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# Useful Communications and News

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## Visit the NEA Member Benefits Website

To find out more about Insurance Programs, Financial Services, Member Discounts, Tools and Tips, Free Giveaways, and Featured Offers click on the links at the NEA Member Benefits Website:

<http://www.neamb.com/>



**Login and use your NSEA Access membership card for members' only discounts at:**

<http://www.memberweb.com/memberweb/NewLogin.asp>

# **GPO/WEP REPEAL: New Vigor In An Old Fight!**

By Ken Buhrmann, NEA Director

In December of 2008, I attended an NEA National Committee meeting in Washington, D.C. I am passing along to you the most current up-date on NEA's efforts to repeal this very unfair law – Government Pension Offset/Windfall Elimination Provision. As I reported in the past, there was little about some action taken by the 110th Congress to repeal GPO/WEP. In November of 2007 over 100,000 signatures on petitions from all states was delivered to Congress. At that time the Senate conducted hearings (lead by Senator Kerry) on the repeal and in January of 2008, the House of Representatives held hearings on the repeal as well. After that progress was slow as then President Bush let it be known that if the repeal bill came to his desk he would veto it immediately. Unfortunately there were not enough votes in the Senate to override the President's veto. Now we have a new era and administration in Washington, D.C.! Expectations are running high. Already bills are prepared and ready to be introduced into the 111th Congress to repeal GPO/WEP. Senators D. Feinstein of California and S. Collins of Maine have SB385 ready to go in the Senate. Representatives H. Berman and H. McKeon both of California have HB 352 set up and ready for introduction into the House of Representatives. At the present time all returning Representatives that have previously signed on are again on board as well as all those returning to the Senate – 300+ in the House and 40+ in the Senate.

At this time NEA is setting up various strategies for putting GPO/WEP repeal on the fast track. There are plans to start cadres to push for grassroots support in all fifty states to encourage all those congressmen who have not signed on to do so. Nevada's cadre has been set up and working for a long time now. The cadre is currently headed by your NEA Directors, Tom Wellman and Ken Buhrmann. Nevada has all its Congress delegates signed on with the exception of Senator Ensign who keeps insisting that repeal of GPO/WEP will allow "double-dipping" by public employees and teachers. Also NEA is planning a big push to recruit retirees to mass "cyber lobby" all representatives and to "spread the word" throughout states on the efforts to repeal GPO/WEP and inform individuals about the issue. More information on this will be forthcoming as soon as we hear from NEA. There is also a push to have all state legislatures that are affected by GPO/WEP to pass a resolution to send to Congress to support repeal of this unfair law.

Now for a reality check – do not expect action on this issue in Congress until approximately May. With a new Congress facing extreme economic issues and concerns, realistically this will be the first order of business. Next will come the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, which has been postponed for a year and has to be addressed this year by law. But fear not – GPO/WEP will NOT be put on the back burner and will be running a fast second in this horse race.

Finally, I have included as an insert in this issue (see the next page) a letter from now President Obama to NEA and all its members. We have in writing his full commitment to repeal GPO/WEP as well as protecting and expanding Social Security benefits for all working Americans. NEA and your state and local leadership plan on making sure President Obama keeps his word. You will find this letter to be very interesting as well as reassuring.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me in the office either by phone or by e-mail. The future of GPO/WEP repeal looks brighter than ever. It still will take much work and patience to get full repeal, but the process has vigor and a new life filled with promise. I will keep you informed of new developments as they materialize.

## BARACK OBAMA

Dear NEA Members,

I appreciate the opportunity to share a few thoughts about your retirement and what I will do to protect you and make sure you get the benefits you've earned. Nobody should be penalized for serving our children, and that's why I support repealing the GPO/WEP and will work to do so as President.

As you know, the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset have a serious detrimental impact on hundreds of thousands of educators and your spouses. That's why as a Senator I co-sponsored the Social Security Fairness Act, which would repeal these provisions. The first provision cuts the spousal benefits of some public employees, while the second cuts the Social Security benefits that some public employees earned themselves.

These provisions also hurt police officers, firefighters, and other public employees. I believe that we have a responsibility to take care of workers who have devoted their lives to public service and that we shouldn't discourage young people from working in these essential jobs at a time when so many teachers are at or near retirement age and we're struggling to replace them.

I will work to repeal GPO and WEP, but I won't stop there. We need to think now about how we provide retirement security for today's retirees and workers retiring 20 or 30 more years down the road. Let me tell you about my comprehensive plan.

