

AMERICA BELIEVES TEACHERS ARE UNDERPAID



Maybe it is your mother, or your Auntie Sue, or maybe even your brother. Or maybe it is because you've had your life touched, or moved, or shaken by one of them. Whichever one is the reason, people care about teachers, and how much they get to make. When people started to get up in arms about teachers being unpaid, they represented a majority of Americans. A new poll shows that more than half of Americans feel that teachers do not get paid enough money, and young Americans, minority, female Americans, and Americans who vote Democratic feel the most strongly about this cause. Public school teachers earned an average of \$55,000 in 2009-10, this is all according to a 2009 report from the National Education Association. But this number is excluding the relatively generous benefits that the teachers receive. The national poll of 1,142 registered the voters, conducted by the polling company Poll Position, found that a total of 55.7 percent of Americans believe that teachers are underpaid, in contrast to just 13.0 percent who consider them overpaid, with a three percent margin of error. 23.5 percent of respondents thought teachers were paid just the perfect amount. Opinions, unsurprisingly, diverge starkly along political lines. Around one in five Republicans consider teachers to be overpaid, compared to 14.9 percent of the Independents, and a measly 4 percent of Democrats. 44.6 percent of Republicans consider teachers to be not paid enough, as do 66.7 percent of Democrats, and 57.3 percent of Independents. This partly explains the racial, age and the gender differences. Blacks, Hispanics, woman and younger people are more than liberal than the middle-aged white men. Conservative reports make the case that the teachers are paid too much, because when they move into the private sector that they usually take from a pay cut. Workers with the taxpayers-funded paychecks, they claim, should earn what the free market is demanding, and with all of the lengthy summer breaks and high job security, teachers already get ample perks. Many of the conservatives also resent American's teachers unions, which are the traditionally powerful players in the Democratic party, and they are often accused of protecting the bad teachers from losing their jobs. Liberals, in response, stammer and scoff all of the time. Teachers wake up early to prepare the lessons, stay up late to grade all of the papers, and spend the day managing a classroom of kids, some with disabilities, disorders and home problems, prepping them all for the state test that are going to determine the future of their jobs. Even more importantly the teachers have one of the most sacred tacks in our fine republic: molding our nation's young. And many of this country's best and brightest choose not to go into teaching, precisely because they can earn a far prettier penny in pursuing the private sector career.