Putting Our Values to Work

A Resource for Association Social Justice Activists and Organizers
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NEA: Our Core Values

Equal Opportunity. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, personal independence, and character.

A Just Society. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

Democracy. We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

Professionalism. We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

Partnership. We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

Collective Action. We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

*Adopted by the 2006 NEA Representative Assembly*
NEA—An Organization with a Soul

Most educators are what psychologists call “inner directed” people. That is, we are driven by our inner core values and possess a strong sense of inner purpose.

This is why NEA has a long and proud history of fighting for equal opportunity for all students and educators.

It is why when there’s a fight over investments in education, we stand up for full and fair funding, and when the debate turns to income inequality, we stand up for our students and their families.

It is why we refuse to ignore the yawning gap between the equal opportunity that America espouses and the socioeconomic reality we encounter in our schools.

We see children who first thing in the morning dash for the cafeteria because they’re hungry. We see children who come to school exhausted because it’s hard to sleep in an overcrowded homeless shelter or doubled up in a small apartment with another family. We see children who fall behind in the early grades and never receive the professional one-on-one help they need to catch up.

For educators, inequality is more than an abstraction. Inequality has a name and a face. Inequality walks through our classroom door every school day.

Fortunately, another generation of NEA members and leaders are stepping up to become social justice activists. They are defending the democracy that gave birth to public schools. They are rallying for the civil rights which the social justice activists of the past sacrificed so much to achieve. They are speaking truth to power about our nation’s shameful opportunity gap.

Our educator/social justice activists today are like musicians in the “justice for all” choir. No one is required to sing solo, but everyone learns how to sing to the best of their ability and in harmony with their colleagues.

We hope this booklet will give you reason to join our “justice for all” choir, if you haven’t already. What’s more, we hope it will help you find your place in the score.

On Being a Social Justice Activist

Somebody Ought to Do Something

Oftentimes when people hear or read about a wrong, they say somebody ought to do something about it. But the truth is, when people say

“All human beings have the burden in life to constantly figure out what’s true, what’s authentic, what’s meaningful, what’s dross, what’s a figment, what’s madness. We all need to figure out what is valuable.”

Maxine Hong Kingston
that, they usually mean: Somebody else ought to do something.

- Activists are the ones who step up and actually do something. They lead by example. What’s more, they invite others to join them. Activists keep hope alive.

- Social justice activists will tell you that activism gives their life meaning. People still hunger for a higher purpose, and it’s the challenge of the organizer to herald a higher purpose.

- “The reward for participating in a movement for social justice is not the prospect for victory. It is the exhilaration of standing together with other people, taking risks together, enjoying small triumphs and enduring disheartening setbacks—together.” So says historian and civil rights/peace activist Howard Zinn.

- “We work for justice, I’ve come to believe, when our hearts are stirred by specific lives and situations,” says Paul Rogat Loeb, a community and student organizer and author of Soul of A Citizen.

- Many educators who have become social justice activists will tell you it dawned on them one day that however hard they worked in their classroom or school workplace, it wasn’t enough—children still came to school hungry or sleep deprived, children were still homeless, children still dropped out of school.

- In education today, there is no shortage of reasons to become a social justice activist. Just look around. (For examples, see “Three Social Justice Issues of Our Day” on pages 23-26.)

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**Getting Started**

- Look for the activist opportunity that fits you—your skills and personality. Find a group that likes to laugh.

- Becoming an activist does not mean a life of endless drudgery. Being an activist is living life to the fullest and always making time for the people and activities that give you the greatest pleasure.

- Jump on every training opportunity that comes your way in our Association—and there are many of them.

- If you are still feeling a bit lost, there is an abundance of resources for the social justice activist/organizer. Check out the back of this booklet. (Pages 34-35)

- Savor the journey.

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*Lift up your eyes upon This day breaking for you. Give birth again To the dream.*

Maya Angelou
Frequently Asked Questions about Becoming an Activist

**Q:** Why become an activist in the first place? I already work very hard.

**A:** Educators become activists because they see something that they know is wrong and they decide, “I can’t remain silent.” It might be a school board siphoning off more and more money to privately-managed charter schools or threatening to contract out your job as a bus driver to a low-wage, no benefits private contractor. It might be ballooning class sizes that prevent you from giving each student the individual attention he or she needs. It might be the unrelenting pressure to teach to the test. You name it. Today in education there is no shortage of issues to awaken the inner activist within you.

**Q:** How do I find the time to be an activist? I’m already very busy.

**A:** Do what you can. Start small. Everyone has time to talk for a minute or two, one-on-one, with a colleague about an issue of mutual concern.

**Q:** I look at the forces arrayed against us and they are so very rich and so very powerful that I wonder if it’s worth the effort?

**A:** Excellent question. Nowhere is it guaranteed that we will prevail. Maybe the Koch Brothers and Fox News and Michelle Rhee will win. But do you really want to be complicit in their victory by sitting out this struggle?

**Q:** How do I keep from getting depressed?

**A:** You keep working and you take the long view. We’re seeing an increase in educator activism right now—organizing, rallies, protests. History tells us that this activism will pay off down the road. We’ll celebrate our victories, learn from our defeats, and move on.

**Q:** I am one person, and the problems we face today seem so huge. How can I make a difference?

**A:** It’s easy to feel overwhelmed. The way to avoid this is to follow Dr. Martin Luther King’s advice: Proceed at your own pace, step by step, breaking down your goals into manageable tasks—and not worrying about the precise political impact of every action you take at any given moment.

