

The “No Child Left Behind” Act is a sweeping “reform” of public education signed into law by President Bush in January 2002. One provision of this act requires that public schools hand over student contact lists (names, addresses, phone numbers) to military recruiters. Another provision requires that schools make a good faith effort to inform parents and students of their right to request that the school withhold this information from the military and also requires that the school comply with this request. According to the law, schools must comply with both of these provisions or risk losing federal funding.

**1. Problems:**

- (a) There is confusion and lack of knowledge among school administrators.
- (b) School administrators have been given no guidance about how to implement this act.
- (c) Many schools are not informing parents and students about their right to “opt out.”
- (d) If schools do send notices to parents and students, they are often lost, not read, or not understood.
- (e) Most parents and students have no knowledge of the law and how it will affect them.
- (f) Some school administrators say they can’t keep separate records of those who do not want their contact information given to the military, but do want such information given to colleges, universities, or potential future employers. Therefore, they say, if students opt out of the program, their names will also be stricken from lists in school directories, lists given to institutions of higher education or future employers.
- (g) In most schools, students are not given equal access to information about the consequences of joining the military or about alternatives to the military.

**2. Possible options for parents and students:**

- (a) “Opt-Out”—Parents and students sign and date a form or letter addressed to the school administrator indicating that they are exercising their right under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and requesting that the student’s name, address, and telephone number not be released to the military without prior parental consent. If they agree, they should add that they consent to the disclosure of such information to colleges, universities, and potential future employers.
- (b) “Opt-In” – Some school districts have chosen to inform parents of the law and give them the choice of having students’ information released to the military. Santa Cruz Schools Boards unanimously adopted a Privacy & Truth Resolution whereby student contact information can be released to the military only when parents give their written consent. In addition, the school provides, annually, information about conscription and alternatives to the military. Rochester, NY sends a letter and form to parents requesting that they choose whether or not they want students’ information released to the military. If the form is not returned, the school does not release the information.

**3. Ways to inform and educate ourselves and our community:**

- (a) Become informed about the provisions of the law and their consequences.
- (b) Find out what your school board and school administrators are doing about this law.
- (c) Find out how other communities/school districts are responding to the law.
- (d) Meet with concerned parents, students, and teachers for discussion of issues and strategies. Discuss “Opt-In” options. Discuss how compliance can be monitored.
- (e) Meet with school board members individually and speak at their meetings.
- (f) Write letters to the editor, including school papers as well as community papers.
- (g) Contact radio and TV stations about doing a story.
- (h) Approach City Councils about taking a position on the issue.
- (i) Leaflet schools, shopping centers, etc.

**4. Web Based Resources:**

Full text of the No Child Left Behind Act can be found at:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>

Santa Cruz Resolution: <http://www.rcnv.org/optoutplus.htm>

San Francisco Resolution : <http://www.rcnv.org/rcnv/archives/2003/sfcounterrecruit.htm>

Rochester, NY Superintendent of Schools:

William Cala -- e-mail address: [wcala@rochester.rr.com](mailto:wcala@rochester.rr.com)

American Friends Service Committee’s Youth & Militarism Program: <http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/>

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors campaign to get the military out of the schools:

<http://www.objector.org/recruiting.html>

**5. Sample letters:**

**Parent letter:**

Dear Administrator of \_\_\_\_\_ High School

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am writing on behalf of my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to request that you do not make my child's name, address, or telephone listing available for military recruitment purposes as is provided for under Paragraph 2, Subsection (a) of section 9528 of Public Law 107-110. I look forward to your prompt response to this letter.

Sincerely,

(Sign with your signature, your name typed or printed, and the date.)

**Student letter:**

Dear Administrator of \_\_\_\_\_ High school,

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am writing to request that you do not make my name, address, or telephone listing available for military recruitment purposes as is provided for under Paragraph 2, Subsection (a) of section 9528 of Public Law 107-110. I look forward to your prompt response to this letter.

Sincerely,

(Sign with your signature, your name typed or printed, and the date.)