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- Dace Blaskovitz: Welcome back to Money and Politics in Delaware. It's that time once a month. Welcome back, Charlie Copeland.
- C. Copeland: Dace, thank you so much for having me on. I appreciate it. Really do.
- Dace Blaskovitz: And we were doing a little pre-interview and then we were giggling, and that's a good word choice, before the segment started. And I think we're going to call this segment "The Crazies At The Teachers' Union" and with that said, Charlie Copeland, we give first-time listeners 30 seconds about you, 30 seconds about what you do for a living.
- C. Copeland: Sure. So I have lived in Delaware the vast majority of my 56 years, other than a few years out of college, a few years when I worked for DuPont and was on the Gulf Coast and then in business school. So out of my 56 years, I think I've been in this state, 45, 46, 47 of them, and almost that entire time living within three miles of the statue of Caesar Rodney down at Rodney Square. So northern New Castle, and my family's been around here, very involved in the community in various ways. Also served in the State Senate for six years, wound up as Senate minority leader.
- C. Copeland: What I do today is I have a family business, a direct mail marketing services/commercial print organization, but I also on a daily basis ... What I really spend my time on is running the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, ISI. For our listeners out there, they can go to isi.org, or if they're a college student around then they can go to join.isi.org. We serve sort of as a para university, para meaning next to. And we come in and provide educational content programming for colleges and universities, things that they used to provide, but they don't anymore, things like civic literacy, free markets, property rights, constitutional development, these kinds of topics. And we're on 40% of the colleges and university campuses across the country.
- Dace Blaskovitz: Wow. Well, I did not know that 40 number. Fantastic, my friend. Well, speaking of education in a positive light, we turned to instead, he says with a big sarcastic grin, to the teachers' union. And you have brought a loaded story. As much bravado as I can put and excitement as I can put through the radio, it's your turn, Charlie Copeland. Tell this ugly, painful story, please.

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C. Copeland: We've talked a lot about the Delaware State Education Association, which is the teachers' union organization here in Delaware, which is an affiliate of the National Education Association, the NEA. Delaware public school teachers are ... when you're hired as a Delaware public school teacher, you are largely peer pressured into joining this organization, so this organization technically represents you. And you can see on billboards and ads all around town, periodically they'll run these billboards, spending their union dues on advertising, talking about great schools and supporting teachers and this kind of thing.

C. Copeland: So you can imagine, Dace, that I was pretty excited to see what the teachers' union was going to be conducting at its annual summer meeting. They have an annual summer meeting in which they all vote. All the union memberships, union representatives all go to some confab and vote on what the union's going to focus on.

C. Copeland: And as you pointed out, and Data Delaware pointed out, Delaware's teachers' salaries have not increased for decades. As a matter of fact, I think they're slightly down, so if you're a teacher today, you're actually earning slightly less money on an inflation-adjusted basis than you were in the past, and this is despite the enormous growth in education spending in Delaware. And by the way, any of your listeners can find this information that I'm talking about here by just doing a web search on the *NEA 2019 Representative Assembly Items*.

Dace Blaskovitz: Okay, hang on just a minute. Let's don't leave that hanging. State of Delaware is the 14th highest spender on public education, yet roughly 80% of the minority kids in Delaware public education cannot read or write at grade level. 80% of the billions that go to annually to public education in the state of Delaware do not make it to the classroom. Arguably, it goes to bureaucracy. And the inflation-adjusted average annual salary at Delaware's elementary and secondary public school teachers has been going down, dropping from 65,223 in 1989, in 1992 it was 60,484 and in 2017... 2018. It's a brutal story. Start again. So the conference, what happens?

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- C. Copeland: The second item to be considered by this national assembly of union representatives, some of them from our state, and this was what was the proposal was: "The National Education Association will rededicate itself to the pursuit of increased student learning in every public school in America." And it goes on, right? And that that sounds great, right, that they will rededicate themselves to the pursuit of increased student learning in every public school in America. And you know what? That item was defeated, defeated. They go on to item three, the third item on the agenda, "to work toward the goal of making every educator a great educator." If you're a teacher or a parent and you hear, "Hey, the NEA wants to make my teacher a great teacher," this proposal was defeated. It was voted down.
- C. Copeland: So they don't want to rededicate themselves to student learning and they don't want to ensure that all their teaching members are great teachers, what do they want to do, Dace? What does the teachers' union want to do? Ah, the very first item they voted on and passed was, "The NEA will call on the U.S. government to address the human rights violations for which it is responsible." So the NEA is now getting into the human rights violations in this by demanding that the government, the U.S. government, take responsible for human rights violations.
- C. Copeland: Yet furthermore, they went on to say that the NEA will incorporate the concept of white fragility into NEA trainings, staff development, literature ... white fragility. I didn't realize that either white people were fragile or that white people were causing fragility, just a really bizarre concept, but that's what the teachers' union ... Rather than educating students, that was voted down, improving our teachers, making them better, that was voted down, we're going to be pushing the U.S. government to address human rights violations.
- C. Copeland: Or here was something else that they passed: "The NEA will create space in all individual's name tags for the individual's pronoun," because of course we just don't want to use he and her anymore. We've got to use ... I don't know what pronoun you'd like to use, Dace, but evidently that is something that's important for teachers to think about. How about the NEA will collaborate and partner to push for reparations for descendants of enslaved African-Americans? So, the teachers' union, rather than teaching kids or improving their teachers, are going to push for reparations. What does that have to do with education? It has nothing to do with education.

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C. Copeland: How about that they're going to lobby for a content curriculum that is LGBTQ-plus inclusive? I don't know who the pluses are, but is this really what ... It's not about educating kids or improving teachers, it's about a leftist agenda on LGBTQ-plus inclusivity. The NEA will publish in their magazine the impact of voter suppression in the United States. Voter suppression? Again, what does this have to do with educating kids?

C. Copeland: This is what your union is spending their time focused on. And if you're a teacher and you got into this business because you love children or you love to teach, and you're paying every month to a bunch of folks who go to an annual confab and talk about reparations and pronouns and white fragility. And I could go on, by the way. There were over a hundred of these things, and anybody can go do a web search for it. Just have to look up the NEA 2019 representative assembly items, and you can go through and you would just shake your head and say, "Who the heck are these people?"

C. Copeland: And by the way, the union is exempt from antitrust laws, and 97% of any apolitical donations go to Democrats, and yet your taxes and mine and any of your listeners are funding them through teacher salaries that we are paying.

Dace Blaskovitz: In 10 seconds, yes or no, the Delaware teachers' union did not issue a dissonant opinion?

C. Copeland: As far as I know, there's nothing on the website that says anybody's issued a dissonant opinion.

Dace Blaskovitz: His name is Charlie Copeland. We're going to take a short break. He, Charlie, agrees with The New York Times regarding Biden. We will be right back.