**Q:** I have read about the civil rights movement and seen the documentaries, and I’m in awe of the heroic deeds of Rosa Parks, the Freedom Riders, and Greensboro Four. They risked their lives. I just can’t see myself doing any of that. Should that discourage me?

**A:** Not at all. You do what you can do. Maybe direct action and civil obedience aren’t for you. There are many other ways to contribute. Fortunately, there are people today who are quite willing to engage in such actions in the fight against voter suppression and for immigration reform as well other social justice causes.
Q: I don’t feel comfortable in the spotlight or at a podium speaking. Can I still be an activist?
A: You bet. There are plenty of “behind the scenes” tasks to be performed in the fight for social justice. Indeed, with the advent of cyber activism, you can tweet, text, facebook, and email to your heart’s content while at home in your slippers.

Q: Have all the great human and civil rights battles already been fought and won?
A: That’s a common misconception. It’s true racism has changed. It’s been beaten back, and in the process, like a virus, racism has mutated into new forms—among them are mass incarceration, racial profiling, and the hounding of immigrants who have lived and worked in the U.S. for years. The human and civil rights movement still has a long way to go. Racism remains the most intractable force in American society, and denial is the life support system of racism.

Q: Should I worry that participating in the actions allied with social justice activism—marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, picketing, and so on—will somehow tarnish my status as a professional individual? It seems undignified.
A: No one has ever needed to give up their individuality, nor surrender their professional standing to advance the cause of social justice. Plenty of professionals, for example, participated in the famous Selma March for Voter’s Rights in 1965—teachers, lawyers, ministers, doctors, and professors.

Tips for the Social Justice Activists

Listen, Really Listen
- Listening to others is the first and probably the most important rule for organizers.
- One-on-one, person-to-person communications is the lifeblood of organizing. In reaching out to someone, you have to start from where that person is, because his or her growth is going to come from there, and not from some abstraction or where you are or want them to be.
- “You have to start from some very concrete piece of people’s reality,” said Paulo Freire who taught illiterate adults to read and authored *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*

“Example moves the world more than doctrine. The great exemplars are the poets of action.”

Raúl Yzaguirre, former President and CEO of the National Council of La Raza and U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic
Attend to people’s leading concerns. If someone is worried about the quality of education their children are receiving, don’t talk abstractions to them. Be specific—talk about the importance of small class size, talk about children getting one-on-tutoring from a professional if they fall behind, talk about after-school programs that help children learn.

A skilled organizer connects a person’s “concrete piece of reality” to the cause for which you are fighting.

Talk the Talk

- Engage your colleagues in one-on-one conversations at every opportunity.
- When someone comes to you with a gripe, ask them: “What do you think we ought to do about it?”
- Remind members that it’s their union, and then behave that way. Don’t do for members what they can do for themselves.
- To every person whom you are trying to organize—a member, or an educator who does not belong to or is not involved in the Association, or a citizen in your community outreach effort—communicate energy, urgency, confidence, and hope. When you are trying to organize someone, it is show time.

Don’t talk too much, it gets in the way of listening and bores people—blah, blah, blah. Boil down your message to its punchy essence. Short words and sentences are best.

Don’t be afraid to challenge those whom you are organizing. No fairy godmother is going to swoop down and wave a wand over them, magically erasing the injustice and unfairness that besets them. It takes people of conscience working together, people who are willing to give something of themselves to the common cause, to overcome injustice.

Nine times out of ten, if an employee or citizen is being exploited, they know it. What they often don’t know, however, is how to get un-exploited. That’s where you, the organizer, comes in.

Make the “Ask”

- Studies have shown that about 80 percent of the volunteers involved in community social justice work became involved because they were asked by a friend, a family member, or a colleague at work. The same holds for involvement in Association actions—someone
you know and respect asks you to step up and join in.

- The personal “ask” is absolutely the best. That is, if you are asked one-on-one, face-to-face by someone you know to volunteer, you are far more likely to do so.

- When asking for someone to volunteer, give them the reasons why they are needed and why the activity matters.

- Be straight with volunteers. If an activity is tedious or difficult, own that and explain why it is still important. Credibility is crucial in maintaining this relationship.

- Keep in mind during the “Ask” that one of the major underlying reasons people take the plunge and volunteer is that they want to be part of something which serves a higher purpose. In the hurly-burly of organizing and collective actions, this often gets overlooked.

Remember: Organizing and collective actions are all about putting our values to work.

Build an Inclusive Team

- Stay connected with the people who responded to your “ask.” Communicate often—even when you don’t need something from them.

- Organizing is about relationships. Do what you can to make volunteers feel special and part of a select team. Continue to exercise your listening skills. Elicit their input.

- The more special you make volunteers feel, the more ownership they will take of the action and the harder and more enthusiastically they will work.

- Don’t underestimate volunteers. They come to you from very different backgrounds and with a wide variety of skills. For example, one of the striking features of the Obama for President campaign in 2012 was the extraordinary amount of responsibility that was given to young people in the their 20s, a group of people who are often undervalued and underestimated.

- Involve colleagues in choosing tactics and divvying up the work.

- Appreciate all contributions, no matter how small.

- Welcome criticism, and laugh at yourself. Keep in mind that when working for social justice, we are always “climbing up the rough side of the mountain,” as the gospel song says, and anyone can slip.

- Celebrate your victories, however small; learn from your defeats and then move on.
Plan for Action

- Assess your group’s strengths, identify allies and decision makers you need to move, and evaluate your adversaries.

- First you develop your goals and strategies. Don’t confuse strategies with tactics.

