

NEA Board of Directors' Report
February 8, 9 & 10, 2007
Washington, D.C.
Tom Wellman and Ken Burhmann

NEA Legislative Lobbying on Capitol Hill – (Thursday, February 8, 2007)

Nevada's NEA Directors returned to Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, February 7, 2007, in order to attend a legislative briefing scheduled for the next day. During the briefing we discussed "The First 100 Hours" of the newly-elected pro-public education House of Representatives:

1. Increased the minimum wage (House and Senate approved)
2. Cut Student Loan Rates
3. Addressed Prescription Drug Prices. They also addressed the issues of Ethics Reform, Stem Cell Research, and the recommendations from the 9/11 Commission and Energy Independence. The House passed a Continuing Resolution for the rest of fiscal year 2007 which did the following:
 - a. brought a \$1 billion increase for education;
 - b. increased the amount of Pell Grants awards for the first time in 4 years (from +260 to \$4,310);
 - c. increased funding to Title 1 and IDEA; and
 - d. approved New Money for school improvement.

This was a bipartisan effort with the resolution passing 286 – 140 with some 50 Republicans voting in favor. There is still a need to increase educational funding for the fiscal year 2008 and funding levels for "No Child Left Behind." Despite the increase in funding from the continuing resolution the federal percent of funding to IDEA decreased. NEA's priorities for this session include allocating the resources and funding for great public schools for every child, holding the Democrats to the same standards we held Republicans and moving toward full funding of key programs. Priority programs for the NEA include the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind, Title 1, Individuals with Disability, and Pell Grants. We moved on to discuss the questions we would ask while on Capitol Hill.

Question 1: Special Education Funding – Will the member support legislation putting the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) on a path to full funding by the year 2015? The federal government has promised to pay 40 percent of the costs of educating students with disabilities. The current federal share of IDEA is less than 18 percent.

Question 2: Social Security Offsets – Is the member a cosponsor of the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82/ S.206). As of April 20, 2007, there are now 290 bipartisan cosponsors of H.R. 82. Congresswoman Berkley and Congressmen Heller and Porter are signed on as cosponsors of the bill. Senate Bill 206 has 26 bipartisan sponsors. Neither

Senator Ensign or Reid has signed onto the bill. (The Social Security Fairness Act would repeal the Government Pension Offsets (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Program (WEP) that affect all of us in non-Social Security states who draw a public pension, like PERS, when we retire.) As Directors we continue to carry this very important message to our congressional delegation and the need to repeal these oppressive laws. We will continue to keep you informed of the progress on these bills as we move through the process.

Question 3: Education Funding: Will the member commit to supporting a substantial increase in funding for critical ESEA/NCLB programs, such as Title I?

- a. Would you support amending ESEA/NCLB to allow schools to assess student knowledge and abilities using multiple measures rather than just a single test?
- b. To provide a comprehensive picture of student achievement, would you support measuring student growth over time rather than just assessing students at a single point in time?
- c. Would you commit to working with NEA to amend the law to maximize the knowledge, skills, and abilities of school-based personnel through expanded mentoring programs for new teachers, high-quality professional development programs for all educators, and financial incentives to recruit and retain high-quality teachers in hard-to-staff schools?
- d. To ensure that all students receive the individualized attention they need and to help teachers in maintaining an orderly classroom environment, will you support inclusion in ESEA of a program to provide funds to assist states to reduce class size in targeted grades and schools?

We had the opportunity to meet with staff members from Congressman Porter's and Congresswoman Berkley's offices. We also had the chance to meet with our newest Congressman - Dean Heller and his legislative assistant. All members of our House delegation were supportive of NEA's priorities and especially the reauthorizing "No Child Left Behind" to benefit the students of Nevada. We met with staff members from the Senate delegation. They were also supportive of NEA's priorities. All staff members from our delegations agreed they would want to see final legislation before they committed to a position on this legislation.

