

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 870**

In America Teachers, like Nurses, are Dying:

‘They will remember those who forget about their safety!’

Diane Ravitch posted the following report on the treatment of teachers in the USA in times of plague. As the Coalition Government criticises Dan Andrews and others who have to date successfully dealt with the ‘plague’, spare a thought for those in the front line in Trump’s America.

Steven Singer: “The Silence of Our Friends” is the Worst Part of the Pandemic

By dianeravitch
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Steven Singer has written eloquently about the rush to reopen schools without heed to the safety of teachers. Trump and DeVos have urged schools to reopen without lifting a finger to supply the funds needed to reopen safely. Others have jumped on any statistic that encourages reopening, without regard to the safety of staff.

Singer says that teachers [will remember those who forget about their safety.](#)

As the [global COVID-19 pandemic rages out of control](#) throughout most parts of the United States, teachers all across the country want to be able to do their jobs in a way that won’t put themselves or their loved ones in danger.

[In most cases that means remote instruction](#) – teaching students via the Internet through video conferencing software like Zoom.

However, numerous leaders and organizations that historically are supportive of teachers have refused to support them here.

The rush to keep classrooms open and thus keep the economy running has overtaken any respect for science, any concern for safety, and any appeal to compassion.

[Many Democratic lawmakers, school directors, union leaders and even public school advocates have repeatedly turned away, remained silent or promoted policies that would continue to put educators in danger.](#)

Thankfully, some districts have been accommodating, worrying about [the safety of children as well as adults](#).

But many others have refused to go this route [even demanding educators with compromised immune systems and other increased risk factors either get in the classroom and teach or seek some sort of financially burdensome leave](#).

[Affected teachers often wonder](#) where their union is, where their progressive representative, where the grassroots activists who were willing to organize against charter schools and high stakes testing.

Answer: crickets.

As a result, more than 300 U.S. teachers and other school employees have died from the virus, [according to the Associated Press](#).

In New York City, alone, 72 school employees died of the virus, [according to the city Department of Education](#).

And since [Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has refused to collect data on how the pandemic is affecting schools and school employees](#), this count is probably woefully under-representative of the full tragedy.

About 1 in 4 teachers – nearly 1.5 million – have conditions that raise their risk of getting seriously ill from the Coronavirus, [according to the Kaiser Family Foundation](#).

In my own Western Pennsylvania community in the last few weeks, we buried [high school employee Terri Sherwin, 60, of Greater Latrobe School District](#) and [elementary school employee Dana Hall, 56, of Jeannette City School District](#).

The assertion that children cannot get the disease, which was popularized by the Trump administration, has been proven false.

More than 1 million kids nationwide have been diagnosed with COVID-19 [according to a report by the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) .

The [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) says](#) most children who get the disease (especially those younger than 10) are asymptomatic or have only mild symptoms but are still capable of transmitting the virus to others. This – along with the lack of a national database – [makes it incredibly difficult to accurately trace the source of an outbreak through the schools](#).

However, in November [the CDC quietly removed controversial guidelines from its website promoting in-person learning, and instead lists it as “high risk.”](#)

“As new scientific information has emerged the site has been updated to reflect current knowledge about COVID-19 and schools,” a spokesperson said.

Yet there has been no subsequent change in the policy positions of most lawmakers, school directors, union leaders or education activists

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