- What are your goals? What are you trying to accomplish? How do you deploy your resources to reach your goal?

- Your strategy is your theory about how to turn your resources into power to move decision makers. And your strategy is dynamic and tested through action. [For a further discussion of strategy, see “Power! A Reality Check,” pages 14-16.]

- Then you look at potential tactics and ask: How does this tactic support our strategy to achieve our goal? If a tactic doesn’t, don’t do it.

- Having decided on a tactic or tactics—specific actions—you need to answer these questions: Who is going to do what? Who is responsible for each task? How will we recruit and retain volunteers? How will we engage people so they become a part of our movement, fight, and cause? How will we keep them engaged?

- From the beginning to the end of the action planning process, three overarching questions should guide you:
  1. Will our efforts build power?
  2. Will our efforts grow our membership and/or involve more members in the Association?
  3. Will our efforts test and develop new leaders?

- Pick battles big enough to matter and small enough to win.

Create a Compelling Narrative

- People make sense of the world through stories. Going into action, you need to be able to answer the question: What’s our story?

- As educators, we have a compelling story to tell.

- We went into education not to become rich, but to make a difference in the lives of children and young people—and we stay in education because we are making a difference. We speak of the students as “our kids,” and their ups and downs are our ups and downs. We are their champions.

- Never forget: The power of our story derives from the power of our calling to make a difference in the lives of other people’s children.

- We can transmit our core values through stories. Moreover, through story telling we can identify and personalize our adversary, and contrast our adversary’s goals with our own. We can underscore where we stand and what we won’t stand for.

- “Stories are more powerful than data, because they allow individuals to identify emotionally with ideas and people they might otherwise see as ‘outsiders,’” adds psychologist Timothy Wilson.

- A social justice activist/educator who comes
Putting Our Values to Work

armed with an emotionally compelling narrative is far more likely to connect to people and move them than someone who relies on a recitation of the facts.

For example, the stories of the students who were brought as children to the U.S. by their undocumented parents, the so-called “Dreamers,” clearly connect with citizens in ways that a lawyer’s brief on immigration reform never would. The Dreamers’ struggle to achieve the American Dream by working hard in school, college, and the workplace touches people’s hearts.

And if you need a refresher on story creation, go back to the children’s classics such as *The Little Engine That Could*, or check out *Aesop’s Fables*. They are clear, compelling, and rich in moral meaning. Our brains are designed to digest stories and remember them.

Don’t Forget to Follow Up

What did we learn? What worked and what didn’t? What did we mean to do but didn’t get done? Win, lose, or draw, make every collective action a learning experience.

Debrief the activists, and evaluate their feedback. Incorporate the findings into your next action plan.

It has been said that coming together is a beginning; keeping together is a process working together is success. The point is to keep working together, inviting in others to join you. Social justice activists are in it for the long haul.

Use the Full Range of Electronic Resources to Move People

The basic rules of organizing remain the same when reaching out electronically to people—the one-on-one “ask” is still key. But thanks to the electronic media of the 21st Century, you can now reach far more people far more quickly.

Still, connecting with people electronically, by whatever means, is no substitute for talking with them one-on-one in person. Which is why door-to-door campaigning continues to generate such positive results, as the Obama for President Campaigns showed in both 2008 and 2012.

Here are some tips for making your Web-based organizing more effective:

- Use clear, direct, active language
- Avoid jargon or academic-speak
- Shorter words are better than longer ones
- Avoid complex sentence structures
- Use active rather than passive verbs
There are numerous examples of the power of electronic organizing. Here are two.

Taking on The Movie Industry

In early 2012, the Weinstein Company was about to release the powerful documentary film *Bully* when it learned the motion picture industry had decided to give the film an “R” rating, because there was some profanity in it. *Bully* features real-life stories of students who have been tormented by bullies. The “R” rating meant that middle and high school students couldn’t see the movie.

When 17-year-old high school student Katy Butler read about the R rating, she was angry. She had been bullied in school for being a lesbian, and she thought middle and high schoolers should see the movie. And she decided to do something about it. Katy Butler became an activist.

With the help of change.org, she set up an online petition calling on the motion picture industry to revoke the “R” rating. Within a month, she had 70,000 signatures. Within two months, she had more than 200,000. That’s what one teenage girl and an online service for activists accomplished.

The Weinstein Company flew Katy Butler to Los Angeles, and she presented her petition to the motion picture industry’s rating group. By the end of the month, the industry had decided *Bully* could be released without a rating. More than three million people have seen *Bully* since then.

Mobilizing Millions

For another, even grander example of cyber organizing, go back to the Spring of 2006.

I googled, I gaggled, I gargled and I giggled.
I tweeted, I twattered, I twittered and twiggled.
I e-mailed, g-mailed and blogged.
I facebooked, I friended and I walled.

James Davis, an advocate for the homeless in Washington, D.C., wrote this poem, tongue in cheek, after lobbying for housing legislation in the Congress.
Republicans in the House of Representatives proposed legislation to criminalize all undocumented people in the United States, i.e., every undocumented person would be designated a felon.

In response, Hispanics in more than a dozen cities mounted massive protest demonstrations, the largest such demonstrations since the anti-Vietnam War protests in the late 1960s and early 70s.

More than half a million demonstrators marched through downtown Los Angeles one day in March. And on a day in April, 300,000 marched in Chicago; other cities such as Dallas, San Jose, Atlanta, and Seattle saw demonstrations of more than 100,000.

How on earth did Hispanics mobilize so many people in so short of time? It turns out that much of the organizing was done by ad hoc coalitions using electronic media—email, MySpace, Facebook, and cell phone text messaging. Hispanic high school and college students generated much of the buzz.

