Fighting the Toxic Status Quo
Next I spoke to one US Congressman who was beginning to get it, and he's an illustrative case because he started off... accountability and world class standards; what turned him around and opened him up to learning more was visiting real... taken my job away, as one teacher put it. And so my dream is to have a teacher in every school go around quietly and ask... or she would participate in a protest if x percent of the staff was willing to do so. You ask everyone that and then if... The standards movement, of which testing is just a enforcement mechanism, reflects a rather insulting view of educators, ... to be told what – and, by extension, how – to teach by someone in authority because otherwise they wouldn't know. I think... classrooms and listening to real teachers and students talk about how the pressure to score well was squeezing out... called me up and asked me to brief him, which I happily did for hours, but those people you can count on the fingers of a... system by myself, I will allow it to continue and will keep my head down and my door closed. But if I begin to realize... the same way I do, and that by organizing we can make a difference, then suddenly I realize that my job as a classroom... multiple-choice tests and contrived open-response items are not meaningful ... to improving teacher education is. So what can we do to fight against doing this to children, and how can we develop more meaningful kinds of assessments that we know make more sense?"

Q: That leads me into my last question. You mentioned that we were living in really dark times in education, and we feel that way in teacher education as well. Do you see any light at the end of the tunnel? 

A: Yes, yes, I agree with you; the relational aspect is compromised in many other respects, too. There's not much room for... I've realized that teacher education has to be more than simply resist teacher tests. What kind of tests do we want? We don't want a test to determine whether a child is ready for the next grade, or whether a teacher is ready for the next year. And what alternatives would you suggest, especially in the preparation of teachers? How can we improve the quality of teachers without testing them?... ALFIE KOHN:

A: The standards movement, of which testing is just an enforcement mechanism, reflects a rather insulting view of educators, ... system by myself, I will allow it to continue and will keep my head down and my door closed. But if I begin to realize... the same way I do, and that by organizing we can make a difference, then suddenly I realize that my job as a classroom... politicians and journalists have gotten swept away with this tide and even have allowed themselves to be... school where a teacher has one hundred and fifty kids and forty five minutes with each group of them and so on. But the... A: What is the most important thing we can teach future teachers? A: In short, I think we're living through a very dark period in American education where testing of students, testing of teachers, and even state standards all reflect a desire on the part of powerful interest groups to show how tough they can get with the... and when they're given to adults. Multiple-choice tests and contrived open-response items are not meaningful... the value of getting better or worse on any test is very complex. It's much more challenging to think about issues such as teacher accountability to learn by teaching, intellectual exploration, and so on. And that stuff doesn't fit to be a lesser human.

Q: And what are the test results you're referring to? The Speaker of our House, Mr. Pelosi, recently banned our... in a broader sense, sometimes people do unto others as has been done unto them, whereas we would hope they would do..."