

“The trade unions are not colluding with the establishment; they are the establishment.”

Rank-and-file teacher opposes Randi Weingarten’s fraud and capitulation

Michael Hull
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The following is a statement by Texas teacher Michael Hull, founder of the Facebook group Teachers Against Dying and a member of the Texas Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee. It is a response to American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten’s surrender to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over their unsafe three-foot distancing guidelines in schools.

On March 16, 2021, I spoke to AFT President Randi Weingarten at a Bad Ass Teachers town hall event, voicing safety concerns including the denial of medical accommodations, the impracticality of effectively implementing certain CDC guidelines, and the emergence of new strains of COVID-19. I explained that a doctor advised me not to return to in-person instruction and wrote a note to my district. Like thousands of others in this situation, I was still forced to choose between following medical advice and continued employment. AFT and NEA were contacted, and both said there was nothing they could do to intervene.

Although I cited several recent studies that contradicted the “safe reopening” position of the major political parties and teacher unions, her retort was that a “growing body of evidence” was the “consensus in the United States,” citing nothing specific. Further, she stated, “What may happen with the variant may happen, then we are going to close the way in which things have gotten closed.” Regarding accommodations, she told me, “What we can try to do if you want, is try to get you the accommodation you

need.”

On March 27, 2021, having heard no follow up regarding the offer to fight for my accommodation, I contacted AFT, asking them how I claim this benefit, and how thousands of other dues-paying AFT members in a similar situation can do the same? I also tweeted at her and AFT about the matter.

It has been nearly a month since my original exchange with Weingarten, and I have still heard nothing back from her or any other representative of AFT regarding accommodations. Moreover, several districts in several states have lifted mask requirements, rendering the CDC guidelines upon which she said schools could “reopen safely” impossible to implement. In addition, new strains are leading to massive surges across the United States and yet the unions are not moving to “close the way in which things have gotten closed.” Instead, she has only further capitulated to the establishment regarding the CDC social distancing guidelines she previously claimed to be against.

Even if one accepts the spurious notion that these guidelines are done in good faith and without political motivation, the fact they have changed so frequently should indicate that we do not know enough about this virus or its long-term impacts to safely reopen schools. But, instead of erring on the side of caution, Weingarten, the AFT, along with other major teacher unions and the political establishment, would prefer to err on the side of the stock exchanges.

I gave Weingarten evidence that schools are not safe, particularly in places like Texas where mask mandates

have been lifted. I told her about the deaths, disabilities, and financial hardships educators, parents and students have endured. I gave her the benefit of the doubt and asked her to pivot away from the disastrous “safe reopening” strategy. I gave her and AFT the chance to fight for us. What I have discovered is that the trade unions are not colluding with the establishment; they are the establishment.



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