After the outpouring of humanity, the proposal to make all undocumented people felons was quietly shelved in the House of Representatives.

**Power! A Reality Check**

To speak baldly about “power” makes some people queasy. It seems almost like “power” is a dirty word—not fit for polite society. Get over it. Our Association exists in order to gain and exercise power for the good of educators, students, families, and communities.

Power is the ability to make change—to produce an effect.

Power doesn’t begin, end, or exist in a vacuum. It exists in relationship to the power held by others.

Collective action is the power to do.

Our ability to make change is determined in relationship to a decision maker that we are trying to move. We advocate for children because they have neither a voice nor a vote. They are politically powerless.

“Without power, there is no real recognition. They don’t even see you. They never learn your name. Without recognition, there’s no reciprocity; there’s not even a ‘you’ to respond to. And without reciprocity, there’s no real relationship or respect,” says community organizer Michael Gecan.

Indeed, many educators today do not feel powerful, because so-called “education reform” has been done to them, rather than by them.
We organize for power. With power, we can put our values to work and win concrete improvements in people’s lives; with power, we can give people a sense of their own power; with power, we can alter our relationships with decision makers.

With power, we have a say in our future, and without it, we must rely on the benevolence and wisdom of strangers—and sometimes strangers aren’t all that benevolent or wise.

Educators seek power because we are in the classrooms and school work sites every day, and we know what it takes to educate a student. But in education today knowledge is power only if decision makers listen and agree with us—only if we can move the decision makers. The sheer veracity of our ideas will not suffice. And if we are unable to move a given decision maker, our next option is to try to remove that decision maker from office.

Of course, NEA's clearly articulated core values are a strength; our training programs are a strength; our deep knowledge of education and commitment to our students are a strength; our three million-plus members are a strength—but only if we mobilize our members and allies can we sway decision makers.

All discussions of power eventually lead to the subject of strategy.

✓ The first step in creating a strategy for a campaign or initiative is to do a power analysis.

✓ You analyze the decision makers to understand who has power and why, and identify the key decision makers who control the fate of the issue you care about.

A WORD OF CAUTION
The Midwest Academy has for years been training organizers from different nonprofit, progressive organizations, and they’ve noticed that many of these organizers make shaky assumptions about the power of their organizations. Here are the Midwest Academy’s “illusions of power”—all too often groups believe that they will win because:

- They are morally right.
- Truth is on their side.
- They have the best information and it is all spelled correctly.
- They speak for large numbers of people.
✓ In addition, you determine who is with you and can leverage the decision makers as well as who is against you and who has no influence.

✓ On the results of this analysis, you build a strategy.

› Coalitions building and community outreach are key ingredients in any strategy. Acting alone, we can accomplish little.

› The work of strategy is figuring out how to turn what you have into what you need to get what you want; how to turn resources you have into power you need to move decision makers.

› As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: “Our nettlesome task is to discover how to organize our strength into compelling power.”

### How Collective Action Wins Social Justice Battles

› Black feminist and lifelong civil rights activist Pauli Murray was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus in Petersburg, Virginia, in 1940—fifteen years before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus. And in Montgomery, just eight months before Parks’ famous act of defiance, a young African American woman named Claudette Colvin had been arrested for refusing to give up her seat.

#### The Bus Boycott

› Why do we remember and revere Rosa Parks today?

› Yes, her action was incredibly courageous, exposing her to years of racist verbal abuse and death threats. But it is was the follow-up collective action by the Montgomery black community—the Women’s Political Council, the NAACP, the black churches, and black faculty and students at Alabama State University—that has etched Parks’ individual rebellion into our consciousness.

› To protest Parks’s arrest, blacks formed the Montgomery Improvement Association and organized a boycott of the bus system. At the beginning, most white people in Montgomery thought the boycott would flop. Instead, what unfolded was an extraordinary feat of organizing. Not only did people have to be
persuaded not to ride the buses, but they also had to be provided with alternative means of transport so they could get to their jobs.

- The Montgomery bus boycott lasted 382 days, and ended only after the buses of Montgomery were desegregated.
- Rosa Parks’s courage and the dramatic collective action which followed it empowered African Americans throughout the segregated South to challenge the status quo. They especially inspired the young men and women who launched the sit-in movement just a few years later.

- On July 2, 1964, the historic Civil Rights Act was enacted—nine years, five months, and one day after the Montgomery Bus Boycott was born at a mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church

  **Seattle Teachers Boycott Test**

- Fast forward to Seattle, Washington, 2013. A teacher at Garfield High School, fed up with the MAP standardized test, which doesn’t test what the students were being taught and which consumed enormous time and energy, alerted her union representative that she was going to refuse to administer the MAP.

- The union rep, Jesse Hagopian, disliked the test as much as his fellow teacher, but he was concerned that she would get fired for insubordination. Instead, he proposed they discuss taking action against the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) at a union meeting with all of the teachers.

- The union members met, had a very frank and open discussion, and decided that they would **all** refuse to administer the (MAP).

- Equally important, they launched a “Scrap the MAP” campaign.

- The teachers reached out to parents and local organizations such as the NAACP, and enlisted their support. They framed the MAP issue as a social justice issue: MAP takes resources and time away from the education of the students, many of whom are minorities. If MAP was so important, why didn’t the expensive private schools that educate the children of the rich use it?

- Teachers from other high schools in Seattle started to call the Garfield teachers to find out what’s up and ask whether they could join the boycott too? “Yes, you can,” was the answer.

