

This is what democracy looks like

Labor unions as cornerstones of democracy

The AFT convened labor activists from across the globe in 2018 to discuss the near-universal attack on public education and public sector labor unions—institutions that have been crucial to the growth of democracies. Education International General Secretary David Edwards led a rich discussion about how to preserve political and labor rights, collective bargaining and freedom of association, and participants from more than 40 countries shared their experiences and strategies on defending worker rights and human rights. “When we come together as unions, we together can accomplish what we cannot accomplish alone,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten.

Watch this collaboration in action.

Tragedy on the border

The tragic death of two Guatemalan migrant children while in the custody of U.S. border authorities in December shocked the nation and moved many to action against the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers. As an organization whose members work so closely with children, these tragedies have been particularly compelling for the AFT, which has now led more than 60 human rights organizations in filing a formal complaint with the United Nations Human Rights Council. More than 25,000 individuals have co-signed our petition.

Join them to urge the UN to take a stand on justice at the border.

Exposed: Hedge funds profit from the border crisis

The AFT is urging investment managers in charge of pensions for teachers, faculty, public employees, health workers and other public workers to make sure those pensions are not invested in corporations profiting from detaining immigrant families in private prisons. The call comes in the wake of an AFT report, “Private Prisons, Immigrant Detention and Investment Risks,” revealing that dozens of hedge funds hold stock in firms making money from for-profit detention, a close cousin of the prison industry. The AFT is also calling on hedge funds to divest their private prison holdings.

Get the details on this dirty border secret.

Read more about pensions, prisons and mass incarceration in Part 2 of the AFT report.

Dark day for academic freedom

Central European University, an institution that has become a symbol of tolerance and academic freedom, has been forced out of Hungary and is moving to Vienna this fall. After years of struggling against the government’s attempts to squash political opposition and free expression, and after enduring personal attacks against its founder, George Soros, the school was pushed out through a new law regarding international branch campuses. The AFT, Education International, leading scholars and education institutions have stood in solidarity with CEU and in defense of academic freedom worldwide.

Read the AFT’s resolution in support of Central European University.

Standing up for a free press and democracy

This week, the AFT executive council issued a resolution protesting the brutal assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, a U.S. resident and *Washington Post* journalist, and warning that these sorts of attacks on the free press are a threat to democracy everywhere. Union sisters and brothers at the NewsGuild-Communications Workers of America and the International Federation of Journalists have joined in the outcry against the crime, which was not only a brutal display of disregard for basic human rights but also an attack on free speech, a crucial element of the democracy upon which public services, public workers and the public good—the core of the AFT’s work—rely.

Read the AFT’s resolution

.