NEA Pacific Regional Caucus- (Thursday, February 8, 2007)

The Pacific Regional Caucus was held on Thursday, February 8, 2007, in room 814 of the NEA building. The Caucus meeting was short to allow members the opportunity to prepare for the NFIE Gala. State presidents gave a brief report on the activities within their state and legislative priorities and concerns.

A brief presentation was made on the Pacific Regional Leadership Conference scheduled for February 16 – 18, 2007, in Anaheim, California at the Marriot Hotel.

NEA Board of Directors' Meeting
December 8 & 9, 2007
NEA Building
Washington, D.C.

President: President Weaver discussed his activities with us in the past weeks since our last meeting. Many of his activities focus around NEA's Positive Agenda for the Reauthorization of ESEA. He spoke of a report released from the Aspen Institute regarding Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers. This is not a good thing and will do serious harm to public education. NEA, state, and local affiliates are going to have a big fight on their hands with this issue. There will be an effort for some very serious grassroots lobbying to address this problem. Reg also discussed a few of the other priorities that NEA continues to work on to benefit members: Health Care, Social Security Offsets, and Vouchers. Reg plans to continue developing coalitions of other union leaders to work as one voice and carry a common message to Capitol Hill on the issues that are important to the members of this association. As so much of our PAC money was expended during this last election, we were reminded how important these funds are to our battle for great public schools. We can't play in this arena if we can't pay, and Board members were urged to continue soliciting members to contribute to the NEA Fund for Children.

Vice-President: Vice-President Van Roekel discussed his recent activities. The NEA Academy continues to be a central focus of his work. The Academy has completed the prototype phase, and the planning phase is near completion. An anticipated soft launch is scheduled for March 30. Dennis still continues his work with the AFL-CIO and the Solidarity Agreement. Five more local affiliates have been approved under the provisions of this agreement. The committee on Associate Membership continues working and will bring the policy for implementation forward at the next meeting of the Board.

Secretary-Treasurer: Secretary-Treasurer Eskelsen discussed her activities with us in the past weeks since our last meeting. Information was provided to the Board on Member Benefits participation for the 2005-2006 year and product comparison for 2006-2007. Membership continues to grow and stay strong. Certificated teacher membership is up 37,480, a 1.8% increase over last year. ESP membership is up 8,609, a 2.2% increase over last year. The dues increase for the 2007-2008 year was also presented and discussed. Active full time certified dues will be \$151.00 based on the average teacher salary of \$50,521. Active full time ESP dues will be \$85.50 based on an average salary of \$27,600. This breaks down to increase of .50 a month for certificated and .42 a month for ESP.

Executive Director: Executive Director Wilson reported that the NEA Staff had donated \$25,000 and almost as many canned goods to the Washington, D.C. food bank. John also discussed the reorganization of the Government Relations Department and the newly created Campaign/Elections Department which will be headed by Karen White. Karen comes to NEA from her work with Emily's List. Diane Shurst will continue as Director of Government Relations which will focus more on the lobby efforts of NEA. John also

spoke about the reauthorization of ESEA and the need for NEA to focus their efforts and move quickly as this takes shape and starts to move through Congress.

General Counsel: Bob Chanin brought members of the Board up to date on the court cases that NEA is involved with which will have potential for impact on the membership. He reported on three items:

- The Washington Education Association (WEA) agency fee case involves the legality of the “opt in” that had been adopted by the Washington legislature. The state Supreme Court had declared the legislation illegal. The case was heard by the US Supreme Court on January 10, 2007. Justices were equally unimpressed by both cases. As of the February meeting no verdict had been issued by the US Supreme Court
- AEA vs. Chao – the Department of Labor ruled that all state affiliates must fall under the provisions of the Landrum-Griffin Act whether or not they represent private sector employees. Those affiliates that do not represent employees from the private sector filed suit against Elaine Chao, Secretary of Labor. NEA lost the suit and the case was sent back to the Department of Labor (DOL). The DOL published a reasoned analysis, which NEA believes to be far from reasonable. NEA is working with the affected states preparing for the worst possible outcome.
- State Voucher Programs – Three more states have adopted voucher programs, Arizona, Utah, and Georgia. All three programs were developed for students with disabilities. Utah’s and Georgia’s programs are statewide. It is estimated that Georgia’s program will cost public education over \$175 million.

