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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING BOOK
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

THE WHITE HOUSE
JUNE 11, 1976

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

I(b)

- Q. Would your Administration take steps to see that the Federal government's share of public education expenses increases, say up to one-third of all funds needed?
- A. The Federal share of the cost of education is now about 7 percent -- compared to percent in 1968. Under my proposed Financial Assistance for Education Act, the Federal appropriation would increase \$200 million per year during each of the next three fiscal years.

Frankly, I do not see the Federal share of the cost of education approaching one-third of the total in the foreseeable future. To do so would cause the Federal budget to skyrocket. This could be paid for in only two ways -- higher taxes or inflation. Either would have crippling effects on our entire economy -- causing, among other things, a squeeze on the revenues of state and local governments, as occurred in the early part of 1975. Local school districts might well end up with less total revenues to pay for the cost of education. I think that our approach is the responsible one, and in the best interest of education.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

I(c)

Q. What do you see as an appropriate level of funding at the end of your four-year term as President?

A. That is impossible to say, precisely. As I say, we have asked the Congress for an increase in funding for the next three years. But what we will get from them, and what the exact needs of education will be in 1980, I cannot specifically predict at this time.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

I(d)

Q. What budgetary priority do you place on public education in relation to the many other concerns of the Federal government?

A. As I said, I place the highest possible priority on provision of high quality education for all American children. The Federal, state, and local governments all have their roles to play in achieving this goal. I have described to you the role that I think is appropriate for the Federal government.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

2.

Q. Do you support a Federal statute to grant teachers and other public employees collective bargaining rights?

Do you support the right of public employees to strike?

If you don't favor the right to strike or place a limitation on that right, what alternative do you propose?

A. For Federal employees, we have a procedure for negotiation on most labor questions under Executive Order 11838. This has worked relatively well, and I do not see a need for a statute at this time.

I do not favor bringing state and local labor relations under Federal regulation. I believe that the continued vitality of state and local governments depends on their remaining as free as possible of Federal controls. If we turn to a completely centralized system, the employees of state and local governments -- including school teachers -- will be among the greatest losers. Furthermore, the whole area of state and local government labor relations is one in which we are still finding our way. We have not yet found one "best" way of dealing with government labor relations. It is therefore a good thing to have different states trying out a number of different methods of dealing with this problem. Justice Brandeis once said: "The states are the laboratories of the Federal system". In this area, as in many others, the states provide us with the opportunity to experiment with a variety of possible solutions.

In general, I believe government employees who work in areas that affect public health or public safety should settle any differences that may arise with their public employers through means other than strikes. Binding arbitration is one possible alternative now being tried in some states and localities. Whatever method is used, the uninterrupted delivery of key public services must be our first concern.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

3(a)

Q. What specific qualifications would you look for in your appointments of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Commissioners of Education, the HEW Assistant Secretary for Education, and Director of the National Institute of Education?

A. I can be very specific.

Dr. David Mathews, whom I appointed Secretary of HEW, combines exactly those qualities I think a person must have to lead a Department deeply involved in the lives of all Americans. He is an educator and an extremely perceptive student of the history of this Nation. He is a capable manager and has proved himself as a committed leader.

Dr. Virginia Y. Trooter, the Assistant Secretary for Education; and Dr. Terrell H. Bell, the Commissioner of Education, are educators with broad experience and a record of outstanding leadership. They have a strong commitment to the thousands of schools, colleges, and universities in this Nation and to their students.

Dr. Harold L. Hodgkinson, whom I appointed as Director of the National Institute of Education, is a recognized leader in his field, and a capable and thoughtful director of the efforts of people performing research in many different disciplines.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

3(b)

Q. What is your position on establishing a separate Cabinet level Department of Education?

A. There is considerable attraction to the idea of a separate Department of Education. A separate department would give at least symbolic recognition to the key importance of education in our national life.

On the other hand, there are valuable administrative advantages to keeping all of the human resource programs under the same roof. At the Federal level, the inter-relationships between these programs make it particularly important that they be coordinated. On balance, I am inclined at this time to maintain a single Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

3(c)

Q. In developing your Administration's education policies, with whom would you consult?

What role do you see NEA teacher-leaders playing in your Administration?

A. In developing education policy, as in developing all policy, my Administration will continue to be open and responsive to all interested groups. I believe it is essential that the proposals we develop reflect extensive consultations with individuals, organizations of elected public officials, and leaders in the education community.

I am particularly anxious to have the views of school teachers, who after all are closest to the subject, reflected in the setting of education policy. I will maintain continued close contact with the leaders of NEA -- our Nation's largest education organization -- and will direct officials of my Administration to consult closely with NEA in developing education planning. My meeting with members of the NEA board last year was most helpful to me in developing education policy. I intend to continue such meetings.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

4.

Q. What initiatives would your Administration take to maintain the guarantees of the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and amendments to them, despite attempts to water down these statutes?

Would you insist upon strict enforcement of all civil rights laws and court mandates?

A. Of course I would insist upon enforcement of all civil rights laws and court mandates. As a member of Congress, I voted for them, and as President it is my constitutional duty to see that they are enforced. At my request, Congress last year extended the Voting Rights Act for an additional seven years. With the support of my Administration, coverage was expanded to include Spanish-speaking Americans.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

5.

Q. Would you support a Federal-state program to guarantee the right of teachers during their working years to substantially carry their retirement benefits with them state to state?

A. I am keenly aware of the apparent injustice done to school teachers who lose retirement benefit rights when they move from one state to another. It is hard for me to understand why these teachers should be treated differently from teachers who move from one district to another within the same state. Congress has initiated a review of the whole subject of pension portability under the Pension Reform Act. I am hopeful that when this review is completed we will be able to come up with an equitable solution to this entire problem.

POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP

5.(1)

Q. While we acknowledge your desire to await the results of a comprehensive study of this question by the Congress, do you support the concept of pension portability for teachers?

A. The question of pension portability is an incredibly complex issue for every pension plan is different. The question is further complicated by the U.S. Constitution which raises grave doubts about the propriety of the Federal Government injecting itself into the economic relations between State and local governments and their employees.

Theoretically, I guess, we could design a universal pension plan to which contributions are made from any employment. This would furnish complete portability. We might even call it Social Security.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

6.

Q. Do you believe that teachers and university researchers should have a limited exemption under the copyright laws?

A. Yes, I believe they should. We are now in the process of determining the precise limits.

My broad feeling is that duplication of materials for scholarly or classroom purposes should be limited as little as possible, as long as the duplicated material is not offered for sale.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

7.

Q. If elected President, what steps would you take and/or what measures would you initiate to improve the quality of American public education?

A. I have already made proposals which -- if enacted by Congress -- will significantly improve the quality of American education.

First, the Federal government should take steps to simplify its assistance, to reduce red tape and regulations, and to encourage increased citizen involvement in education decisions and programs. My proposed Financial Assistance for Education Act would reduce red tape, require more citizen involvement in the decisions about the use of Federal funds, and increase State and local authority on particular approaches.

Second, the Federal government should do more to help children with special educational handicaps. This continues to be not only one of the country's principal education problems, but one in which Federal help still is most needed.

Third, the Federal government should strengthen its capability for research and development in the field of education. We need to speed the pace of development of more effective educational approaches. This function is especially appropriate for the Federal government to perform. Even though the overall budget problem this year is extremely difficult, I have asked for a substantial increase in the budget for the National Institute for Education.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

8(a)

Q. What is your position on the use of public funds to support church-related or other non-public schools?

A. Church-related and other non-public schools are among our important national assets. They express the worthwhile diversity of culture and educational approaches in our country. They help preserve values that maintain both public and private virtue. Many of these schools face very serious financial difficulties, and I would like to find some way, within the limits set by our Constitution, of giving them assistance. However, we are of course prohibited from taking any step that would violate the principle of separation between church and state set forth in the American Bill of Rights.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

8(b)

- Q. Would you support legislation to provide tax credits for tuition to non-public schools?
- A. I would give serious consideration to a constitutionally supportable tax credit proposal. But I would not want to minimize the difficulties involved in developing such a proposal.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

8(c)

Q. What is the responsibility of the Federal government in providing financial support for post-secondary education institutions?

What form(s) should such assistance take?

A. Our principal responsibility is to help provide equal opportunity for all Americans to pursue their education beyond the high school level. This means helping to remove the financial barriers that now stand in the way of some qualified students. We are achieving this goal through the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants program, which helps economically disadvantaged students pursue any kind of post-secondary education. Full funding of this program is essential, since it is the base upon which needy students may build. Students may use federally subsidized student loans and the college work-study programs to add to that base.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

9.

Q. What initiatives would you and your Administration take to eliminate sex discrimination, specifically to eradicate inequality in the world of work, leadership in our institutions and participate in politics and our educational system?

A. Last May 27th, when I signed Hew's Title IX regulation, I joined all Americans in a commitment to eliminate sex discrimination in the U.S. schools. Those regulations call for schools and colleges to begin a self-examination to identify and end any discriminatory practices which may exist. I am hopeful that educators charged with carrying out the law will do so in the spirit that embraces its real purpose. In addition, my Administration is working hard to upgrade women in the Executive Branch. For example, Carla Hills was named to fill the top position at HUD and Marjorie Lynch is now Under Secretary at HEW.

I support the actions taken by the Secretaries of the Departments of Labor and HEW to seek public support to expand job opportunities for women and minorities.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

10.

Q. What is your position regarding the enactment of a universal, comprehensive national health security program that is supported through the tax system and is not based upon the ability to pay?

A. I am concerned that all Americans have access to quality health care, but I do not believe we can realistically afford Federally dictated national health insurance providing full coverage for all 215 million Americans. We can see from the experience of other countries that there are serious questions about the quality, as well as the cost, of national health insurance plans.

I believe the Federal government should aim first at seeing to it that aging Americans get the necessary medical services. We have already taken a step in this direction with my proposal to protect persons over 65 against the costs of catastrophic illness. I look forward to the day when we may use the private health insurance system to offer more middle income families high quality health services at prices they can afford and also shield them from catastrophic illnesses.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

11.

Q. What are your major aims and objectives as President?

A. As I have travelled around the United States in recent months, I have detected a great yearning for the United States to return to a focus on the rights of the individual. I believe this should be the goal of our third century, which we enter this year, and I would like to start the first four years of that century by emphasizing the right of all individuals to participate to a greater degree in the benefits of our economic system, and to be able to partake of the benefits of our educational religious and professional system, while still retaining his or her own individuality.

NEA QUESTIONNAIRE

12.

Q. If you are chosen as your party's nominee, why should teachers support you for President?

A. First of all, because teachers, like all Americans, have a large stake in our Nation's future. Teachers aim for a peaceful world, a prospering economy, and a society that gives a fair chance to all -- and those are the goals that I believe my Administration has the best chance to achieve. But teachers have a special interest in the kinds of programs that I am setting forth, particularly in the field of education. Nothing is more precious to a teacher than the right to teach the subject in which he has been trained in the way that meets the needs of his particular students. If our government becomes more centralized -- as inevitably will happen under the programs proposed by the opposition party -- teachers are going to find this precious freedom eaten away. Our schools need help and support from the Federal government. The programs that I have proposed will give this help, while leaving the control of education in the hands of those who are intimately aware of the needs of local communities and individual students.