

PRESS RELEASE

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Tuesday

Feb. 1, 1966

Dr. Max Rafferty, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, was accused today of harassing two teachers and attempting to impose his own political beliefs upon them.

In testimony prepared for delivery in San Deigo today to the Subcommittee on School Personnel and Teacher Qualifications of the Assembly Education Committee, William Flosser of the California Federation of Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO, charged:

"For almost a year, two fully qualified teachers have been under investigation by the Credentials Committee, a hand picked group serving under Rafferty.

"This committee, acting on the direct advice of Rafferty apparently, has denied applications for teaching credentials to Mrs Diane M. Kepner and Miss Barbara Bozman.

"This delay in what should have been a routine process amounts to nothing less than outright harassment and intimidation on the part of Rafferty.

"Both applicants have outstanding records. Both are fully qualified to teach. Indeed, one of the teachers received a 'top secret' clearance to work for the U.S. Government overseas. Both have extensive experience working with children. One teacher was described by the Personnel Director in her district as having a 'commendable' teaching record.

"Yet Rafferty, through his committee, has ruled that these applicants are not fit to teach our children solely because of participation in the Free Speech Movement at the University of California late in 1964.

"Clearly this is political harassment by Rafferty.

"At a time when more teachers are needed desperately in our schools, particularly in culturally deprived schools where at least one of the applicants desires to teach, the Superintendent is preventing good teachers from teaching. Therefore, we of the California Federation of Teachers ask 'How many more are being kept out of their chosen profession by Rafferty and his clique?'

"For instance, the CFT has heard of one teacher who was on a Freedom Ride in a Southern state. Her credential application is being questioned. Another participated in a civil rights sit-in in San Francisco and is now having trouble receiving a credential. And we know the intent of the probationary protection law is evaded when local administrators threaten a teacher by saying he will be investigated by the Credentials Committee unless he resigns from the district.

"These two teachers, even though not members of our organization, must be the CFT's concern. Recently the California Federation of Teachers successfully represented two members with similar credential cases before the Credentials Committee. Their applications were approved.

"We are asking Dr. Rafferty to explain why the cases of Mrs Kepner and Miss Bozman have been pending for almost one year and in what way they differ from the two cases of the AFT members.

"Looking ahead, the President of the CFT, Marshall Axelrod of San Francisco, has created an Academic Freedom Committee of the CFT to investigate such malpractices as these. The committee is charged with guarding against attacks on academic freedom from any source (including the Superintendent) and protecting the rights of teachers."

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