

BIPARTISAN ESEA BILL SHOWS PROMISE

“A big deal” is how AFT President Randi Weingarten characterized the rewrite of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. The panel finished its work on April 16 with a bill Weingarten called “the most positive development we’ve seen in public education policy in years—because of both its content and the committee’s very intentional move to leave partisanship at the door.” The bill, which has moved to the full Senate, includes major gains for English language learners and early childhood education. Weingarten also noted that the bill “restores the law’s original intent” of addressing poverty and educational inequality through targeted funding. “While not perfect—no compromise is—the bill moves away from the counterproductive focus on sanctions and high-stakes tests, and ends federalized teacher evaluations and school closings,” she said. Weingarten contrasted this promising federal action with growing acrimony in states like New York, in a recent column available at <http://go.aft.org/AE215news1>.

CORINTHIAN SHUTDOWN

Corinthian Colleges announced on April 25 that it will immediately close its remaining campuses, fueling calls from student advocates, lawmakers, the AFT, and other organizations for U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to relieve Corinthian students of crippling student debt. The debacle also is bringing attention to the PRO Students Act, a federal bill to protect students from predatory, deceptive, and fraudulent practices, particularly in the for-profit college sector. Corinthian was accused of charging students exorbitant tuition and fined \$30 million by the Department of Education for padding job placement rates. “More than a marketing tool to lure new students, solid job placement rates allow the company to satisfy the accrediting bodies that oversee its nearly 100 U.S. campuses, while enabling Corinthian to tap federal student aid coffers—a source of funding that has reached nearly \$10 billion over the last decade,” a *Huffington Post* investigation reveals. Read the story at www.huff.to/1cwBHWH.

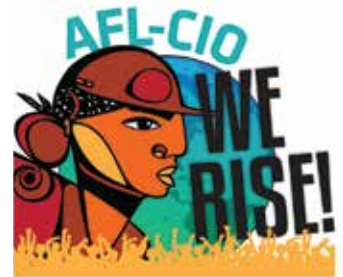
Michael Adorno-Miranda, speaking at a press event in April, is one of the Corinthian 100, students who are refusing to pay back their student loans because their “education” at Corinthian Colleges gave them no useful credentials—just lots of debt.



AFT STAFF

HELPING IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

On April 2, the AFL-CIO officially launched “We Rise!” a national initiative to help immigrant workers. The effort will equip unions around the country to empower such workers and their families by helping them apply for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) programs. “We Rise!” will also encourage qualified legal permanent residents to become U.S. citizens. More than 200 labor activists from 23 different unions and 27 states gathered in Washington, D.C., this spring for three days of training. This effort builds on the AFT’s initiative “Reclaiming the Promise of the American DREAM: Educators, Parents, and Students Working Together on the Implementation of DACA and DAPA,” which encompasses 25 locals in 16 states. Meanwhile, on April 7, the AFT joined with dozens of states and organizations to file an amicus brief in *Texas v. United States of America*, urging the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit to lift the stay on President Obama’s executive action on immigration. The brief is available at <http://go.aft.org/AE215news4>.



HOLDING A TESTING GIANT ACCOUNTABLE

AFT President Randi Weingarten traveled to Pearson’s annual shareholder meeting in London on April 24 to join union leaders, parents, and education advocates who are demanding that the company measure the social, emotional, and academic impact of its education practices. “While I recognize Pearson has a duty to its shareholders to be profitable, my question centers on another obligation: to conduct business in a way that befits the world’s largest education company—that is, in the words of its president, John Fallon, where every product must be measured by its ‘social impact.’” The AFT, the United Kingdom’s National Union of Teachers, and other organizations also sent a letter to Pearson outlining their concerns. Read the letter at <http://go.aft.org/AE215news3>.

TAKING STOCK OF TEACHER PREPARATION

Some of the nation’s leading voices on education policy offered guidance on effective teacher preparation at the 2015 Teaching & Learning Conference in Washington, D.C. Among the speakers at the March event were Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University; Kentucky Commissioner of Education Terry Holliday; and Sharon Robinson, president and CEO of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Their plenary session was moderated by AFT President Randi Weingarten, who emphasized that teaching, like any other profession, must treat induction and preparation as a core mission. The panel highlighted some of the components teachers need to succeed: high-quality preparation rooted in rich clinical experience, continuous supports for new teachers, and opportunities for growth. Details are available at <http://go.aft.org/AE215news2>.