



A post about my IEA leadership. You might want to sit down before reading this one. - Fred Klonsky

JULY 8, 2015

It is no secret that over the many years of teacher union activism I have been a vocal critic of our state IEA leaders.

Some have concluded that I have some personal vendetta.

I don't.

Some (really just one person) has labeled me anti-union and anti-IEA because I voice criticism of policies I think are wrong.

I am so not anti-union or anti-IEA.

But this must be said.

When I approached President Cinda Klickna about the Illinois delegation supporting my NBI on the Confederate flag, she immediately said she would help.

“Write it up and we will bring it up with the steering committee,” she said without a moment of hesitation.

The Illinois steering committee gave their support and Cinda scheduled it for a discussion and vote by the Illinois Caucus the very next session – early enough so I could get it to the hall and get it filed so it wouldn't end up as NBI 135.

Cinda's swift action resulted in it being NBI 11, among the very first to be debated.

It meant that I spoke, not as an individual, but on behalf of the Illinois delegation.

NEA Board of Director from Illinois Jim Grimes functioned as a guide and coach through the complicated RA technicalities and rules.

When I made the motion to support NBI 11 from the floor and debated for nearly two hours, the steering committee essentially said to me that however I wanted to play it, whatever I wanted to accept or reject as friendly amendments, they would support and notify our delegates that I had steering committee support.

NEA Board of Director Rainy Kaplan was unstinting in her support of the NBI and of me.

When amendments came up, I simply had to signal thumbs up or thumbs down to the Illinois steering committee and that was that as far as they were concerned. Even when our state stood nearly alone in opposing removing the term “Confederate symbols” from the language of the NBI.

We will fuss and fight again, I am sure.

But on the day of a long and contentious debate over race and racism, Illinois stood together.

And I wanted to thank them all.