

Teachers' union blasts No Child Left Behind, calls for reform by 2020

By Alyse Knorr

WASHINGTON - The National Education Association, the largest teacher's union in the country, attacked the "fundamentally flawed" No Child Left Behind Act, Wednesday at the unveiling of its education reform plan.

"No Child Left Behind demanded outcomes and promised resources to achieve those outcomes," NEA President Reg Weaver said. "Those promises to our children, we believe, have been broken."

In a report called "Great Public Schools for Every Student by 2020," the union listed what it considers flaws of the law, including a narrowed curriculum, inappropriate and overemphasized testing, insufficient resources and a failure to prepare students for more than low-level basic skills.

"No Child Left Behind prescribes a one-size-fits-all system to the most changeable and diverse of any population: growing children," the report states.

The group's biggest complaint, however, is that the federal government has taken on too overbearing a role in public education.

"The federal role has lost its balance in No Child Left Behind," said Joel Packer, NEA's director of education policy and practice.

"No Child Left Behind radically altered and expanded the role of the federal government, making it far more intrusive than it had ever been," the report states.

The report emphasizes that the federal government should be involved in education in a

role of support and funding, but that it should respect state and local school departments and let them take on the responsibilities of their own communities.

"We want the federal government involved in education," NEA Executive Director John Wilson said. "But they do not need to be the micromanager of education - they need to be the support system."

U.S. Department of Education spokesman Chad Colby emphasized the many rights state and local districts already have.

"States and local districts provide roughly 91 percent of the funding, they set their own standards, they set their own curriculums and they write their own tests to measure against those standards," Colby said.

NEA's report proposes a new framework for the federal government's role in education, with a goal of providing "great public schools" for every student by 2020.

"Every child in our country has a right to a good public education," Weaver said.

Weaver described the current system as a kind of "geographic roulette" in which "some kids win and others lose," depending on where they live.

Among the group's suggestions for the federal government:

guarantee sustained funding for special needs students, economically disadvantaged students and English language learners; provide equal access to educational services and supports for all children and require more publicly transparent accountability.

"We're calling for the transformation of public schools," Wilson said.

The group also called for a greater use of scientific research on education topics and more support for teachers.

"For us, the most intriguing and perhaps exciting element is point number three, where they talk about ensuring that all kids have equal access to critical educational resources and tools," said Amy Wilkins, vice president of the Education Trust, a non-profit organization that advocates for low-income students and students of color.

Wilkins said she is deeply concerned, however, that the framework appears to call for less federal accountability.

Colby commented on accountability, as well - at the state level.

"The federal government's role is to supplement funding where there's concentrations of poverty, and in return for that funding, No Child Left Behind requires that there should be results," Colby said.

Weaver also noted at the briefing that Sen. Barack Obama supports the NEA's framework and has sent a letter to the union announcing his endorsement. Sen. John McCain's campaign Web site praises No Child Left Behind for setting common standards for judging educational achievement.

Weaver said the NEA plans to distribute the report to the 9,000 of its 3.2 million members attending the convention, and to call on them to meet with members of Congress, parents and other teachers to share the paper and its policy framework.

Los trabajadores que tienen dificultad en esta lenta economía podrían calificar para una extensión de beneficios del seguro de desempleo

El Departamento estatal del Desarrollo del Empleo (EDD, por sus siglas en inglés) está trabajando rápidamente para asegurar que los trabajadores que tienen dificultad en encontrar trabajo en ésta lenta economía reciban beneficios suplementarios del seguro de desempleo (UI) autorizado por el Congreso y el Presidente Bush.

"Somos sensibles a las dificultades que están sufriendo los trabajadores desempleados y sus familias por causa de esta lenta economía", dijo Patrick Henning, Director del Departamento del Desarrollo del Empleo. "El EDD trabajará con las personas desempleadas para inmediatamente poner a su alcance esta nueva ayuda a todos los que han agotado su solicitud de beneficios del seguro de desempleo regular".

Empleados del EDD han estado revisando archivos de solicitudes de beneficios del seguro de desempleo y se pondrán en contacto con los 1.6 millones de solicitantes que tengan la probabilidad de ser elegibles para la nueva extensión federal. La solicitud para estos beneficios suplementarios se puede presentar el 6 de Julio de 2008 o después.

Los trabajadores que tienen la probabilidad de ser elegibles para estos beneficios suplementarios pueden ser elegibles para recibir hasta 13 semanas de beneficios suplementarios. La cantidad de esos beneficios semanales será igual a la cantidad que los solicitantes estaban recibiendo en su solicitud original del seguro de desempleo.

mentarios:

- Están completamente o parcialmente desempleados(as) el 6 de Julio de 2008 ó después,
- Han agotado su solicitud de beneficios del seguro de desempleo regular
- No son elegibles para presentar una nueva solicitud de beneficios del seguro del desempleo regular
- Han tenido una solicitud válida que principió el 7 de Mayo de 2006 o después, y
- Cumplen con todos los requisitos de elegibilidad

Debido a los requisitos de elegibilidad de la ley federal, algunos trabajadores no serán elegibles para los beneficios suplementarios si no han ganado los suficientes ingresos durante sus períodos reglamentarios para solicitud de beneficios regulares. El período reglamentario del trabajador son los 12 meses de sueldos que se utilizan para establecer la solicitud del seguro de desempleo y calcular sus beneficios.

