arbitrary one that will be made by the state Commissioner. Test refusal is another way to let the Commissioner know it is not our children and teachers that are failing, it is the state, with its refusal to provide the equal

right to education for all. Below is a letter by a New York parent explaining her right as a parent to refuse.

Dear Superintendent:

I have received your letter regarding my family's decision to refuse participation in all standardized tests/assessments being given this school year, including but not limited to the ELA, math, and/or any local assessments used, in whatever manner, to evaluate my child and/or her teachers.

You (the district) are asserting that "[t]here is not [sic] an option" to opt out. To the contrary, there is: it is called the

Constitution of the United States. The Constitution provides that option (in no particular order of importance): on 14th Amendment substantive due process grounds (i.e., my right to nurture, raise, and direct the education of my child, my right and my child's right to personal liberty, my right to protect my child from harm and for my child to be free from harm, and my right and my child's right against unreasonable governmental intrusion); First Amendment privacy grounds; my child's right against Fourth Amendment

Parent Explains Right to Refuse • 13

II • TYRANNY OF STANDARDIZED TESTING

and the way we currently do testing sustains that model.

But the 21st century requires different skills and thus a different approach. Imagine we allowed education research to impact our policy, live in our classrooms, and address what is really ailing our communities. [...]

Instead of sitting an 8-year old down for nine hours of testing every year, and at least 13 hours of testing if the student has special needs, let's implement a curriculum that's open and exploratory; one that allows students choice and peer support. And one that creates the next wave of engineers, architects, artists, and design thinkers. As we address the psycho-social-emotional needs of our communities mentioned above, we can begin to implement an invigorating 21st century curriculum.

So what can we do? Consider the words of the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

"That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government."

The reality is, we were never "created" equal in America. When these words were written the black man was a slave, not a man. When the constitution was completed we were only "promoted" to 3/5 of a man. The descendants of these enslaved

people, 236 years after the Declaration of Independence, continue to perform 30-40 percentage points behind their master. Either our educational leaders are incredibly ignorant to these connections, or this is all by deliberate design.

Congress just recently voted to continue annual testing with the *Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA)*. This act will lead our country toward investing billions of public dollars into private companies to administer oppressive standardized testing tactics, instead of investing billions in what the research says is needed for our communities.

Whenever government becomes destructive of its people, it is time for the people to alter or abolish the government. When parents choose to opt out of the state tests, they are using civil disobedience to alter the government for its destructive high stakes standardized testing practices. Parents are opting out because the current implementation of standardized testing perpetuates a mental model of oppression for parents, teachers, and students.

Parents are opting out because they love their children and they love America. Parents want to create a future rooted in America's ideals that is brighter for their children and grandchildren. A future, not rooted in the poverty, war, pain and suffering of today. But a future rooted in love and happiness.

Teachers are forced to align their curriculum and instruction to the state exams. Despite the very questionable validity and

reliability of the exams, teachers are still punished if their students do not perform well. Student intellectual abilities are then compromised because of the narrowing of the thinking and learning experiences that occur in standardized testing classrooms. Our fast paced unpredictable economy needs adaptive citizens who live aligned to their brilliance. Test prep schools are the last thing we need. Especially when considering the tests are created by private industry focused more on profit and dependence than transforming the lives of children.

America was born of horror for black people and that horror continues today for brown and poor people as well. Slavery, Jim Crow, redlining, crack cocaine, and now standardized testing were all sanctioned by the American government. All designed to destroy the mind, body and souls of black and brown people; all within our so-called democracy.

Throughout history, when the American people united, these injustices were destroyed. I am incredibly inspired to see parents of all races and backgrounds unite to destroy the oppression of standardized testing. The Opt Out Movement, along with the Black Lives Matter Movement, give me tremendous hope and love for this country. I stand for justice, I stand for humanity, and I encourage parents to stand in solidarity with each other. Parents must remember that they are the essential voice in education that will transform the system and by extension, transform the world.

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unreasonable governmental action; and Fifth Amendment rights. In addition, the Ninth Amendment recognizes that there are fundamental personal rights that are protected from abridgment by the government even though not specifically mentioned in the Constitution. Federal statutes also come into play.

No Child Left Behind expressly provides: “Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, and States . . . have the primary responsibility for the supporting that parental role.” 20 U.S.C. § 3401. [Content that remains in the recently passed, *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* that became law on December 10, 2015. — BF Ed. Note] Similarly, the federal government has declared that I must be afforded “substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of [my child].” 20 USC § 6301 (12).

Indeed, my right to refuse to allow the state to compel my child to submit to a standardized test (or assessment) has constitutional dimensions that have been recognized by the Supreme Court of the United States for nearly 100 years. My constitutional right to guide my child’s education and to protect my child from harm and exploitation at the hands of government is one of the oldest fundamental liberty interests recognized by that Court.