Executive Committee: All members of the Executive Committee provided members of the Board with a written report of their activities since our last meeting

Action Items

1. **GUIDELINES FOR CONTINUOUS MEMBERSHIP** Van Roekel – Cebulski

Motion to recommend for Board of Directors approval of the adoption of the Guidelines for the Unified Continuous Membership Program. **Motion carried**

2. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYLAW 2 – 7 (n)** Billirakis – Smith

Motion to recommend for Board of Directors’ sponsorship of the proposed bylaw amendment to increase the 2007–2008 membership dues for the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund from \$8.00 to \$10.00 in 2007 – 2008. If approved, this amendment would be placed on the ballot for the 2007 NEA Representative Assembly. **Motion Carried**

3. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYLAW 2- 1 (c)** Crowder – Pringle

Motion to recommend for Board of Directors sponsorship of the proposed Bylaw amendment to delete the “exception” proviso to eligibility for NEA Student membership to read as follows:

- *Student membership shall be open to any student (i) who is enrolled in a postsecondary program that is preparatory for employment in a position that would make him or her eligible for Active membership or (ii) who is serving as chairperson of the NEA Advisory Committee of Student members. A student who is eligible for Association membership in both the Student and Active membership categories may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, join the Association as a Student member. Student members shall be eligible to be voting delegates at the Representative Assembly. Student members shall maintain membership in the state affiliate provided the affiliate has a membership category for student members.*

If approved this amendment would be place on the ballot for the 2007 NEA Representative Assembly **Motion Carried**

4. **MERGED STATES REPORT: GUIDELINES FOR NEA AND AFT MERGER** Van Roekel – Smith

Motion to recommend for Board of Directors’ approval the recommendation to amend Section III of the Guidelines for the Mergers of NEA and AFT State Affiliates as presented. **Motion Carried**

**Amendments for Consideration
By The
2007 Representative Assembly**

A brief overview of the amendments and the Board’s position will be given at this time. The entire amendment and impact statement will be provided during your local affiliate’s caucus and will be discussed in detail during our state caucus at the Representative Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Standing Rule Amendment 1: To require that three (3) speakers for and three (3) speakers against any item being debated by the Representative Assembly be heard, provided a sufficient number of speakers have called in, before debate on that item can be closed.

Board moved to oppose – carried

Standing Rule Amendment 2: To require that all points of information during Representative Assembly debate begin with the word “who, what, when, where,” or “how.”

Board moved to oppose – carried

Standing Rule Amendment 3: To require that acronyms and abbreviations be spelled out when first used in a new business item.

Board moved to support – carried

Standing Rule Amendment 4: To limit to three (3) the number of consecutive points of information that can be raised between speakers for or against any item that is being debated by the Representative Assembly.

Board moved to oppose – carried

Standing Rule Amendment 6: To require that a delegate who is recognized to speak may yield the balance of his or her allotted speaking time to another delegate only after speaking for or against the item being debated.

Board moved to oppose – carried

Constitutional Amendment 1: To allow the NEA Bylaws to provide NEA membership for certain persons who are not education employees.

Board moved to support – carried

Bylaw Amendment 1: To place the statement of NEA Core Values into the NEA Bylaws

Board moved to refer to Executive Committee

Bylaw Amendment 2: To clarify the effective date of membership for persons who join the Association for a particular membership year prior to the September 1 start of that membership year and to clarify the eligibility of such persons to receive Association benefits and services.

Board moved to support – carried

Bylaw Amendment 3: To prohibit the inclusion into any Representative Assembly agenda of items, practices, or procedures that are likely to discriminate against any delegate.

Board moved to oppose – carried

In other action by the Board, the appointment of the Board Steering Committee was approved, and the recommendations from the 2006-2007 Annual Meeting Review committee were also accepted.

Discussion Items

NEA Update on Health Care Issues - Members of the Board were provided an update by staff on progress being made on health care issues that affect members of the NEA.