- Michelle Rhee, who has received millions from various business interests to promote “education reform,” especially tying teacher
employment and salaries to students’ standardized test scores, wrote an op-ed published in the Seattle Times denouncing the teachers, and accusing them of not wanting to be held accountable.

The superintendent came to Garfield High School and offered the teachers an olive branch: Drop the MAP boycott and the District will not take any action against them, and it will form a blue-ribbon commission to study the efficacy of the MAP. The teachers, united now through collective action, said, “No.”

Notes union rep and history teacher Jesse Hagopian: “It is an amazing and wonderful thing to see a group of individuals lose their fear and together do what they know is right.”

The District then announced that administrators would administer the MAP. The union, backed by the Student Government and the PTA, urged parents to write their son or daughter a note excusing them from the MAP.

The day of the MAP less than a handful of students showed up for the test, and a number of those who did show up, pressed one key down on the computer and held it for a couple of minutes, thereby invalidating the whole test.

The District, near the end of the school year, announced that next year the MAP would be voluntary, which effectively killed it.

During their “Scrap the MAP” campaign, the teachers at Garfield High School heard words of encouragement from educators all around the country. They, it turns out, are not the only educators fed up with standardized tests. One day, the Garfield teachers went to lunch to find that a group of teachers from Florida had bought them all pizza.

Collective action, people working together for a common cause, is the engine of social justice activism. That one angry teacher could never have accomplished what all of the Garfield teachers working together accomplished.

Remember: Unions, while fighting for their own members, can be powerful instruments for social justice for all. A union provides a ready-made launch pad for collective action.

**Unions Fight for Social Justice**

Ever since the middle of the 19th Century, unions have been a force for social justice in America.

“The essence of trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, and the poor.”

A Philip Randolph, African American labor and civil rights leader
Unions fought for the abolition of child labor in mines and factories, for the eight-hour work day, for the two-day weekend and paid vacations for all employees. Unions supported a woman’s right to vote. Unions advocated for universal health care and a progressive tax system based on one’s ability to pay.

This is not to say that every union fought for equal opportunity for all, however. Some unions were bastions of racism, sexism, and exclusivity well into the 20th century.

A. Philip Randolph’s vision of social justice unionism was carried on by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. Today, for example, we see a united labor movement, including NEA, pushing for comprehensive immigration reform, just as organized labor pushed hard for passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Back in the 1950s, when 35 percent of the workforce was represented by unions, there was a semblance of economic justice in America, and that was no coincidence.

A corporate CEO in the 1950s and 60s made 20 times more than the average worker. Today CEOs make 600 times more.

Between 1979 and 2009, the top one percent enjoyed a 224 percent pay raise, while the bottom 90 percent’s income rose just five percent, and the bottom 20 percent’s real income actually dropped seven percent. (All income figures adjusted for inflation.)

Today, in an America where unions are under attack and their power has been eroded, the economic wheel of misfortune turns for more and more American families as they struggle to live on poverty level pay.

There is definitely a correlation between the rise in income inequality in the U.S. and the drop in the percentage of workers represented by unions. Unions are indispensable for democracy to function. As Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once said: “We can have concentrated wealth in the hands of a few or we can have democracy. But we cannot have both.”

One need never feel embarrassed about standing up for one’s union or trade unionism. Unions are as all-American as apple pie, and, on balance, unions have served and are serving the common good in America.

Educator unions are at the forefront of the fight to stop the privatization of public schools, and they are leading the fight to
increase funding and raise standards for schools which serve poor and minority children.

- We hear it said that unions are “selfish” and disregard the interest of others. This is nonsense. We should never confuse pursuing one’s “self-interest” with being “selfish.” Was it “selfish” of NEA leaders and members to demonstrate against apartheid? No. Was it in their self-interest? Yes, it was within their “self-interest”—their spiritual and moral self-interest.

- Who is fighting today for the people who work for poverty wages in Walmart, in the fast food industry, in the tomato fields of Florida—and in some of our school districts? Unions. Without unions, an ever increasing number of workers in America will be forced to work for poverty wages.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a staunch supporter of unions because he knew the terrible toll poverty takes on families. Dr. King was in Memphis supporting the striking sanitation workers and their union when he was assassinated.

- Those who argue that “unions were good once, but we don’t need them any longer” are dead wrong. We need organized labor more than ever today to stand up to the organized greed of corporate America and close the income inequality gap.

- We need unions to reverse the three-decade-long trend of the rich getting richer and everyone else getting peanuts. We need unions to say “No” to employers when they put profits above the basic rights and needs of workers and their families.

- If you need ammunition to rebut attacks on unions, check out They’re Bankrupting Us! And 20 Other Myths About Unions (Beacon Press) by Bill Fletcher, Jr.

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**NEA Demonstrates Against Apartheid**

On July 2, 1985, a convoy of buses filled with 2,000 delegates from the NEA Representative Assembly drove to the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C. to protest apartheid. As NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell said at the time: “The fight against apartheid is an extension of the fight against racial oppression in our daily lives.” Some 60 NEA members volunteered themselves for arrest that day as part of a multi-year campaign in the U.S. to end apartheid.
Overcoming Obstacles along the Way

- The reasons and/or excuses for inaction are many and sometimes quite seductive.

- Community organizer William Feather once noted: “Conditions are never just right. People who delay action until all factors are favorable end up doing nothing.”