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Cuando un individuo presenta-

ta la solicitud para la extensión de beneficios, el EDD les proporcionara las formas de solicitud para las primeras dos semanas de beneficios. En cuanto los solicitantes completen las formas correctamente, y las envíen al EDD, y cumplan con todos los requisitos de elegibilidad, los solicitantes podrán empezar a recibir sus beneficios suplementarios dentro de 10 días después de enviar las formas.

Los trabajadores que están recibiendo beneficios del seguro de desempleo regular y siguen teniendo dificultades obteniendo empleo, pueden completar una solicitud para la extensión de beneficios suplementarios cuando se termine su derecho a su solicitud del seguro de desempleo regular. Las solicitudes de extensión deben completarse a lo mas tardar para el 22 de Marzo de 2009.

El EDD anima a todas las personas que están sin trabajo a que soliciten por medio del Internet al www.edd.ca.gov, y oprima en la frase "File a Claim for Unemployment" localizada en la media parte de la pagina. Despues oprima en la frase "Apply Online (eApply4UI)" localizada a la mano derecha de la pagina. Esta es la manera más rápida y más conveniente para completar la solicitud para beneficios del seguro de desempleo.

Los solicitantes presen-

tedieron con su experiencia en Arizona, un estado con una población hispana de 29.2 por ciento en 2006, según el U.S. Census Bureau.

She said she is conflicted about whom to vote for, saying she feels "lured" by Obama's grassroots movement but is interested in McCain's message. She said she voted for Obama in the primary but will probably choose McCain in the general election.

"I'm attracted to Obama in my heart, but I think I like McCain in my head," Pena said.

pressed with his experience in Arizona, a state with a Hispanic population of 29.2 percent in 2006, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Carolina Pena, a 21-year-old Maryland resident who is originally from Ecuador, said McCain represents Hispanic interests better than Obama. She said he has shown a strong commitment to the Latino population and that she is im-

portante. Gonzalez, who is originally from Cuba, said many of Obama's messages and goals speak to immigrants and the poor, while McCain's do not as much.

"I feel the Latino community needs much more what Obama has to offer than what McCain has to offer," she said.

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Confronting the Hispanic Health Paradox

By Michael Tsang

phrase "Hispanic Health Paradox".

The Hispanic Health Paradox is not well understood. Some have claimed and tried to demonstrate that it is because only the healthiest individuals from Latino countries are immigrating to the US. Others claim that Latinos often return to their home country when they are elderly or sick. Neither of these two popular hypotheses has been shown to be a proper explanation of the paradox.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Latinos have the most reported cases of Tuberculosis. Latinos also have a greater chance of dying from Diabetes Type II than non-Latino Whites.

The reasons for such adverse conditions are not fully understood. One explanation may be the fact that Latinos often have lower rates of health insurance, lower rates of preventative care, and lower chances of having a primary-care physician. These factors obviously play an important role in the health of the average American.

Meeting with a primary-care physician is one of the most important ways a person can avoid serious ailment. With many Latinos coming from a lower socio-economic background it can be harder to afford the health insurance or out of pocket fees to see a primary-care physician.

This is where the dichotomy of Latino health comes into the picture. It seems counterintuitive that the group of people with some of the most prevalent health disparities might have the lowest mortality rates. This puzzle is what Kyriacos Markides and Jeannine Coreil were referring to in their 1985 study when they coined the

same. For this reason, the Hispanic Health Paradox is most likely due to a large sum of factors and not a single reason. However, the health of Latinos must be accurately profiled, as much as it can, before any real inferences can be made about the state of Latino health.

Dr. Greg Talavera and San Diego State University are a part of a nationwide study on Latino health to do just that. As the medical director of the San Ysidro Health center, Dr. Talavera will locally track the health of Latinos for up to six years; hopefully resulting in data sufficient enough to accurately describe the state of Latino health. At that point the study will be prepared to address the Hispanic Health Paradox.

"That is the importance of this study and that is what it is entirely designed to do... to document the [Hispanic Health Paradox's] existence and possibly give explanations", says Dr Greg Talavera. "If not", he emphasizes, "we will have a very good study that accurately profiles the health of Latinos in the US, and accurately profiles the health of the sub-groups also".

For more information regarding Dr Talavera and the study he is involved in please refer to his website at <http://www.rohan.sdsu.edu/~gtalaver/>.

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