

COMMITTEE AGAINST A SEPARATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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BROAD EDUCATION, LABOR AND CIVIL RIGHTS COALITION OPPOSES SEPARATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Calling on others to join with them in opposing legislation that would create a federal cabinet-level department of education, representatives of over 60 leaders in elementary, secondary and higher education, and in the labor and civil rights communities today (April 23) officially announced the formation of the Committee Against a Separate Department of Education.

The announcement was made at a press conference on Capitol Hill, just as Congress reconvened from its Easter recess. Among those participating were Albert F. Unger, Director of Governmental Relations, Pennsylvania School Boards Association; Norman Hill, Executive Director, A. Philip Randolph Institute; Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers; Lane Kirkland, Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO; David Breneman, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution. Two Senators who have opposed the legislation in the Congress, Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and S. I. Hayakawa (R-CA), also participated in the press conference.

Opposition to the separate education department idea has come from many quarters and the Committee was formed primarily to provide an organized voice for the wide range of arguments that exists against it.

Attached is a brief statement by the Committee followed by the list of signatories which is growing daily. Also attached are remarks from several individual members who did not attend the press conference.

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The following individuals are opposed to the creation of a separate, Cabinet-level Department of Education. As representatives of the education, research, labor, civil rights and higher education communities, they have come together to announce their opposition to this idea.

A. J. Abramovitz, Ph.D., Superintendent,
Cleveland Heights, University Heights District, Ohio

Stephen R. Aiello, President,
New York City Board of Education

George Bonham, Executive Director,
Council on Learning

David Breneman, Senior Fellow,
Brookings Institution

Randolph Bromery, Chancellor,
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Sol C. Chaiken, President,
International Ladies Garment Workers Union

Burton Clark, Chairman,
Higher Education Research Group, Yale University

Jacob Clayman, President,
Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO

David Cohen, Professor of Education,
Harvard Graduate School of Education

James S. Coleman, Senior Study Director,
National Opinion Research Center,
University of Chicago

Jill K. Conway, President,
Smith College

Richard M. Cyert, President,
Carnegie-Mellon University

Melvin A. Eggers, Chancellor and President,
Syracuse University

Joseph Featherstone

Murray H. Finley, President,
Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union

Chester Finn, Author,
"Scholars, Dollars and Bureaucrats"

Robert Georgine, President,
Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Maxine Green, Professor of Education,
Teachers College, Columbia University

Fred M. Heddinger, Executive Director
Pennsylvania School Board Association

Norman Hill, Executive Director,
A. Philip Randolph Institute

Harold L. Hodgkinson, Former Director,
National Institute of Education

Sidney Hook, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy,
New York University; Senior Research Fellow, Hoover
Institute, Stanford University and author of many
books on John Dewey

Christopher Jencks,
Department of Sociology, Harvard University

Bennett D. Katz, Senate Majority Leader,
Maine State Legislature

Elizabeth T. Kennan, President,
Mount Holyoke College

Richard W. Lyman, President,
Stanford University

Frank Macchiarola, Chancellor,
New York City School System

George Meany, President,
American Federation of Labor, and Congress of
Industrial Organizations

William H. McClennan, President,
Public Employee Department, AFL-CIO

M. A. McGhehey, Executive Director,
Kansas Association of School Boards

Ed. McGuire, Chancellor,
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

Albert Morrison, President,
American Federation of School Administrators

James M. Moudy, Chancellor,
Texas Christian University

Michael Novack,
Syracuse University

Harry Poole, President,
Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butchers Union

J. C. Turner, President,
International Union of Operating Engineers

Joseph Rauh, Civil Rights lawyer and activist

Diane Ravitch, Author,
"The Revisionists Revised"

Billy Reagan, Superintendent,
Houston Independent School District

John P. Roche,
Henry L. Luce Professor of Civilization and Foreign Affairs,
The Fletcher School of Law