- “The time is not right.” Every social justice activist has heard this one, usually from self-described “realists.” Agitator for independence Sam Adams heard it in Boston in 1773. Dr. Martin Luther King heard it in Montgomery and then again in Birmingham. César Chávez heard it before he led the historic farm workers march from Delano to Sacramento. Harvey Milk heard it when he was organizing San Francisco’s first gay rights demonstrations.

- By the way, “realists” are people who want change without upsetting the status quo.

- When civil rights activist Mary Frances Berry was told that the time was not right to start demonstrating at the South African Embassy against apartheid—it was the Reagan era!—she responded: “The time you need to do something is when no one else is willing to do it, when people are saying it can’t be done.”

- Former NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell had the best response to “the time is not right” objection: “If not now, when? If not us, who?”

- “Let’s be realistic.” This statement is typically used to throw cold water on a proposed collective action or some other challenge to those in power. Often underlying this objection is the speaker’s own feeling of powerlessness. “I am just a teacher…just a school secretary…just a bus driver, just a community college professor…”

- Social justice organizers have to be prepared to help people over the “I am just a…” hurdle. The “I am just a…” syndrome guarantees continued powerlessness.

- A suitable response to “let’s be realistic” is: “Well, if this action or challenge isn’t realistic, tell us one that you think is.”

- As author and activist Alice Walker has written: “The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

- Fortunately, American history—and NEA history—brim with examples of people who

Ring the bells that still can ring.
Forget your perfect offering.
There’s a crack in everything.
That’s how the light gets in.

Leonard Cohen, songwriter and poet
started with very little or no power, then came together, acted collectively, and against seemingly overwhelming odds, made a difference.

“*Apathy.*” This word is one of the most powerful depressants in the English language—it can suck the air right out of the room. Beware of the word “apathy”—it is the evil offspring of “cynicism”—and if it pops up in a discussion with potential activists, move past it as swiftly as you can.

Instead of bemoaning “apathy,” talk about engagement—How to get members engaged in their union? How do we engage parents and our allies in the community in the cause of a great public school for every student?

The successful social justice activist/organizer transmits hope, and that hope is grounded in his or her core values. “I believe that what we do, getting justice for those who have been denied it, is the good and right thing in life to do and everyone ought to be on our side,” says farm worker organizer Baldemar Velasquez.

Here is historian and civil rights activist Howard Zinn’s anti-apathy/anti-cynicism message:

“To be hopeful…is not foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage and kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.”

“More research is needed.” In social justice advocacy, facts are essential. Whatever the issue, you must have the key salient facts at your fingertips. Educators love facts—and they always want more.

Our hunger for facts can delude us into thinking the side with the most facts is going to win. **Facts are necessary but not sufficient.**
Facts alone do not mobilize people. And we must beware of what Jesse Jackson aptly called, “the paralysis of analysis.”

- It’s worth repeating: The side that connects with people on an emotional level is the one which will win.
- Psychologists tell us that the human mind is not set up to be activated or changed by mere data, evidence, or argument. Emotions are the prime mover of the mind. It is no accident that word motivation and emotion share the same Latin root—movere, which means to move.

Three Social Justice Issues of Our Day

Poverty’s Impact on Our Students
- “Poverty affects children’s health, and wellbeing. It affects their emotional lives and their attention spans, their attendance and their academic performance. Poverty affects their motivation and their ability to concentrate on anything but survival,” notes Diane Ravitch, a Research Professor of Education at New York University.
- Poverty rates have risen since 2000, with child poverty at its highest level since the United States started collecting this statistic in 1962.
- Twenty-two percent of the nation’s children now live in poverty.
- There are now 17 states in which the majority of K-12 students live in poverty: West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, California, Nevada, and Oregon.
- The academic achievement gap between poor and non-poor students is now twice as large as the achievement gap between black and white students.
- As bad as the child poverty statistics have become, however, teachers and education support professionals don’t educate statistics, we educate living, breathing children and young people—each one of whom comes to us with abilities and strengths, not just problems.
- Skilled and dedicated teachers and education support professionals can and do help individual students overcome poverty’s powerful undertow, especially when the educators unite with the student’s family in the effort.

Let People VOTE
But there is no scientific evidence that schools and families alone can lift most students from impoverished backgrounds out of poverty. In today’s winner-take-all economy, that will require a combination of great public schools for every student and government income distribution policies which improve the economic circumstances into which children are born and grow up.

Politics was once seen as a way of improving people’s wellbeing by changing their economic circumstances. In recent years, that bigger picture has been lost as the focus has narrowed to what the individual should do to lift him or herself up out of poverty. History teaches us, however, that income distribution provides policy makers with a way of improving the wellbeing of whole populations.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

Youth of color, LGBTQ students, and students with disabilities are punished more often and more severely than their peers for the same misbehavior.

The Advancement Project has observed “dramatic increases in the use of lengthy out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, referrals to alternative schools, referrals to law enforcement and school-based arrests [that have] blurred the line between the education and criminal justice systems.”

More than 70 percent of the students involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement are African American or Hispanic.

Three million plus students are suspended from school annually—that is 17,132 each day.

One in every 20 white students is suspended.

One in every 14 Latino students is suspended.

One in every 13 American Indian students is suspended.

One in every 6 black students is suspended.

One in every 4 black students with a disability is suspended.

Just one out-of-school suspension in the 9th grade doubles a student’s risk of dropping out before graduation.

Sixty-six percent of the males in state and federal prisons do not have a high school diploma.

