

# EXCLUSIVE: Largest Teachers Union Held Webinar on Protecting ‘Undocumented’ Children from ICE

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*Becky Pringle, president of the National Education Association.*

The National Education Association held a webinar on Jan. 17 instructing teachers on how to protect “undocumented” students from immigration authorities.

The presentation for members of America’s largest teachers union was part of a webinar series titled “Preparing for a Second Trump Administration” and was reviewed by Parents Defending Education and shared with The Daily Signal.

President Donald Trump promised to carry out mass deportations of illegal immigrants, starting with criminal aliens. So far, he is keeping that promise—there have been over 3,500 arrests of illegal aliens.

NEA President Becky Pringle said it is teachers’ “professional” and “moral obligation” to keep “our students safe” when “ICE comes into our schools or into our communities” by “making sure that you know your rights, you know how to protect your students, and that you know that this is that time.”

Lubna Alam from the NEA Office of General Counsel told teachers how they can prepare for potential deportations of students by pushing school districts to adopt “safe zones resolutions that NEA has drafted” and engage in “education of immigrant communities in your area.”

Hundreds of school districts have designated themselves as “Safe Zones,” meaning they don’t collect data on students’ place of birth and staff commit “to keep our students safe, especially if, and when, Trump sends ICE into our communities.”

The NEA lawyer informed teachers on the call how to hide children of illegal immigrants from immigration authorities. “ICE cannot just come to school and look through student records, because, you know, they would need a subpoena to do so unless it’s directory information,” she said. She said if families don’t want information about their child’s place of birth listed, it may be because that is information the school could give to the authorities. “When it comes to the directory information and this information that schools are collecting,” Alam said, “it’s important that the school district is not including place of birth information in their directory information and that they are informing families that they have the ability to opt out of directory information disclosure.”

Erika Sanzi, director of outreach for Parents Defending Education, the group that uncovered the presentation, said NEA staff promote “falsehoods and hyper-partisan content” in the presentation on preparing for Trump’s second term. “It’s understandable that school staff is concerned for their students and their families but the NEA—including their General Counsel staff—is promoting falsehoods and hyper-partisan content,” Sanzi told The Daily Signal. “Hyperbole and lies do not help anyone, regardless of immigration status or political party.” The webinar also focused on the union’s education ideals.

To open the webinar, Pringle said the NEA will “continue its critical work of not just building a movement with our members, but with the entire nation to reclaim public education as a common good, as a foundation of this or any democracy.” She continued: “You understand that we cannot stop there, that we actually have to transform it into something it was not designed to be, a racially and socially just and equitable system that prepares every student, native and newcomer.”

The webinar included a “land acknowledgement” with the statement that “through hundreds of years of displacement, erasure, and colonization, the resilience of our nation’s first peoples persists, and their cultural and historical presence today is invaluable and irreplaceable in the fabric of our society.” Guest speakers for the webinar included the NEA’s senior director for the Center of Racial and Social Justice, Rocio Inclan.

Trump won the 2024 election “by villainizing and othering our populations, our migrant populations, our populations of color,” according to Inclan. She said her “head is spinning” because of the “number of attacks that we see currently and that we see coming on our black, brown, LGBTQ students, ourselves, our communities, and our immigrant communities.” These so-called attacks “are existential threats to our fundamental freedoms and to our liberty, attacks on our liberty to pursue our dreams,” Inclan said. The attacks are coordinated, she said, adding that the bad actors behind them share a “common motivation to erode trust, to reduce funding, reduce participation, consolidate power, and sow division.” “The extremists use immigration as the way to separate us,” Inclan said. They “energize their base, they keep them enraged and engaged so that they are able to hold on to whatever it is that they want to do.”

She said the bad actors “start provoking fear, they’re eroding trust in our system and our immigration system” and they “start reducing the funding appropriated for having a solid and stable, in this case, immigration system.” Inclan said that the “side that is pro-immigrant, pro-democracy hasn’t been as consistent about beating the drum with a counter narrative.”

She showed a slide titled “Race Class Gender Narrative Key Elements,” and said that “whenever we talk about our issues, we lead with our values.”

The National Education Association did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Daily Signal.