Richard F. Rosser, President,
De Pauw University

Bayard Rustin, Civil Rights leader

David S. Saxon, President,
University of California

Carl Shaff, Executive Director,
Nevada State School Boards Association

Albert Shanker, President,
American Federation of Teachers

William Sidell, President,
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

**Adele Simmons, President,
Hampshire College**

**Theodore Sizer, Headmaster,
Philips Academy**

**Roland Smith, Superintendent,
Plainfield, Illinois Public School System**

**Robert I. Sproull, President,
University of Rochester**

**David Sweet, President,
Rhode Island College**

**John William Ward, President,
Amherst College**

**Ben Wattenberg,
American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research**

**George Weathersby,
Commissioner for Higher Education, State of Indiana**

**Jacqueline G. Wexler, President,
Hunter College**

**Rev. John P. Whalen, Executive Director,
Consortium of Universities**

**William H. Wynn, President,
Retail Clerks International Union**

REMARKS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

"One of the fundamental strengths of the American system of education is its diversity. I believe that the creation of a Department of Education in the federal government would generate pressures to centralize what has been a highly decentralized, pluralistic system. Such a move would discourage the initiative and responsibility that is now shown by different interests at different levels. It would be a mistake."

Sidney Hook
Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, New
York University and Senior Research
Fellow, Hoover Institute, Stanford
University

"There is nothing inherently wrong with having societal activities subject to central direction. In education there are in principle both advantages and disadvantages to centralization. There is, however, an aspect of American society that leads the dangers to be greater than in most other societies. The United States has a high degree of democratic control of its institutions, probably more than any other developed country. This means that the way these institutions function is very much subject to the fads and whims of popular control. Under such a circumstance, it is better to have greater decentralization, so that American education does not come under the spell of a single fad. . . .

". . . If exercised through a central Department of Education, the fads and foibles of democratic control can lead to great instabilities in American education."

James S. Coleman
Senior Study Director, National
Opinion Research Center, University
of Chicago

"From the standpoint of civil rights enforcement, a separate department of education would be a national disaster. The education establishment, which would presumably run the new department, has always told the government to keep hands off whenever efforts were made against segregation and discrimination in the education field. Self-regulation will no more work here than in the other areas where it has been tried and failed."

Joseph Rauh
Civil Rights Lawyer and Activist

"If one looks at the higher-education budget of the U. S. Office of Education for fiscal year 1980, one will see that over \$4-billion has been allocated for student assistance. Less than \$400-million is allocated for institutional assistance and other higher-education programs. We are witnessing a continued high priority being placed on assuring that all qualified students have an opportunity to obtain a postsecondary education. That, I believe, is a worthwhile goal. But, to emphasize my point, more than 90 percent of the funds committed to higher education are in reality channeled to and for individuals, making them in reality welfare programs; and as welfare programs they justifiably fit into the bigger picture of Health, Education, and Welfare--not as a separate entity.

"Over 25 percent of all of higher education's funds come from the federal government, while only 9 percent of elementary- and secondary-education funds are federal funds. Research funds for institutions of higher education come from practically every department in the federal government. Their administration probably never could, or should, be consolidated. The creation of a separate department would be primarily characterized by moving the Education Division, already dominated by elementary- and secondary-education interests, out of H.E.W. Higher education would be further overshadowed in a new department in which its voice would be even more difficult to project."

Edward C. McGuire
Chancellor, Massachusetts Board of
Higher Education

"We remain unpersuaded that the creation of a new Department is the right approach to obtaining greater efficiency and accountability, and a stronger voice of education issues on the federal level. Rather, we support the examination of alternative proposals for reorganizing the Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"We are primarily concerned that the proposed Department is a signal of greater Federal control over educational policies and decisions when the influence of Federal government is already so pervasive. I am very doubtful that the diverse and complex needs of higher educational institutions can best be served by a single agency."

David S. Saxon
President, University of California

"No persuasive arguments have been made that the national education interests would be better served with a cabinet-level education secretary. What is needed is more federal imagination in the field, not another structural reorganization."

George Bonham
Executive Director, Council on Learning

"The power to establish (unified and systematic educational policy for the whole nation) carries with it, inevitably the power to dominate educational practice throughout the nation.

"The 200 year old absence of a department of education is not the result of simple failure during all that time to notice that virtually every other nation in the world has come to have one. On the contrary, it derives from the conviction that we do not want the kind of educational systems that such arrangements seem to produce. That conviction is as sound now as it ever has been."

Richard W. Lyman
President, Stanford University

"It isn't going to accomplish very much and major changes that won't accomplish very much should always be avoided."

Christopher Jencks
Department of Sociology, Harvard University