More than 80 percent of schools employ some form of zero tolerance policy for both trivial and serious infractions. Zero tolerance policies, which harken back to the “War on Drugs” days, are seen as a major contributor to the school-to-prison pipeline.
It is also widely believed that removing misbehaving students leads to the creation of a school climate more conducive to learning for the remaining students. But research shows the opposite is true. Schools with higher rates of school suspensions/expulsions have lower ratings in school climate surveys and lower rates of academic achievement, even when controlling for demographics, such as socioeconomic status.

“The Pipeline is not an act of God or inevitable; it is a series of human choices at each stage of our children’s development.”—Marian Wright Edelman, founder and President of the Children’s Defense Fund.

Voter Suppression

Since the 1960s, there has been a concerted effort to expand voter access, especially for blacks in the South, for Hispanics, for young people, for the old and disabled who have difficulty getting to the polls. Across the country, we found ways to make the voting process more inclusive.

That all stopped with the 2010 election. It was quite remarkable. Although there was no evidence of voter fraud in any state, right-wing politicians in legislatures introduced restrictive, voting “reform” legislation in 41 states by the end of 2011.

The corporate-funded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) aided and abetted this stampede by providing model restrictive voting legislation to state legislators.

By the end of 2012, 19 states had passed laws that make voting more difficult, in particular for minorities, the young (especially college students) and low-income elderly—all groups that are less likely to support right-wing political candidates.

Among the most popular measures to make voting more difficult: requiring a photo ID. A much higher percentage of African Americans and Hispanics do not have a photo I.D. than whites.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder has called the new photo I.D. requirements the modern-day equivalent of the poll tax and literacy tests which were used to keep blacks from voting in the segregated South.

To make matters worse, some states have stipulated that student or public employee identification cards will not be accepted for voting.

Other measures adopted by states to discourage voting include the elimination or
contraction of early voting opportunities, and the elimination of same-day registration and of pre-registration for 16- and 17-year olds.

Then, in June 2013, in *Shelby County v Holder*, the Supreme Court declared a central part of the 1965 Voting Rights Act unconstitutional. In particular, the Court struck down the section of the law requiring counties and states which had discriminated against black voters in the past to get permission from the U.S. Department of Justice before making any changes related to voting.

*Shelby County v Holder* emboldened several states, including North Carolina and Texas, to pass even more restrictive voting laws. North Carolina, after the decision, for example, expanded its voting “reform” law from six parts in 14 pages to 60 parts in 57 pages, including all of the restrictions cited above.

In January 2014, a group of members of Congress introduced a series of amendments to the Voting Rights Act, in an effort to resurrect the provisions the Court rejected.

### What are human rights?

- Human rights are those rights that are essential to live as a human being. They affirm the dignity and worth of every person. They are self-evident, inalienable, and universal.

- To deny a person human rights is to deny his or her humanity.

- The idea that every person has certain rights as a human being is a relatively new concept, at least in western culture. The French philosophers Voltaire and Rousseau invented it. For much of history, rights had been tied to one’s station in life—aristocrats had specific rights, as did clergy, merchants, craftsmen, and peasants. The Magna Carta, for example, spelled out the rights of the barons in medieval England.

- In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its 30 Articles are considered the most definitive statement of human rights for the modern world.

- NEA’s Director of Research, Dr. William G. Carr, was a consultant to the American delegation at the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945, and later he worked with the group that helped write an early draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Dr. Carr went on to become NEA’s Executive Director in 1952.

- More than any one person, Eleanor Roosevelt was instrumental in the creation and passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This extraordinary document was signed by the United States, along with most other nations in the world.
It is especially noteworthy that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, unlike the U.S. Constitution, states that education is a fundamental human right. (Article 26)

It also states that the right to belong to a trade union is a fundamental human right. That’s right, union membership is a basic human right. (Article 23)

Missing from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the right to determine one’s sexual orientation and gender identity. Today, NEA, along with many other progressive groups, supports the idea that sexual orientation and gender identity are integral to every person’s humanity and must not be the basis for discrimination or abuse.

What are civil rights?

Civil rights are those rights guaranteed to citizens through a country’s or state’s constitution, laws, and court decisions.

The Bill of Rights to the Constitution (Amendments one through ten) sets forth our basic civil rights as American citizens, including our freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly, as well as the civil right to petition the government to redress our grievances.

The framers of the Constitution were most worried about government tyranny, and the Bill of Rights focused on providing freedom from such tyranny. The framers, however, did not recognize the rights of African Americans, women, Native Americans, or people who did not own property.

In time, Americans saw the value of other freedoms, such as freedom from slavery; and Amendments to the Constitution were passed abolishing slavery and giving women the right to vote. What’s more, legal barriers to the Federal government providing assistance to the elderly, disabled, and poor were eventually defeated.

Is the right to an education a basic civil right in the United States?

Many are surprised to learn that there is no explicit mention of education in the Constitution, and therefore, the right to an education does not derive from the Federal Constitution.

In fact, in San Antonio v. Rodriguez (1973), the United States Supreme Court held that education was not a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution. Justice Thurgood Marshall wrote a scathing dissent to this opinion.
But what about Brown v. School Board (1954)? That decision was based on the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. In Brown, the court found that if a state provides an education to children and young people, it must do so equally—and racially segregated schools were “inherently unequal.”

The Fourteenth Amendment has also been used in numerous other cases over the years to justify the Federal government protecting not just the rights of African Americans but also Hispanics, Asian Americans, American Indians, and people with disabilities. For this reason, some arch-conservatives and libertarians today would like to see the Fourteenth Amendment repealed. For social justice advocates, however, the Fourteenth Amendment is an old friend.

All state constitutions require the provision of public education. In the United States, therefore, the right to an education is embedded in the state constitutions. States, however, continue to grapple with the issue of providing equitable and adequate funding for every student’s education.