The Court has repeatedly held that because I have the natural inclination to further the best interests of my child, it is I who is the best protector of my child and, therefore, I have the natural right and duty to care for my child and protect her against unreasonable, arbitrary, and capricious governmental action. It is I — the parent — not the school district — who is entrusted with this constitutionally protected, fundamental right.

The Court is emphatic that the State (the school district) has no right to interfere with or hinder my efforts to raise my child, or my efforts — my affirmative obligation — to protect my child from harm or exploitation. See e.g. 20 U.S.C. § 6311 (based on the specific requirements outlined in *No Child Left Behind*, high-stakes testing violates federal law). The Court has stated:



“[t]he fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children [(my child)].... The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.” *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925). My child is not “[t]he mere creature of the state.” As the

Supreme Court has similarly held: “the custody, care and nurturing of the child reside first in the parents, whose primary function and freedom include preparation for obligations the state can neither supply nor hinder,” *Prince v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 321 U.S. 158 (1944). I have a constitutional liberty interest to direct the upbringing and education of my child. This right, guaranteed by the Constitution, may not be abridged by unreasonable policy.

Even the New York Court of Appeals — the highest court of our state — recognizes this interest. The Court of Appeals stated: “It is the natural right, as well as the legal duty, of a parent to care for, control and protect his child from potential harm, whatever the source and absent a clear showing of misfeasance, abuse or neglect, **courts should not interfere with that delicate responsibility**,” *Roe v. Doe*, 29 NY2d 188 (NY 1971), (emphasis added). Neither should any branch of government.

These constitutional, statutory, and common law guarantees do not disappear when

my child enters your schoolhouse gate. In fact, the federal government has explicitly provided protection to my child within the school environment. See 20 U.S.C. § 1232h (protecting students from examinations without written parental consent).

To reiterate: the School District does not have my permission to compel my child to take any state / district standardized test or assessment. Under my guardianship, my minor child will refuse.

In addition, her various tests / assessments will be properly scored as a “refusal,” will be considered “invalid,” and will not be included in the participation rate. (See 8 NYCRR § 100.2(p)(1)(xi). New York State Education Department manuals provide explicit instructions on proper coding. These instructions are not discretionary. Your district does not have authority to deviate from them. They require that a “refusal” — along with “administrative error” and “medically excused” — has its own administrative code; it does not get scored as a “0,” “1,” or “2.” Moreover, as with “administrative error” or “medically excused,” a refusal is not deemed a valid score. Any attempt by your school district to otherwise code, score, or deviate from these instructions would constitute a due process violation of governmental procedure.

Furthermore, during the administration of any and all make-up tests, my child will continue to receive a free and appropriate public education in her regular classroom environment, along side the rest of her classmates. You are hereby on notice that any state agent who ignores my parental instruction, and/or who compels, harasses, intimidates, or otherwise forces my minor child, or attempts same, in any way, to participate in any standardized test or assessment, and/or who takes any action that causes my child emotional, psychic, and/or physical harm against these express instructions, will be in violation of federal and state constitutional law, statutory law, and common law. I trust there will be no further need for clarification.

Thank you for your cooperation.

(Reprinted from *Western New Yorkers for Public Education*)

DEMONSTRATION FEBRUARY 10

Buffalo Teachers Reject Receivership, Demand Smaller Classes and Equal Rights for All

Buffalo teachers demonstrated against receivership, the anti-student, anti-education state testing, and for a new contract commensurate with the important and difficult job teachers perform. The action was in part response to recent “Orders” by New York State Education Commissioner Elia for receivership schools that dictate significant changes to teaching conditions, which are also harmful to students. These include the power of receiver Dr. Cash to involuntary transfer any teacher, any time from 20 receivership schools. Cash has refused to publicly state which schools and teachers will be impacted. This leaves students, parents and teachers with great uncertainty and concerns about the emotional and educational damage this could cause students, classrooms and schools. While it is said the purpose of transfers is to put “qualified” teachers in the given classrooms, there is no public listing of just what such qualifications are.

Many are demanding to know, why the secrecy? How does this assist? The teachers, joined by parents and students, braved the bitter wind and cold to reject receivership and demand smaller classes and better working conditions, which mean better learning conditions for students. Signs also brought out that receivership is increasing inequality, with the students and teachers in these schools being discriminated against, such as through these special powers and “Orders” from the Commissioner.

