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Violence, Vandalism in Schools Linked to Nation's 'Moral Climate'

United Press International

The president of the National Education Association yesterday said school violence and vandalism is unlikely to decrease until violence in the nation as a whole is brought under control.

James Harris, testifying before a Senate subcommittee examining increasing school violence, said students "see that violence is a fundamental way of life in our society."

The NEA official, whose group represents 1.7 million classroom teachers, advocated legislation to restrict the sale and use of handguns as a first step in improving the nation's "moral climate."

Harris and other educators also warned against blaming only a small group of students for problems of violence that threaten to undermine the public education system.

Owen Kiernan of the Na-

tional Association of Secondary School Principals and Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers agreed that the schools are responsible for some of the problems.

They called for a movement away from the traditional disciplinary practices of suspension or expulsion. Instead, they urged the establishment of special schools or new facilities that give "sympathetic and skillful attention" to the needs of a disruptive student.