

## NEA Board of Directors Report – Judy Rohde November 11, 2024

On September 25-29, 2024 the NEA Board of Directors met in Washington DC. Highlights of the meeting:

### Lobbying on The Hill

The five topics we lobbied our Senators and Congress people on were:

- **Repeal Social Security's Unfair Government Pension Offset(GPO) & Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).** The GPO/WPE deprive more than 2.8 million educators and other dedicated public servants of Social Security benefits they have earned.  
**Good news** – The *Social Security Fairness Act* has 217 signatures to bring this bill to the floor for a vote after the elections break.
- Urge our Congress persons to support the Senate's appropriation funding levels in the final FY 2025 education funding bill.
- Ask our Congress people to co-sponsor Ethan's law (S. 173/HR 660) to require safe storage of firearms.
- Encourage our senators to bring to the floor as many judicial nominees as possible for a vote and confirm them before this session ends.
- Ask our Senators to support the nomination of President Biden's nomination of Suzanne Summerlin as General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

UPDATE: Last year we lobbied for S.1723/HR 7227, the *Truth Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies*. Since then, the bills passed the Senate and House Committees. It was highlighted in the *Washington Post*. The Catholic Bishop conference issued an apology over past actions.

### REPORTS

#### **President Becky Pringle**

1. Becky shared the work NEA is doing across the US to secure a pro-public education environment.
  - Battleground States feel favorable about support for pro-education candidates.
  - VP Harris has erased deficits in key demographics in election polls
  - Momentum is on Harris/Walz side.
  - NEA had a vibrant presence at the DNC
2. NEA continues the fight to Repeal GPO/WEP.
3. NEA will continue to push for policies on Loan Forgiveness.
4. NEA will maintain its Priorities for 24-25:
  - Build a movement to protect, promote and strengthen public education.
  - Advance respect, excellence and support for all educators
  - Advance learning success and well-being of all students.
  - Organize for power: Recruit, retain, engage, empower and mobilize our members
  - Secure and support a pro-public education environment.

#### **General Counsel Alice O'Brien**

Alice gave an update on legal issues. Twelve states have universal voucher programs. Four states have ballot issues this fall. Other legal victories include:

- The Oregon Employment Relations Board dismissed a multi-million dollar class action challenge to the Portland Teachers strike
- The KY injunction against payroll deduction ban continues to hold.
- NY Teacher tenure law was upheld after more than 10 years of litigation
- We had "wins" in NH, FL and AK cases that challenged curriculum restrictions.

- Several NEA members won lawsuits and kept their teaching licenses

### **Secretary Treasurer Report Noel Candelaria**

Noel gave a report and update on the Strategic Budget and Planning. NEA had 2,847,170 members for 2023. Our projected membership for this year is 2,833,800. We are working to erase the deficit from declining membership. Retired member for 2023 was 323,100. The projected membership for 2024 is 321,000.

*It was moved to transfer \$255,625 from the contingency fund to pay for the NBIs adopted on September 28, 2024.*  
The motion passed.

### **Vice President Princess Moss**

NEA Retired Conference will be March 9-11, 2025, and the Leadership Conference will be March 7-9. Both are in Detroit.

VP Moss shared the information about the NEA programs to build strong local/state association with issue-organizing, electronic dues payment, member organize, and year-round organizing initiatives.

### **Executive Director Kim Anderson's Report**

NEA will be working on issue-organizing across the US. We will work to have people trained in every school district. We will partner with allies to elect pro-education candidates. Governor Walz showed the importance of providing meals for all our students. Our members are speaking out to their elected representatives. Some of our successes were:

- Securing Record Student Debt Relief
- ESP Bill of Rights Introduced in Congress
- Honesty in Education Elevated
- Social and Racial Justice Initiatives
- Stopped 30 percent cut to federal education funding and 80 percent cut to Title I, ultimately securing small, targeted increases instead
- Partnered with USDA to expand school meals resulting in USDA announced Community Eligibility Provision expanding school meals to 5M more students!