It starts with protecting Social Security. It is one of the most successful social programs in American history, and we need to preserve and maintain it, without risky privatization plans. I will work to forge a bipartisan consensus that will keep the program financially secure for future generations. I will also encourage personal savings and hold companies to their pension promises by reforming the bankruptcy code so that companies do not use it to take benefits away from their workers. And since almost half of full-time workers do not have a job with a retirement savings plan, my retirement security plan will automatically enroll workers in a workplace pension plan. I will also expand the existing Savers Credit to match 50 percent of the first \$1,000 of savings for families that earn under \$75,000, and make the credit refundable. Coupled with the automatic workplace pension plan, this proposal will stimulate tens of millions of new Americans to invest for their retirement.

Improving retirement security for educators through sensible steps like these will be a high priority for me as President. I greatly appreciate the support I have from the NEA, and I look forward to working with you as President to create the changes we all want to see in our country.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama



Obama for America PO Box 8210 Chicago IL 60680  
[www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com)

PAID FOR BY OBAMA FOR AMERICA

## UCN-Retired Members Earn Cash!

Thanks to a grant from the NSEA Membership Committee, UCN-Retired members both retired and pre-retired can earn \$25 for each new member they recruit for our retired association. Talk to the people you work with or those you retired with. Get them to commit to joining our organization. Yearly dues are just \$50. Life time dues (one time cost and you never pay again) are \$420. If you have a new recruit, just email [robinblair@att.net](mailto:robinblair@att.net) with their name, address and phone number and I will send them an application. When they return the application and dues, I will send you a check for \$25. It's that easy!

Thank you,

Robin Blair, President UCN-R

## UCN Bargaining Training

By Rose Brennan, NSEA Organization Specialist

NSEA's UniServ Directors gave the second UCN Bargaining Training in Elko at the Red Lion Hotel on March 27-29 for almost 30 teachers and support staff from bargaining teams in eight different locals. The highlight of the weekend was the presentation and discussion with Mike Dyer and Sandy Lawrence from the NSEA's law firm. Mike reviewed the history and importance of legal rights of members to negotiate under Nevada law. Members who receive RIF (reduction in force) notices have a right to a hearing under Nevada law to ensure that there is legitimate justification for the lay off. The law firm will be representing members under these circumstances.

There were questions and discussion surrounding the pressures that local members are facing from their districts because of the state's economic crisis. Sandra Lawrence answered questions concerning violations of the law called "Unfair Labor Practices" when the district attempts to bargain directly with members outside of the negotiation process to get agreements to give up salary or benefits to avoid lay offs.

Participants learned the essential steps in preparing for bargaining to insure that the outcome is supported by the membership. There were exercises in analyzing your contract and writing clear and unambiguous language. Simulations of actual bargaining sessions gave participants the practice of presenting a proposal and persuading the district to accept it. The district team was played by volunteer participants who didn't hesitate to use some of the same arguments that some of them had heard in their actual bargaining experience, e.g. "So, you're just in it for the money."

On Sunday the final "Deal or No Deal" exercise was to learn how to close negotiations. Members were tasked with resolving a negotiation that was at impasse for the fictitious Tough Times School District. Teams worked with the same background information on a salary schedule and demographics but represented the separate positions and had their separate proposals. They had real caucuses and worked hard on prioritizing and persuading in order to get a successful overall agreement that they believe would be ratified by everyone in the Tough Times School District.

There was a good exchange throughout the training of advice and helpful hints from the participants with various degrees of experience. For some it was a surprisingly valuable exercise when they volunteered to take the perspective of the district. The same bargaining training was given in February in Reno for other UCN locals and was well attended also.

# Attending PRLC is a Learning Experience!

By Jane Claar, LCEA Secretary

This year I was fortunate in being selected at one of our quarterly UCN (Uniserv Council of Nevada) meetings which funded my travel to Seattle, Washington for the annual Pacific Regional Leadership Conference. The conference is a wealth of educational and political issues that affect our states, leaders and teachers. They have a large menu of topics of great interest in all areas for participants to select and learn. There is also a state meeting called a Caucus which every state holds during the conference. Nevada's was led by our President, Lynne Warne who updated everyone there on what is happening currently in Nevada that affects all the members of NSEA, especially what is happening in the Legislature.

One of the sessions that I selected to attend was what is happening in the legal and political areas of our judicial system. The expert at this session was a Washington State representative who was very knowledgeable about not only the Legislative Representatives in Washington State, but also in the Judicial areas there. She informed us that the Right Wing Conservatives who traditionally attack education with the false stories about what is happening in education are now going after judges. They try to get someone elected who has not supported education in the past and take the place of a judge who seems to be very fair minded and probably looks at all sides of an issue. They have been successful in removing good judges who have been blind-sided, so to speak, and not in the position to pay for a big campaign because they didn't know they were being targeted. These organizations in Washington band together and focus on someone as a group, thus being able to finance with a lot of money an unknown candidate who will be prone to support their way out causes. The presenter warned us that if it's happening in Washington State, it will move to other states soon.

