



**California Federation of Teachers**  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, September 12, 2012**

*Contact: Steve Hopcraft, 916/ 457.5546, [steve@hopcraft.com](mailto:steve@hopcraft.com); Twitter: @shopcraft  
Fred Glass, 510/ 579.3343; [fglasscft@gmail.com](mailto:fglasscft@gmail.com)*

## **CFT Solidarity with the Chicago Teachers Union Education reform the wrong way leads to strike**

The California Federation of Teachers supports its sisters and brothers in the Chicago Teachers Union, AFT Local 1, who went on strike Monday to defend their livelihood, their students' learning conditions, and the mission of public education. The CFT has sent a contribution to the CTU strike fund, and a participant/observer to express our solidarity.

The Chicago school board is bent on eroding teacher rights and ultimately privatizing the school system. It is demanding longer school days, larger class sizes, and teacher evaluations based on the discredited model of student standardized test scores. It calls these actions "education reform." There is no basis in education research for implementing these policies.

The actions of the Chicago School Board stand in stark contrast to the work unveiled on Monday in Sacramento by the Education Excellence Task Force convened by Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson and chaired by Linda Darling-Hammond and Christopher J. Steinhauser. These recommendations for education reform in California provide a roadmap to change based squarely on best practices and classroom research, and significantly, with the participation of major stakeholders, including teachers themselves.

The model of "education reform" pushed by Chicago's mayor and school board portrays the Chicago Teachers Union as an obstacle to student success. The mayor and school board—like anti-union politicians across the country—have imposed an austerity budget that undermines the viability of public education. They say there is no alternative. They are wrong. The wealthy have increased their share of national income while enjoying historically low income tax rates. The alternative to slashing school budgets is to fund schools with fair tax rates on the rich.

The type of education reform pushed by Mayor Emmanuel and the Chicago School Board ignores the actual causes of fiscal problems and real solutions to them, and instead seeks to divert public attention through scapegoating teachers while placing the burden of austerity on the backs of students and teachers. Chicago teachers have had enough of this type of education reform.

It is with good reason that public education is considered the cornerstone of democracy. Chicago has become the national center of a struggle to determine whether the legacy of public education—access to education for all, and to the critical skills needed by citizens in a democracy—shall continue to exist, or be destroyed by essentially anti-democratic forces. The members of the Chicago Teachers Union are taking a stand to protect the inheritance provided by public education for their students.

**Please contact Steve Hopcraft to schedule an interview, 916/457-5546; [steve@hopcraft.com](mailto:steve@hopcraft.com)**

*For more information please visit: [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org)*