*NEA Read Across America* reaches over 7.6 families across all demographics. NEA pushes for schools' health and safety needs. NEA pushes to not only prevent gun violence but also to reach out to those affected by gun violence. We are growing community schools across the US. NEA is promoting greater respect to our educators. NEA have members share their products and curricula with other members. NEA has grant money to implement positive AI programs in our schools. New member recruitment was up by 17% last year, however, we have losses due to legislative roadblocks. NEA continues its "Join Now" program for recruiting members. NEA is beating back vouchers in several states. More vouchers are on the ballot this November.

### **Public Schools Strong Campaign**

A panel discussion was held to highlight NEA work in locals across the US on building strong local associations. Two of the six panelists were from Ed MN: **Catina Taylor, Minneapolis ESP President and Marsha Howard, Minneapolis MFT President.** In Minnesota, the ESP chapter had membership increase from 47% to over 70% in the local. They also improved the solidarity among members for salaries increases across job categories. After a strike, they got a \$10,000 pay raise, while building community coalition. They also regained previous contract takebacks and unemployment insurance for ESP employees. In Minnesota, the certified units got better mental health services for students. Leaders pushed for site leaders taking charge. They worked with coalitions so that contracts had synchronized expiration dates.

### **Finishing the RA Business**

Since the 2024 NEA RA was ended after one day due to the staff strike, the NEA Board of Directors had the responsibility to finish the Association's work. This included discussion and voting on 115 NBIs (New Business Items); 25 proposed amendments to the NEA Resolutions and 18 proposed amendments to the NEA Legislation Program. Please contact Judy if you want copies of any of this : [judyrohde@gmail.com](mailto:judyrohde@gmail.com) .

## **SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS AND OBSERVANCES**

**American Indian/Alaska Native Observance: Deborah Parker, The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition** spoke of her advocacy for restoring and correcting the atrocities that happened to the children of the Indian Board Schools across our nation. The residual impact of those crimes still resonate among indigenous cultures, even today.

**Hispanic Observance: Juan Proano, CEO of League of United Latin American Citizens** shared the work that LULAC is performing across the US. Their history dates back to the 1920s, and they had numerous judicial victories in securing equal rights for Hispanic/Latino persons in education and the workforce. They raised money for families affected by violence in their communities. LULAC helped secure integrated schools across this nation.

**ESP of the Year: Jennifer Bramson, ESP in Utah**, was recognized at the meeting. She shared her story of union involvement, political action and building support for the ESP profession across her State.

## **A message from Becky and Kim after Tuesday's Election 11/6/24**

We want to begin by saying thank you for the incredible effort we waged for our students, for educators, for public education, for freedom, for democracy, and for our future. ...

*Below is a summary from Tuesday's election received by email on Wednesday (11/6)*

**President** | Donald Trump has defeated Kamala Harris. So far, Trump has carried all of the battleground states. Michigan, Nevada, and Arizona haven't been officially called, but he has leads in all three that are unlikely to change. As it stands now, Trump has 277 Electoral College votes to Harris's 224. He is also currently leading the popular vote 51% to 47.5%.

**Congress** | Republicans have claimed the majority in the U.S. Senate, flipping at least 3 seats. Three seats are currently too close to call. Republicans are poised to maintain a majority in the U.S. House, though it may take a few days or longer for the final results.

NEA members Jahana Hayes and Greg Landsman were both reelected.

**State Ballot Measures** | The ballot measure results are a bright spot in an otherwise extremely disappointing election.

We defeated vouchers in Kentucky (65%-35%), winning all 120 counties. We repealed vouchers in Nebraska (57%-34%), carrying 82 out of 93 counties. We blocked vouchers in Colorado, by a 52% to 48% margin.

We reformed high-stakes testing in Massachusetts by a margin of 59% to 41%.

In North Dakota, we helped defeat the proposed elimination of property taxes, 63% to 37%.

And in Washington, we defeated the proposed repeal of the capital gains tax by a current margin of 63% to 37%.

**Statewide Races** | In North Carolina, our ally Josh Stein handily defeated Mark Robinson (54.8%-40.2%), democrat Jeff Jackson defeated Dan Bishop for Attorney General, and NEA-recommended candidate Mo Green defeated far-right extremist Michele Morrow for state superintendent, by a close margin of 51% to 49%.

**Social Media** can be a healing place at moments like this. Please like and share [Becky's tweet on X](#) (Twitter), our [message on Facebook](#), and [this carousel on Instagram](#).