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Antony Davies: Unions do not appreciate our teachers

By Antony Davies

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This week is Teacher Appreciation Week, and the teachers unions ask that you please refrain from showing your appreciation in any meaningful way.

Of all the things employers can do to show appreciation, nothing beats cold hard cash. A raise says that your employer values you so much that he is willing to part with some of his bottom line to keep you happy.

But, by union rules, public school teachers who go that extra mile for your children do not get raises. In fact, parents can't even reward the best schools by sending their kids and tax dollars to them.

Teachers unions will tell you that education is different from other products, and that the reward of profit and punishment of loss don't affect the quality of education. That lie has condemned generations of children to a substandard education. There is nothing magical that exempts education from the laws of economics. What encourages that business to provide the best quality for the dollar is the promise of profit that flows in the door along with happy customers.

This is the magic that elicits excellence — economists call it the free market.

Are there pockets of excellence in the sea of failing public schools? Absolutely — but what's important is the rule, not the exceptions. The rule is that businesses generate excellence when consumers have the freedom to choose which businesses to reward with their dollars and businesses have the freedom to decide for themselves how to produce their product.

How many more generations of children must we lose to union restrictions before we are allowed to show our appreciation for excellent teachers?

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