

NEA Board of Directors' Report
December 6, 7 & 8, 2007
Washington, DC
Ken Buhrmann & Tom Wellman

NSEA/NEA Legislative Briefing and Lobbying on Capitol Hill – (Thursday, December 6, 2007)

Nevada's NEA Directors returned to Washington, DC on Wednesday, December 5, 2007, to attend a legislative briefing scheduled for the next day. NEA has been able to successfully slow the proposed reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act). This slow down has been accomplished through a phenomenal grass roots cyber lobbying effort of our members; they expressed their concerns about the proposed reauthorization language letting members of Congress know that we wanted them to get it right this time. With the slowdown of reauthorization, the election of the next president could seriously impact the course of public education. It is important that we monitor the acceptable candidates for president and pay close attention to their position on ESEA. NEA GR staff and lobby team members continue to meet with members of Congress to discuss our concerns with ESEA developing successful solutions that will benefit students, parents, and our members. The GR staff/lobby team also presented those in attendance with information on other "hot" topics that are being addressed in this Congress before their adjournment date, which could be as late as December 23, 2007. These same issues will likely be on the table when Congress reconvenes in late January.

Other specific topics of interest to the NEA are the following:

1. Rural Education
2. Vouchers
3. Educator Tax Relief
4. School Construction
5. Head Start
6. Employment Non-discrimination
7. Hate Crimes

NEA will continue to monitor these and will provide updated information on any changes in the issues.

We were sent to Capitol Hill to meet with the members of our congressional delegation and to lobby them on the following questions:

1. **Will the member support passage of a fiscal year 2008 "omnibus" spending that includes funding for No Child Left Behind programs, special education, and career and technical education at the highest possible level?**

Congressmen Heller, Porter, and Congresswoman Berkley were all supportive of the omnibus bill. The staff in Senator Reid's office was also supportive of the concept. They all approached this type of bill with the usual caveat of wanting to see the actual bill and

the break down in spending before they commit 100%. Senator Ensign's office supported the idea of the bill, as long as it did not exceed currently established spending limits established by the president which included funding for the war effort in Iraq.

2. Will the member oppose including the misleadingly named "academic bill of rights" in the final Higher Education Act reauthorization bill?

NEA opposes this concept of the "academic bill of rights" and feels that current law already has provisions to address this issue. All members of our delegation were very concerned about this issue and felt they could support NEA's position on this bill. Congressman Porter even volunteered to meet with members of NEA's GR staff to discuss proposed language changes for the bill.

3. Will the member help move legislation to repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision forward for a mark-up (Senate) or hearing (House)?

All members of our House delegation have signed on as co-sponsors of this bill and support the concept of repeal. They all reminded us that this is a very costly measure and will not all be accomplished in a single year, but may have to be phased in a gradual manner. Senator Reid still supports this issue, but feels that because of his position of leadership in the Senate he can't sign on as a co-sponsor. Senator Ensign has removed this issue from his legislative aide that handles education issues. We were assured that all of our material has been passed on to the legislative aide now responsible for this issue.

4. Will the member support efforts to extend/expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program?

NEA supports this bill because it is the right thing to do for kids: all children deserve the chance for a healthy start in life. In October, the House failed to override President Bush's veto of Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (H.R. 976), which would have provided \$35 billion in new five year SCHIP funding. This would have allowed extending coverage to approximately four million additional children. The vote was lost along party lines. Congressman Porter is to be commended for breaking ranks and voting to override the veto, doing the right thing for kids. We also had the opportunity to meet and discuss this issue with Senator Reid. He was thankful for the hard work and support that NEA had provided on this issue, but felt it would not be resurrected in the near future.

