



TEACHERS FOR A
JUST CONTRACT
Not just an opposition, an alternative.

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The UFT Must Stop Supporting Politicians Who Don't Support Us!

Teachers are feeling burned by President Obama. After accepting the support of teachers and our unions all across the country, his policies have been destroying our schools, our unions and our jobs. The so-called "Race to the Top" grant program has been used by Obama and his Education Secretary Arne Duncan, to close instead of help struggling schools, to threaten the livelihoods of teachers regardless of dedication, tenure and seniority, to encourage privatization through a mindless proliferation of charter schools, and to weaken unions through merit pay.

Here in New York, the UFT has historically supported incumbents for city council, state legislature and Congress even when their record on education and union issues has been deplorable. Only against the most notorious incumbents has the union backed a challenger to an incumbent. Where there's no incumbent, the UFT generally backs the Democrat.

The results have been bad for UFT members. Think of this: Although the organization of teachers unions in New York, NYSUT, is one of the top donors to state politicians and one of the biggest lobbyists, the state legislature has never questioned the anti-strike provisions of the Taylor law, and just this spring lifted the cap on charter schools and - with the complicity of the UFT - made it quicker and easier to fire tenured teachers for alleged "ineffectiveness."

**HOWIE HAWKINS:
A CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR
OUR UNION SHOULD ENDORSE!**

Part of the problem is that Democratic party politicians and many incumbents take UFT support for granted. We have to become more independent. And the solution isn't to support Republicans: they are even more anti-union than Democrats. The solution is to

show these jokers that if they let us down, we will take our votes (and our phone banks, and our campaign contributions) elsewhere. The UFT's decision to run a union member against Jonathan Bing, who sponsored a bill to end the use of seniority in layoffs, is a step in the right direction. To make a difference, this independent streak has to go further: to the race for New York governor.

IF THE UFT ENDORSES CUOMO, WE NEED OUR HEADS EXAMINED

As soon as Andrew Cuomo got the Democratic Party nomination for governor, he came out swinging against public employee unions. Announcing his choice of Robert Duffy as his running mate last May 27, Cuomo said, "Yes, he tangled with public employee unions. Guess what, we're going to be tangling with public employee unions going forward." Now that Cuomo has made his intentions to battle against us known, we'd be crazy to support him.

But neutrality is not the best solution. Our endorsement, support and votes are powerful weapons that go unused when we sit out an election.

HOWIE HAWKINS: A CANDIDATE WE CAN ENDORSE WHOLE HEARTEDLY

We should support a candidate who stands for "good schools for all communities, fiscal equity for fully funded schools in all communities, free public education from pre-school through graduate school, who opposes privatization and union busting, and supports community schools with parent, teacher and community participation," and ending the Taylor law penalties against our right to strike. [For more information, go to www.howiehawkins.org]

The exciting news is, there is such a candidate: Howie Hawkins, a longtime Teamster, of the Green Party. Although he is not going to become governor, UFT support for Hawkins would accomplish very important goals: The Dems will never take us for granted again. And if Hawkins receives 50,000 votes, it will establish an automatic ballot line for his party in the next election, and a long-term alternative for New York voters.

The Green Party is often equated with environmentalism. But it also stands for reforming the tax structure, easing the burden on working people, and making the wealthiest pay their fair share, for using the increased revenues to create jobs, for a moratorium on foreclosures, stronger protections for tenants, and much, much, more.

Let's stop supporting politicians who take us for granted and "tangle with us." The UFT should endorse Howie Hawkins for Governor, and begin a new era of political independence that brings us respect. If you agree with these ideas, or for more information, contact Teachers for a Just Contract. We are a caucus in the UFT, fighting for better contracts, and a more militant, democratic union since 1992. You can find more information on our website, www.TeachersforaJustContract.org. Email us at JustContract@yahoo.com, call 212 831 3408, or mail the coupon below to Teachers for a Just Contract, P.O.B. 545, New York, N.Y. 10028

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