**NEA: Education is a human and civil right**

- For NEA, public education is a fundamental human and civil right. For us, the right to a quality education is the most basic of human and civil rights, because it is the essential enabling right—the prerequisite to fully exercising all the other rights that are our birthright as human beings.

- Moreover, NEA polling and focus groups show that while we can cite many good reasons why public education matters, none is more persuasive to the public than education is a basic human and civil right.

- A great public school is a basic right of every student—NEA’s advocacy is built upon this bedrock.

- To deny any person, child, or young adult, his or her human and civil right to a quality public education is to deny their humanity.

- But that is what our society does when a student is consigned to a school in which the odds are stacked against them—schools where class sizes are too large or educators are ill-prepared to teach students from ethnicities and cultures different from their own or bullying is rampant. The existence of achievement gaps among different groups of students is living testimony that our society
has not achieved the basic human and civil right of equal opportunity for all students.

- This failure of our society to live up to its promise to our nation’s children should drive our social justice activism. Every student needs and deserves a quality education.

- Think about the child growing up today on the Pine Ridge Reservation of South Dakota, or in the slums of Camden, New Jersey, or in the barrio of East Los Angeles, or in an Appalachian hollow…What lies ahead for that child? The American Dream? Or is it a living nightmare of societal neglect and poverty?

- As educators, it is our responsibility to see that our society not lose sight of the children from what Michael Harrington called “the other America”—they are “our” children too.

- Historically, educators have been advocates for children and young people, and when necessary, we’ve been a thorn in the national conscience. NEA, for example, was one of the first organizations in the second half of 19th Century America to point out the deficiencies in the education being provided both the children of freed slaves and American Indian children.

- It is also our responsibility as educators to point out that while human and civil rights are precious, they are also precarious. History teaches us that if you think your human and civil rights are secure and can never be taken away from you, you need to think again. The right to vote is a case in point.

**Why does NEA give out human and civil rights awards?**

- When the NEA merged with the American Teachers Association (ATA) in 1966, we promised to carry on ATA’s tradition of giving out human and civil rights awards.

- Because there are people who think that all the great human and civil rights battles have already been fought and won—and they are wrong.

- Because by acknowledging those who work for human and civil rights, we lift our spirits and affirm our commitment to equal opportunity and a just society.

- Because there is still so much to do, and we truly believe in “justice for all.” It’s embedded in our organizational DNA.

- Because we’re educators, and we appreciate the importance of honoring good work.

- Check out [www.nea.org/hcrawards](http://www.nea.org/hcrawards).
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ARTICLE 1
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

ARTICLE 2
Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

ARTICLE 3
Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

ARTICLE 4
No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

ARTICLE 5
No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

ARTICLE 6
Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

ARTICLE 7
All are equal before the law and entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

ARTICLE 8
Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

ARTICLE 9
No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

ARTICLE 10
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.
ARTICLE 11
1. Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to the law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

ARTICLE 12
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

ARTICLE 13
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

2. Everyone the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

ARTICLE 14
1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from nonpolitical crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 15
1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.

2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

ARTICLE 16
1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

ARTICLE 17
1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

ARTICLE 18
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
ARTICLE 19
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

ARTICLE 20
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

ARTICLE 21
1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly and through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public services in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

ARTICLE 22
Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

ARTICLE 23
1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

ARTICLE 24
Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

ARTICLE 25
1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

ARTICLE 26
1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall
be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

**ARTICLE 27**

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

**ARTICLE 28**

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

**ARTICLE 29**

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**ARTICLE 30**

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

“*The best way to help the movement grow is to talk about it face-to-face, to your family and friends. Let them see you go to jail, and they’ll start to think differently about what they believe.*”

*Rev. Benjamin Barber, recipient of the NEA Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Award and President of the North Carolina NAACP*
Additional Resources for the Social Justice Activist

**Action Resources—Print**


Bill Fletcher, *They're Bankrupting Us and 20 Other Myths About Unions* (Beacon Press, 2012)


Midwest Academy, *Organizing for Social Change* (Seven Locks Press, 2001)

NEA Education Support Professionals Quality, *Organizing: A Tool to Build Strong Locals* (NEA, 2009)


**Action Resources—Electronic**

Advancementproject.com

Aflcio.org/Get-Involved/Become-a-Union-Organizer/Organizing-Institute

Change.org

ColorofChange.org

CommunityChangeinc.org

Educationvotes.nea.org

HumanRights.com

info@humanrights.com

Midwestacademy.com

MoveOn.org

Nea.org/hcr

Nea.org/bullyfree

Neworganizing.com

Ruckus.org

Signon.org

**Human and Civil Rights Background Resources**


Derrick Bell, *Ethical Ambition: Living a Life of Meaning and Worth* (Bloomsbury, 2002)


NEA Human and Civil Rights, Focus on Hispanics: Invisible No More—The Latino Struggle for Civil Rights (National Education Association, 2010)

Linda Pinkow, Sam Pizzigati et al, editors, The Wealth Inequality Reader (Dollars & Cents, 2012)

Diane Ravitch, Reign of Error: the Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Dangers to America’s Public Schools (Knopf, 2013)

Adam Roberts, Timothy Ash, editors, Civil Resistance & Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present (Oxford University Press, 2009)


Michael Sandel, Justice: What’s The Right Thing To Do? (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2010)

Jeanne Theoharis, The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks (Beacon Press, 2013)

Drew Westin, The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion In Deciding The Fate Of The Nation (Public Affairs, 2007)