NEA Board of Directors' Meeting
December 7 & 8, 2007
NEA Building
Washington, DC

Leadership Reports:

President: President Weaver discussed his activities with us since our last meeting. He opened the meeting by talking about how proud he was of the Clark County Education Association for blocking the hostile takeover attempt by the Teamsters Local 14. He praised the leadership of our association for the hard work and mobilization of our membership. KUDOS to CCEA for a job very well done! Other victories for public education came during the recent November election cycle: Virginia-elected a pro-public education Senate; Kentucky-elected a pro-education governor and other state officials; in Buffalo, NY,- the court ruled in favor of the Buffalo Teacher Federation on a step freeze case; and of course, the Utah Education Association won the voucher repeal defeating the worst state voucher proposal currently on record. It was great to start the meeting on such a positive note celebrating our victories.

As may be expected, many of President Weaver's activities centered around the continuing work on the reauthorization of ESEA. Weaver and AFT President Ed McElroy met privately with Congressmen George Miller, (CA-D), and Senator Ted Kennedy, (MA-D). It was agreed there would be no new attempts to move the reauthorization bill on ESEA, no bill mark-up in the House, and no hearing in the Senate. The next attempts at reauthorization will be after the new president is elected. There is still a great deal of work to be done on this issue. NEA will continue to work hard for the benefit of our students, parents, and most importantly our members. We will keep you posted as events develop.

President Weaver also shared with members of the board a newly publicized document from the NEA, *Truth in Labeling: Disproportionality in Special Education*. This document is a collaboration effort of the NEA and the National Association of School Psychologists. This plan provides educators with basic information about the overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse children in special education programs and the disproportional underrepresentation of same students in gifted and or talented programs. Board members were encouraged to take their first set of NEA Education Policy Briefs from the table.

It's that time of year where we, as an association, are faced with all of the issues that surround the endorsement of a presidential candidate. Reg recommended that all seven Democratic candidates for president be considered as "acceptable" and that this information be conveyed to the membership. States will now have the option to concur totally; to concur partially; or not at all. Only those states that concur in some manner will receive any assistance from NEA for the 2008 Presidential election. The only Republican candidate that participated in the process was ex-Governor Mike Huckabee from Arkansas. Regrettably, President Weaver was not able to move this candidate to "acceptable" as he did not agree with all NEA basic principals. In an effort to help our Republican members feel more included in the process, President Weaver will explain NEA's position by sending a letter to all identified Republican members in early voting

states. This proposal raised a number of questions and concerns from the state presidents who felt that all members should receive this communication regardless of party affiliation.

Vice President: The vice president discussed his activities with us since our last meeting. Vice President Van Roekel reminded the members of the Board that December 14 was the deadline for nominations of ESP of the Year. The vice president went on to talk about the Special Committee on Membership and the proposed Bylaw Amendment submitted by NEA Retired. The Special Committee on membership has two charges. The first is “should NEA expand its membership to employees of private pre-K institutions?” The second charge is “what groups should be eligible for membership?” Members of the Board should expect to see some recommendations presented from this committee during the next BOD meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer: Secretary/Treasurer Eskelsen discussed her activities with us since our last meeting. She was pleased and proud to inform the Board that NEA had successfully completed their last audit and had been given a clean unqualified opinion, which is the best in this process. She was pleased to inform us that the trend of membership increase continues to grow in the Association. NEA’s financial report is on track with income, expenditures, and assets. She went on to share her visit with the India Primary Teacher Federation. Thousands of teachers from all over India came to participate and sat on the Astroturf of a local stadium under tents. This event is very similar to our Delegate Assembly. After the conference, Lily had the chance to tour a local facility that rescued victims from child labor sweatshops. The children stayed at this facility until they were able to be reunited with family members. It was a very moving and memorable story and we were both proud that Secretary/Treasurer Eskelsen was chosen to represent NEA and all of our members.

Executive Director: John Wilson was excused from the meeting to allow him the opportunity to attend the Sisco Systems Public Service Summit in Stockholm, Sweden. This invitation was extended as a result of John’s work with the Partnership for 21st Century Skill. He will also have the opportunity to attend Nobel Peace Prize activities in Oslo, Norway.