Information Items

1. Read Across America Update – The Board was presented information on the upcoming Read Across America Events.

2. Legislative and Political Update – The Board was briefed on Legislative issues on Wednesday, February 8, 2007. Reg also talked about the Social Security Offsets and that more Congressmen and Senators are signing on to these bills. He was positive with this information but urged all members of the Board to remember that this will take time to move, and he urged patience.
3. ESEA Reauthorization Advisory Committee – The Committee rolled out a new book, *NCLB/ESEA It's Time for a Change! Voices from the American Classrooms* a compilation of stories from teachers across the United States and their experiences with No Child Left Behind and the impact this act was having on their jobs. We were able to present a copy of the book to each member of our Congressional delegation.
4. Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises Report – The NEA Ballot Measure/Legislative Crisis Fund budget for 2006-2007 began with an estimated carryover of \$241,271 and a budget of \$9,195,600 for a total of \$9,436,871. In the first quarter, eight states (Maine, Oregon, South Dakota, Arizona, Michigan, Idaho, Nebraska and Nevada) received a total of \$ 5,663,000 for ballot measures. Nevada withdrew a \$490,000 ballot measure request after the Nevada Supreme Court took the measure off the ballot. The preliminary fund balance for the second quarter of the 2006-2007 fiscal year, less interest paid on a loan of \$68,189, and less \$2 million set aside by the NEA Board of Directors for selected ballot measures and ballot measure independent expenditures, will be \$872,682.00.
5. NEA Strategic Goals Update – Members of the Board were provided information on new NEA Strategic Goals and where we are in the implementation process.
6. Internal Concerns Committee Report – The Committee brought forth two recommendations for the Board's approval. The first recommendation would have allowed Board members to use a travel agency other than the official NEA travel agency. Motion Failed. The second would have allowed Board members with pets to be reimbursed up to \$ 250 per year for pet care. Motion Failed.

Members of the Board participated in a Women's History Month Observance on Friday, February 9, 2007.

Members of the Board participated in a Black History Month Observance on Saturday, February 10, 2007

On Saturday, February 10, 2007, the Board participated in a training event, "Creating a Culture of Organizing." Input from this event will be compiled and presented to Board members in future trainings.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 4 & 5, 2007, in Washington, D.C.

**Pacific Region
Minority Leadership Training
And Regional Leadership Conference
February 14 – 18, 2007
Anaheim, California**

This year's Minority Leadership Training and Women's Leadership Development Conference was scheduled for February 14 – 16, 2007, at the Marriott Anaheim Hotel in Anaheim California. Seventy five of our members from across the state were able to attend this worthwhile program. Members were able to interact with other members from the Pacific Region and share their experience and address their concerns regarding minority issues and developing women's leadership roles in our Associations at the local, state, and national level. Our very own Bob Munoz, Chair of the NEA Hispanic Caucus, had a part in organizing this wonderful event.

The Pacific Regional Leadership Conference was held February 16 – 18, 2007, in the same location as the MLT program. This event gave those that attended the opportunity to gain more background and expertise into how NEA operates and the programs that are available for members. Participants also had the chance to attend hearings on NEA's Strategic Focus and Budget, NEA's Legislative program, NEA's Resolutions Hearings and NEA's Positive Agenda for the Reauthorization of ESEA (NCLB). We also had a chance to hear from Arianna Huffington, nationally known author and political activist. A very worthwhile program for all that attended.

**Additional Activities
of the
Nevada NEA Directors**

March 5, 2007 - Both NEA Directors attended NSEA Lobby Day in Carson City. Ken was asked to participate in a round table discussion with Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley on Merit Pay and the issues that surround this topic.

March 17, 2007 – Both NEA Directors attended ESEA's General Membership Picnic at Sunset Park in Las Vegas.

April 5, 2007 – NEA Director Ken Burhmann attended a Town Hall meeting with Senator Harry Reid in Reno

April 21, 2007 – NEA Director Tom Wellman attended the Nevada State AFL-CIO Celebration Honoring the Friends of Nevada's Working Families.