



A Union of Professionals

AFT News Release

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AFT Statement on ‘Malala Day’ at the United Nations

AFT’s Weingarten: *“Malala Yousafzai’s courage and zealous commitment to the principle that access to education is a fundamental human right are an inspiration to all.”*

WASHINGTON—Statement of AFT President Randi Weingarten on Malala Day at the United Nations. Malala Yousafzai spoke today—her 16th birthday—to hundreds of young people from more than 80 nations gathered for a Youth Session at U.N. headquarters in New York. Malala is the Pakistani girl shot in the head by the Taliban last fall because of her campaign for girls’ education. Among those attending today’s session was an AFT-sponsored delegation that included Cherlene Thomasso, an 11th-grader from Cape Town, South Africa.

“Malala Yousafzai’s courage and her zealous commitment to the principle that access to education is a fundamental human right are an inspiration to all who care about the well-being and advancement of children around the globe. Tens of millions of children worldwide are not able to attend school—57 percent of them are girls. Malala’s message today is simple and wise: All children are entitled to basic education, and that is a right that must no longer be denied to girls.

“The AFT is proud to be participating in Malala Day events. We join with Malala and the other young people at today’s Youth Session to call on the United Nations and governments around the world to protect the right of every child to safely attend school. We urge individuals everywhere to sign the [worldwide petition](#) in support of universal access to education.

“When Malala was targeted by gunmen simply for wanting to go to school and for supporting education for all girls, her brave recovery and fearless advocacy energized the global movement supporting education for all. Today’s events are a reminder that if we are as resolute as Malala has been and if we stay united for progress, we will end the marginalization of girls and ensure that all children—boys and girls—are welcomed into the world of learning.”

Follow AFT President Randi Weingarten: <http://twitter.com/rweingarten>

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American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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