Deputy Executive Director: Deputy Executive Director John Stocks gave his report and announced the appointments of Dennis Friel as Mid-West Region Director and Armand Triberio as Pacific Region Director. He also congratulated NEA President, Reg Weaver, for being inducted into the Illinois Labor Hall of Fame.

General Counsel: General Counsel Bob Chanin, provided us with an update of his activities since our last Board of Directors meeting. He discussed the recent victory in Buffalo, New York. In 2004, the salaries of all school district employees were frozen and the Buffalo Teachers Federation filed suit against the freeze and lost. This past summer, the step freeze was lifted. The School Board and the funding authority ruled that employees would be placed on the step they held in 2004 when the freeze went into effect. The BTF filed suit against this outrageous practice, went back to court, and WON! This fight is not over yet, as the school district and their funding authority are appealing this recent court decision.

The NEA plans on filing an amicus brief in the case of Colorado Christian University and the 10th Circuit Court. Colorado Christian University is filing a suit claiming religious

discrimination. This case does pertain to higher education, but has very serious implications at the Elementary and Secondary levels of education where states continue to try and implement a voucher program. At issue is a Colorado state law that allows state money to be given to only sectarian schools. This law allows any anti-voucher proponent to challenge any voucher law based on the state constitution. This will definitely be a case watched closely by NEA because of the far reaching implications this has on all of public education.

Mr. Chanin explained the NEA was still waiting for the decisions from the US Supreme court on the ESEA/NCLB lawsuit Pontiac, Michigan vs Spelling, and Alabama EA vs Chao. This second case involves the Alabama Education Association and 26 other state affiliates and whether they should fall under the Landrum Griffin provisions, because NEA has private sector and these other entities do not.

***** BREAKING NEWS- A decision has been handed down on the ESEA/NCLB lawsuit involving Pontiac, Michigan vs Spelling from the US Supreme court. The gist of this ruling is that our case does have merit and will be allowed to be filed in the court system.*****

At the 2007 NEA RA an NBI was adopted that urged the NEA to respond to the recent US Supreme court decision ruling that the desegregation programs, in Louisville, Kentucky and Seattle, Washington were unconstitutional. Bob is drafting a memo to address this issue and this NBI.

Executive Committee: All members of the Executive Committee provided all members of the Board of Directors' a written report detailing their activities since our last meeting.

Action Items

1. CONTINGENCY FUND REQUEST : IMPLEMENTATION OF 2007 NEW BUSINESS ITEMS (SMITH- CROWDER)

Motion to recommend for Board of Directors approval the allocation of \$272,890 from the Contingency Fund for implementation of 2007 New Business Items adopted by the NEA Representative Assembly.

Motion carried: roll call YES-174 and No-0

2. Amendments for Consideration By The 2008 NEA Representative Assembly

A. Standing Rule Amendment 1

Title: To require a delegate to ask a question when recognized to speak on a point of information.

Move to oppose- carried

B. Standing Rule Amendment 2

Title: To require that new business items requesting dissemination of information via NEA websites and publication be accepted only if certain conditions are met.

Move to oppose-carried

C. Standing Rule Amendment 3

Title: To require that the positions taken by the NEA Board of Directors on proposed amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, or Standing Rules be presented with the amendment text.

Move to support-carried

D. Constitutional Amendment 1

Title: To allow the NEA Bylaws to provide NEA membership for certain persons who are not education employees, and to prohibit such members from serving as officers of the Association, members of the Board of Directors, or delegates to the Representative Assembly.

Move to support- carried

E. Bylaw Amendment 1

Title: To prohibit the Representative Assembly meeting agenda from including items, practices, or procedures that will exclude any delegate based on race, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, physical challenges, or other differences.

Move to oppose-carried

3. Small States Foundation Grants:

The purpose of The Small State Foundation Program is to assist states with active membership counts below 12,000 in providing basic state programs to Association members. Small States Grants are a recognition of the capacity challenges of states with low membership.