The demonstration, organized by the Buffalo Teachers Federation (BTF), also came a day after the BTF filed a lawsuit against the state, rejecting receivership as unfair, harmful and unconstitutional. It was brought out that schools are put in receivership based on the invalid state tests, with the government branding students, teachers and schools as failing. It is in fact the state that is failing, by refusing to provide the funding required by law, almost \$100,000 million. It is also the state that is failing by continuing to impose the Common Core testing regime. More than 200,000 students refused the state test last year and many more will do so again



this year. The widespread rejection of the testing is such that even Governor Cuomo has had to admit it is not valid. Signs and participants at the rally urged all to refuse the state tests.

Many participants then proceeded to the school board meeting being held at Waterfront. People spoke on the need for a new contract for teachers, one that brings their wages and working conditions on a par with teachers in the region. It was brought out that Buffalo teachers have lost tens of thousands of dollars as a result of having no contract for more than 10 years. They contend with large numbers of students in poverty, who are English Language learners (ELL), who have special needs. Yet their wages do not reflect this reality and they and their students are constantly faced with insufficient resources, classes that are too large, and the absence of necessities like music, physical education, full-time librarians, and more.

Speakers also demanded that receiver Cash and the state provide the research and data showing how receivership solves any problem. No such research was provided when the law was put in place in April 2015 and none since. There is considerable data and examples to show that state takeover of public schools does not raise the quality of those schools. Instead, in Newark, New Orleans, Memphis, Philadelphia and elsewhere, it has meant school closings, privatizing through charters, and no improvement for students.

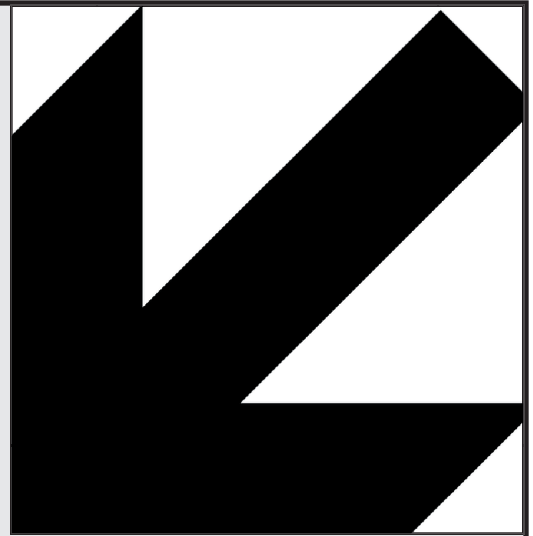
A Speaker brought out that Flint, Michigan, also under state control using a financial manager, saw the government-made disaster of lead poisoning of the water for the 120,000 people living in Flint. The same person responsible for this crime was then appointed by the Governor to be financial manager for the Detroit public schools — which have classes of 35-45, 170 teacher vacancies, poisonous black mold and more. This is where state takeover leads. Public Control of Public Schools, where teachers, parents and students decide what is needed, can provide a new direction that raises the quality of education for all.



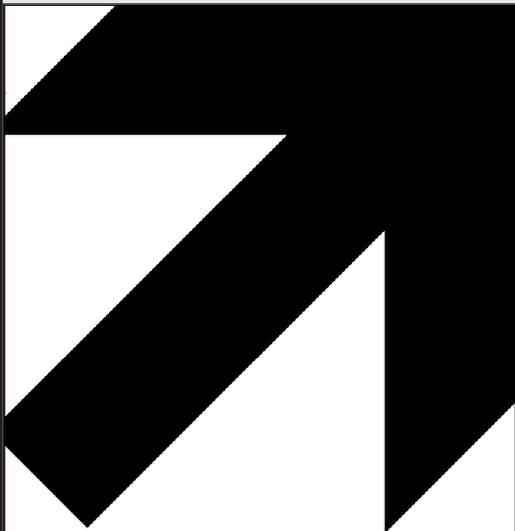
Concerned about Common
Core testing, homework and
curriculum?

Wondering about
receivership and how to
respond?

Interested in what to do
to improve the quality of
education for all?



You Can Choose to Refuse Common Core/High Stakes Testing and Receivership



Community Forum

*Information, Discussion
and Call to Action*

**March 12, 12:30pm
Buffalo State College**

Classroom Building Room C-122

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- *Jamaal Bowman, African American Principal, Cornerstone Academy for Social Action Public Middle School, Bronx, New York*
- *Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold, Buffalo School Board*
- *Dr. Mark Garrison, Education researcher and analyst, D'Youville*
- *Beth Dimino, Long Island teacher refusing to administer state tests*
- *Mike Lillis, Hudson Valley teacher, union president and organizer of statewide forums*
- *Danilo Lawvere, Buffalo area teacher and parent organizer*

**Organized By:
Buffalo We Decide!**

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