

NEA Responds to Draft of Changes to NCLB/ESEA

The NEA has filed a letter responding to the U.S. House Education Committee's reauthorization draft of Titles II-XI of NCLB/ESEA, expressing opposition to the proposed provisions regarding "performance pay" based on student test scores. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) renamed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, established laudable goals – high standards and accountability for the learning of all children. However, the law must be fundamentally improved and federal lawmakers need to provide adequate funding if NCLB is to achieve its goal. Congress is reconsidering the legislation in 2007, offering an opportunity to make it more workable and more responsive to the real needs of children. NEA is in the forefront of the effort to improve the NCLB Act. NEA has developed a comprehensive Positive Agenda for the ESEA Reauthorization that spells out detailed recommendations to make the law better. NEA will focus on three priority areas in working with Congress as it considers the reauthorization of NCLB/ESEA:

- Use more than test scores to measure student learning and school performance.
- Reduce class size to help students learn.
- Increase the number of highly qualified teachers in our schools.

NEA believes the changes made so far are steps in the right direction, but more significant changes are needed in order to make the law workable and effective. NEA hopes that you will join in this effort by urging your elected representatives in Congress to support legislative proposals that will improve NCLB. (Participate in "Lobby Day at Home" to help.)

Announcing OEA Educator "Statewide Lobby Day at Home" December 11, 2007

It appears from the current information that the Ohio Legislature will be in recess on December 11. Therefore, our previously scheduled Lobby Day in Columbus for December 11, 2007 is **cancelled**. However, a number of important issues remain and will be held over for Legislative consideration and action beginning in January 2008. For these reasons, we ask everyone who planned to participate on Lobby Day and their colleagues to contact their House and Senate legislators on the key issues below.

We are asking you to:

- Mark December 11, 2007 as a "Statewide Lobby Day at Home"
- Contact your Ohio Senator and Representative to make an appointment at least 10 days in advance
- Meet face to face with your representatives to discuss the issues
- Provide OEA with feedback after contact has been made

Here's a list of the current issues in play as the recess begins:

CURRENT ISSUES:

- STRS Health Care Legislation House Bill 315 - This legislation would create a dedicated revenue stream for funding health care benefits for current and future STRS retirees. The bill would increase contributions for employees and employers by 2.5% of salary, phased in over five years. This legislation is supported by the Health Care Advocates for STRS, a coalition of employee, employer and retiree groups. Currently, school boards and their lobbyists are strongly opposing the passage of House Bill 315. We need to communicate to our legislators at home the need for this dedicated revenue stream to maintain health care benefits for our STRS retirees and future retirees.
- House Bill 347 Eliminates Praxis III; introduced by Arlene Setzer (R Vandalia) - This bill will eliminate the Praxis III statewide performance assessment of classroom instruction system and replace it with assessment systems developed by each individual school district.

On the national scene, we need to continue to raise our interest in the reauthorization of the NCLB/ESEA Act and the repeal of the Social Security Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

- ESEA reauthorization has been slowed down and will not likely surface until January 2008. However, we must keep our Congressional representatives aware of our concerns.
- The Social Security issues GPO/WEP also will not receive a second committee hearing until after January 2008. It is necessary to talk with your congresspersons to let them know that **we are not double-dipping** but want to be treated as equals just as other private sector workers. *All we want is what we have rightfully earned in social security benefits.* To address the federal issues with your congressperson you may e-mail them at their Congressional website.

Talking points on all of these issues can be found on the OEA website.

Our strong showing of collective power can determine the outcome of critical legislation.

There is no need to pre-register for this activity. Please send an e-mail summary after your contact with legislators to govtsrv@ohea.org. If you have any questions, please contact the OEA Governmental Services Division at 1-800-282-1500 ext. 3170. **Thank you for your efforts in this important activity.**