

Center of the American Experiment and Educated Teachers MN

Don't be fooled. The Center of the American Experiment, its secretive funders and its allies don't care about workers or public education.

CAE disguises itself as a think tank, but in reality pushes the agenda of its anti-union, corporate donors. This Minnesota organization promotes school privatization and dismantling public pensions and vehemently opposes programs that protect the LGBTQ+ community or advocate for people of color.

The Center of the American Experiment is also actively trying to get Education Minnesota members to leave the union. The drop campaign is called Educated Teachers MN, which started in 2018. CAE and its front group only care about education around September of each year when members can revoke their union dues. They unsuccessfully send educators up to a dozen misleading mailings about their union each year.

They don't want us to come together to fight for quality public schools, strong communities, racial justice or better pay and working conditions. Here's where CAE really stands on issues that are important to educators and working families.

School privatization and vouchers

The center loves to bash public education and advocate for school privatization and vouchers.

Kim Crockett, CAE's former vice president and general counsel, praised a plan by President Donald Trump's Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to provide public money for private school vouchers.

"We have generations of students who've attended failing public schools. That's unacceptable," Crockett said in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Feb. 10, 2017. "The more government gets involved, the less impressive the product has become."

Immigration and racial justice

CAE consistently tries to blame new immigrants and people of color for our hard times. Usually the group uses subtle dog whistles, but sometimes the unvarnished truth comes out.

Crockett made racist remarks about Somali-American refugees in a June 20, 2019, New York Times article.

"I think of America, the great assimilator, as a rubber band, but with this — we're at the breaking point," Ms. Crockett said. "These aren't people coming from Norway, let's put it that way. These people are very visible."

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Unions and working families

CAE has a long track record of attacking public employees, their unions and the benefits they earn.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic this spring, CAE continued to beat up on public pensions and break promises made to public employees by pushing for defined contribution plans. That means less money for educators when they retire.

The center also brings in and touts anti-union speakers for events. Rebecca Friedrichs, a former California public school teacher who sued her union over the collection of fair-share fees, was a featured speaker at a high-profile event in 2018.

Friedrichs wrote an op-ed in the Washington Times accusing U.S. public schools of grooming children to be sexualized.

"If we as a society are so disturbed by the actions of Epstein, Miss Maxwell and an untold number of others," Friedrichs wrote in July 15 opinion piece, referring to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and his criminally charged former partner Ghislaine Maxwell, "then why are we allowing America's public schools to groom our children to be sexualized?"

The center and its subsidiaries deliberately distract us with fearmongering to protect the richest few who write the rules against us. But Minnesotans are better than that. No matter what we look like or where we come from, we can come together to rewrite the rules, make the rich pay their fair share and ensure every one of us can care for our families, earn a fair return for our work and do right by the people who protect us.