Another great session I attended was about technology. One of the interesting things I learned there was that the reason many companies out-source their technology to foreign countries was not only that it's cheaper, but the students in foreign countries are taught to communicate better than our students and also write better. Even if our graduates were hired for the technical jobs that are out there....they can't do as good of a job as what the companies are hiring in the foreign countries for less money. They can go in to a foreign country and change a whole school system there. Here in America, schools can only be changed one at a time. The system isn't set up to change it all together.

One of the last sessions that I attended was a very good overview of a new program that NEA has initiated because of a New Business Item (or NBI as it is called at RA) that was passed at one of the Representative Assemblies in the recent past. A training program has been set up for teams to be trained in each state to go out and give free trainings to ELL or ESL teachers in states that have high populations of English Language Learners. This program is now in place, but must be funded in future budgets of NEA programs and will only be funded if we as NEA members and staffing in schools, ask for the program to be funded. It's our organization, and they listen to what members ask for, but only if the members let them know what they want. We can't sit back and wait for things to happen if they don't have our input. This training for the Team Trainers will take place this summer of 2009 here in Nevada if it is funded at RA this summer in San Diego. I put in my Budget request at the Budget hearing that was held at the PRLC in Seattle by our Treasurer, Becky Pringle.

Anyone can go to PRLC if they want to pay for the registration next year. It will be held in Reno, Nevada at the Peppermill. Early registration is around \$175-\$200 per person, and includes all your meals during the conference. That is Friday night dinner, breakfast on Saturday and Sunday, and lunch on Saturday. Saturday night is always on your own for the meal. It's a wonderful opportunity to learn a lot about what is happening in education all around the United States. You can learn more about your state's plan for better conditions for all teachers and students, and you can meet and collaborate with teachers all throughout the Pacific Region. The states that we meet with are Hawaii, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Nevada, and Alaska. Next year President Warne has advised us that those attending all sessions at the PRLC will receive one hour Nevada State Department credit for no additional cost in their registration. It's a great opportunity for everyone to participate. Plan to attend!

## **2009 NEA Pacific Regional Leadership Conference**

By Steve Fargan

I attended the NEA Pacific Regional Leadership Conference in Seattle, Washington, the weekend of February 13-16, 2009.

On Friday night we were welcomed to the conference by the keynote speaker, NEA President, Dennis Van Roekel, getting us off to a great start.

On Saturday I attended four sessions. Two sessions were held Saturday morning and two sessions were held Saturday afternoon.

The first session I attended on Saturday morning was "Identifying, Recruiting and Involving New Leaders." This session had two presenters from the California Teachers Association, Bill Fisher and Joe Krause. They gave many examples of how to get more members more involved in the Association.

"Using Election Successes to Shape a Better Policy Agenda" was the second morning session I attended. This session had two presenters from NEA Campaign and Elections, Tricia Bosak and Trish Welte. Hearing about the electoral victories of NEA endorsed candidates in the Pacific Region and across the nation gives me hope during the challenging times we are currently in.

The first Saturday afternoon I attended "NEA's Read Across America: Tips and Tools for Mobilizing Members." This session had three presenters, Karen Watters, NEA Board of Directors, Oregon, Anita Merina, NEA Public Relations, and Karle Warren, NEA Board of Directors, Washington. This session was full of great ideas, resources and participants sharing activities they have had success in. I was further inspired for my upcoming Read Across America school visits in Lyon County on Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The fourth and final session I attended on Saturday was one of the most eye-opening sessions I have ever attended at a Pacific Regional Leadership Conference, "ESEA Update: What's Up? What's Down? What's Ahead?". This session had three presenters, Theresa Montaño, NEA Board of Directors, California, Joel Packer, director, NEA Education Policy and Practice, and Christy Levings, NEA Executive Committee. They went over the efforts put forth by NEA concerning the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the reasons why it may still take some time for the reauthorization to occur, and addressed questions and concerns from the members in attendance. They also shared a PowerPoint that included the following slide:

## Bush Implementation Strategies

- **Former Assistant Secretary for EI/Sec (under Paige) Susan Neuman in December publicly said Bush Administration used four initial strategies on NCLB implementation:**
  - No Excuses
  - Fill a body bag – find a failing school, close it down, threaten other schools
  - The “shame game” – focus on the failures
  - The “blame game” – blame the teachers

This was the eye-opener that confirmed my previous suspicions about how the so-called “No Child Left Behind” has been used against educators. I asked the presenters permission to share this information with others.

On Sunday morning I attended the NEA Legislative Hearing. During this hearing I submitted the following request:

*I would like a response from NEA to follow up on a previous request to have NEA investigate the conflicts of interest initially created by the Obey/Porter Legislation. I am deeply concerned when federal funds for the research on scientific research-based educational programs are given to companies that also receive federal funds through public schools to purchase programs that these same companies also sell. This illegal “inbred” research needs to be replaced by genuine independent research.*

I also met and had discussions with many other teachers from the eight states of the Pacific Region throughout the weekend.

