



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 29, 2013

Common Core National Education Outrages Teacher Coalition

As outrage continues to grow surrounding the unprecedented [“Common Core” nationalization of K-12 education](#) under the Obama administration — particularly among Republicans, Tea Party groups, conservatives, and libertarians — a new foe of the controversial scheme is attacking the federally backed standardization plan from all angles, including the political left. Known as the [Badass Teacher Association](#), with members calling themselves BATs for short, the nationwide coalition of educators is working hard to defeat the agenda — and they have been wildly successful thus far.



Badass
Teacher (BAT)
Association

Analysts say the group is set to have a major impact on the raging debate, and in an interview with *The New American*, BATs co-founder Dr. Mark Naison explained why. Already, in a period of a few months, the association has attracted some 26,000 BATs on its primary Facebook page. Headlines about the teachers and their opposition to the Common Core national education scheme have appeared from coast to coast. As the battle against the controversial standards heats up, the group’s influence is expected to grow in tandem.

Proponents of Common Core regularly claim that criticism of the standards, [pushed on 45 state governments so far by the establishment and the Obama administration](#), has come mostly from the right. The BATs, though, while certainly a left-leaning organization as evidenced by the “socialist fist” in their logo (shown), have their own problems with Common Core — and they are making it known, loud and clear. While its members and leaders quoted in media reports say they, too, want to restore local control, the outrage goes much deeper.

“This association is for every teacher who refuses to be blamed for the failure of our society to erase poverty and inequality through education,” the organization says on its [website](#) and in e-mails to new members, asking others to join the alliance and fight back as well. “BAT members refuse to accept assessments, tests and evaluations created and imposed by corporate driven entities that have contempt for authentic teaching and learning.”

According to the association, its aim is to reduce or even eliminate the use of high-stakes testing while increasing teacher autonomy in the classroom. In a nutshell, that starts with killing Common Core. The BATs are also working to “include teacher and family voices in legislative decision-making processes that affect students,” it explains. To achieve its mission, the alliance says it will plan different actions each week where members can help out, as well as having state groups coordinate local rallies and events. Other activism will include phone calls, letter-writing campaigns, e-mails to officials, and more.

“We’ve had enough. We are not your doormats. We are not your punching bags,” says Dr. Naison, one of the association founders and a professor at Fordham University with experience in public schools.



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“We are some of the hardest working, most idealistic people in this country and we are not going to take it anymore. We are going to stand up for ourselves, and stand up for our students even if no organization really supports us. We are Badass. We are legion. And we will force the nation to hear our voice!”

In a phone interview with *The New American*, Dr. Naison said he has been concerned for a long time about what he called “excessive testing” and the effects it is having on public schools, adding that kids were essentially doing nothing all day except preparing for standardized tests. “I saw this whole emphasis on standardized testing as smothering the learning process and driving the best teachers out of our schools,” explained Naison, who teaches history and African-American studies. “When I heard that Common Core was coming to New York, I realized that everything I was worried about was going to get worse — much worse.”

Among other concerns about the national standards, Dr. Naison cited the huge expense, taking money away from things that make kids enjoy school, the “punitive and humiliating” nature of the scheme, ratcheting up pressure on students and teachers, and more. “I saw Common Core as testing on steroids, like it was coming from outer space,” he said. “This is an extremely intrusive and oppressive program being mandated in all of our schools — it’s been shoved down the throats of school officials in a fundamentally undemocratic process.”

One of the most remarkable elements of the opposition, Dr. Naison continued, is how it spans across the entire political spectrum and obliterates traditional partisan divides. “Never have I found myself finding so much common ground with people who call themselves conservative and libertarians — we all agreed public schools were going to be ruined by this,” he said. “This really represents the worst fantasies of both the right and left coming true: Big Government and Big Corporations imposing this terrible, untested, expensive plan using intimidation and bullying.”

The fact that such a broad coalition opposes Common Core forced Dr. Naison to ask why it was happening in the first place. “It was very suspicious,” he said, noting that both the Democrats and Republicans played a role in foisting the “untested, expensive, and oppressive” scheme on most of America despite the overwhelming lack of public support. However, considering the association’s explosive growth — there are now 50 state BAT groups working to defeat the agenda alongside the national alliance — the professor sounded upbeat about the prospects for success.

“One of the reasons we’re making such a big difference is because proponents of Common Core claim only right-wing extremists are opposed to it; we show that’s not true, we show that opposition comes from across the political spectrum,” he said, adding that progressives, liberals, libertarians, Ron Paul supporters, conservatives, and more were active in the effort. “It’s clear that this group crosses the whole political spectrum. We are a multi-partisan, anti-Common Core group dedicated to sticking it to the man — the big shots in America who are bullying teachers.” The association, formed on June 14, also supports the choice that homeschooling parents make and commends those who “realize that our fight is their fight.”

On the BATs website, the association goes on to blast “high-stakes testing and attacks on teacher autonomy” that have “become official policy of both major parties, supported by the wealthiest people in the nation, and cheered on by the media.” Teachers, the group goes on, “may have reached a tipping point” regarding the demonization of educators and the “micro-management of their classroom lives.” BATs are also upset with the leaders of teachers’ unions who have accepted funds from the Common Core-financing Gates Foundation and have failed to fight back effectively against the schemes.



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As awareness of the billionaire- and taxpayer-funded educational takeover continues to grow, opposition to the plan is surging across America in a way that has united far-left progressives, hardline conservatives, and people everywhere in between in a unique alliance. The new teachers' group, however, represents what could become one of the most potent forces seeking to stop Common Core. While only a little over one third of Americans were even aware of the new national standards, almost three fourths of Americans say they "have trust and confidence" in government-school teachers. As such, the voices of teachers are likely to have a major impact on the national grassroots effort to stop Common Core.

As *The New American* [documented extensively](#) in a recent cover-story package, the administration's education agenda has come under fire for countless reasons: poor standards, propaganda, endless federally funded testing, stripping parents and local communities of control over education, unconstitutional coercion by the Obama administration, links to the United Nations, [unimaginably intimate data-collection schemes](#), and much more. Universities and colleges are now [in the federal government's crosshairs](#), too. With a heavy-hitting coalition of teachers joining the battle, however, analysts say the future of education is already starting to look a little brighter.

Image: BAT logo from badassteachers.blogspot.com

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