Move to support-carried

Information Items

1. Health Care Reform: Bill Raabe, Director of Collective Bargaining and Advocacy, gave a Power Point presentation on the national health care reform debate. It was a very interesting presentation telling all of us that this is a critical issue. There is still a great deal of work to be done to see that all of our members have quality health care that is not cost prohibitive.

2. Update on Alternative Compensation: Bill Raabe, Director of Collective Bargaining and Advocacy, provided members of the board information on NEA's position on "pay for performance." He reviewed our resolutions that applied to this issue and clarified NEA's position. While in support of certain types of pay for performance, NEA is opposed to "pay for performance based on student test scores." Bill went on to explain that NEA will assist locals that are dealing with these plans to make sure that it is a positive plan for all members involved.
3. Read Across America: The NEA's Read Across America day is scheduled for March 3, 2008. The committee is working on a series of fun and exciting kickoff events, details to follow. NEA's Cat-A-Vans will also hit the road again during this week in a number of states with a variety of projects to help celebrate Read Across America.
4. Utah and CQE Voucher: Kim Campbell, President of the Utah Education Association, spoke about their recent voucher battle victory! She outlined the steps that they took to be successful in this battle. She thanked the state affiliates, NEA staff, and executive committee for all of their support. This is a positive victory that will directly impact and benefit all the parents, students and teachers in Utah. Congratulations on a job well done.
5. Proposed Additions/Revisions to NEA Resolutions: Brent McKim, Chair of Resolutions, reviewed the action taken on Resolutions at the 2007 RA. Brent reported that 45 resolutions were amended, 5 new resolutions were adopted, and 9 proposed amendments to the resolutions were referred to the Resolutions Committee. The full committee will be meeting again in February to review amendments referred at RA and to review new proposed resolutions.
6. ESEA/NCLB Campaign update: Becky Pringle, Chair of the ESEA Advisory Committee, reported on the work of the committee since our last meeting. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Congressman Miller (D-CA) have both agreed that they will not be pursuing any action on the reauthorization of ESEA during the remainder of 2007. This decision is based in large part on the Bush Administration's lack of commitment to adequately fund federally mandated education programs. NEA and its affiliates are to be congratulated for slowing down the reauthorization and attempting to focus on the delivery of a strong education bill that will make comprehensive changes to the current law.

Special Events

1. Hendrikus Bervoets was introduced to the Board. He exhibited an art for AIDS show on the first floor of the NEA building. Mr. Bevoets reminded us that 8,000 people die every day from AIDS. All of the profits from the sale of artwork would be used for the benefit of AIDS relief.
2. Bill Milken, author of "The Last Dropout-Stop the Epidemic," spoke to the Board. He explained how his personal experiences influence the work that he now does. As a result of classroom behavior he was kicked out of school. Through the people he met, and the

experiences he had during this time of his life, he knew that he wanted to make a difference in kids' lives. He formed Street Academies, a program for troubled students, which is designed to help youth to reconnect to the educational system, stay in school, and achieve good grades.

3. Hispanic Observance- Dr. Juan Andrade, head of the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, presented "A Summary of Latino Political Demographics." As the Hispanic population continues to grow, they will impact all demographics, particularly local and national politics.
4. NEA's staff choir presented a beautiful medley of holiday songs to get us all in the mood for the upcoming holiday season.

The next meeting of the NEA Board of Directors is scheduled for February 8 and 9, 2008, at NEA Headquarters in Washington, DC.

NEA Director's Additional Activities

1. January 16, 2008- Both NEA Directors, Ken Buhrmann and Tom Wellman, were able to travel to Washington, DC, to attend the House hearing on the repeal of WEP and GPO. While there the NEA Directors were able to spend time on Capitol Hill delivering information and lobbying our delegation for their continuing support of the repeal of this bill.