I appreciate the opportunity I was given in being able to attend the NEA Pacific Regional Leadership Conference. I would be happy to share more details about the conference with interested teachers.

## UCN Members Join With WEA in a Legislative Rally



NSEA President, Lynn Warne and WEA President, Ken Buhmann (above.) Friends joined with Randy Cahill, NSEA Organization Specialist (below.)



On Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup> in Carson City, many UCN members joined over one hundred members of the Washoe Education Association in a Legislative Rally. Together we demonstrated to elected officials that teachers and support professionals **will** stand up for education. After rallying outside the Nevada State Legislature, we went into the Nevada State Assembly and Nevada State Senate chambers which were both in session. It is very important for all of our members to continue to be involved during the current legislative session.

Here are some resources to help you make contact and share your concerns with our Nevada State Legislators:

Visit the NSEA website:

<http://www.nsea-nv.org>

Sign up for NSEA's electronic newsletter, Member Matters:

[http://www.nsea-nv.org/contact\\_update.cfm](http://www.nsea-nv.org/contact_update.cfm)

Visit the NEA website:

<http://www.nea.org>

Visit the NEA Legislative Action Center:

<http://www.nea.org/home/LegislativeActionCenter.html>



Educators in front of the Nevada State Legislature (above) and some of the UCN members in attendance (below.)





Skier: Ron Shevock, Photo taken by Steve Fargan

## Discount Season Passes at Kirkwood

The Ormsby County Education Association and Lyon County Education Association have teamed up again to offer discounted season passes at Kirkwood. We have expanded our team to include members of any local affiliate of the Uniserv Council of Nevada, the Nevada State Education Association or the National Education Association. Kirkwood has expanded the offer to include your family, friends, and even friends of friends.

Below are some details on the best deal on an unrestricted Kirkwood 2009-2010 Network pass.

- There are no blackout dates.
- Never miss a powder day.
- Ski or ride any weekend, any holiday and never have to wait in a ticket window line.
- Kirkwood gets the deepest and driest snow in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

### **The price is only \$379\* per pass!**

(Order early to get next season's pass at a lower price than last season's best price. The initial price is \$20 less than last year for an unrestricted/no blackouts/no restrictions season pass at Kirkwood.)

Valid 7 days a week with no restrictions.

The Network Pass is not valid at Durango Mountain Resort!

Greetings! As your 09/10 Kirkwood Network Pass Representative, I'm happy to share with you this extremely low initial sale price of just \$379\* - the best deal available anywhere, anytime on a full winter of Tahoe's best skiing and riding!

**Purchase before APRIL 30th using this log in and password:**

Network Log In: **fargan**

Network Password: **kirkwood68**

Purchase Your Pass Here:

<http://www.kirkwood.com/networkpass>

or

<https://skikirkwood.com/e-commerce/grpLogin2.aspx>

\*Network Pass Rate Increase Dates: April 30, 2009; September 8, 2009; December 15, 2009.

This price is only good through April 30th when purchasing individually so I want to make sure everyone is aware of this exceptional deal. All pass renewals purchased now through April 30th are only \$379 for a Fully Unrestricted Adult Network Season Pass. After April 30th the \$379 price will still be available when purchased in a quad (purchased in a group of 4 using 1-4 credit cards). Those purchasing individually will have a \$399 option. Pricing is valid through September 8th. The current list price for a Kirkwood Unrestricted Pass on the Kirkwood website is \$469.

Contact [Steve Fargan](mailto:lolo@loloville.com) at: [lolo@loloville.com](mailto:lolo@loloville.com) (home e-mail) if you have any questions.

Please feel free to print out the poster on the next page to share information about this great deal.

# KIRKWOOD 2009/10 NETWORK PASS

UNRESTRICTED  
SEASON PASS at a  
**NEW LOW PRICE!**

# \$379\*

SAVE OVER \$200



Greetings! As your 09/10 Kirkwood Network Pass Representative, I'm happy to share with you this extremely low initial sale price of just \$379\* - the best deal available anywhere, anytime on a full winter of Tahoe's best skiing and riding! Purchase before **APRIL 30th** using this log in and password:

*Network Log In: fargan*

*Network Password: kirkwood68*

*Purchase Your Pass Here:*

<http://www.kirkwood.com/networkpass>

\*Network Pass Rate Increase Dates: April 30, 2009; September 8, 2009; December 15, 2009.



Kirkwood Mountain Resort | Highway 88 at Carson Pass | Conditions: 1.877.KIRKWOOD | [www.kirkwood.com](http://www.kirkwood.com)