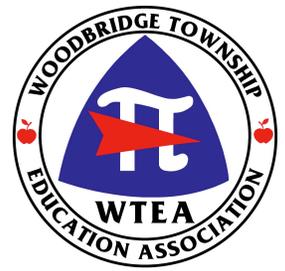


ADVOCATE



Legislative Update

The WTEA has been working intensively throughout the spring and summer on a member-to-member campaign, focused on passing a constitutional amendment to secure funding of our members' pensions. Unfortunately, that initiative was derailed by Senate President Steve Sweeney, who refused to allow the final vote needed for the amendment to appear on the ballot this November.

As a result, it would not be surprising for members to be angry, discouraged, and disheartened by Senator Sweeney's failure to get the constitutional amendment on the ballot in November, given all our members have endured throughout the last seven years of the Christie administration. Attacks on pensions, health benefits, and collective bargaining have negatively impacted every single member. Not to mention the educational reforms that continue to threaten our job security while placing a greater emphasis on standardized testing.

So what can members do about it? First of all, we must recognize the power we have as a collective group. The strength of NJEA, as well as WTEA, comes from our membership. When we unite together around a common goal, we have the ability to bring about change.

Next, we must use that power to support and elect candidates that will protect our interests – candidates that support public employees and public education; candidates

that will fund our pension and ensure the state fulfills its financial and contractual obligations; candidates that will protect the sanctity of collective bargaining; candidates that understand that student achievement is more than a test score.

This will not be an easy task. We know that many members do not want to get involved in politics or elections. However, there is no alternative. If you want to take back your paycheck, you must get involved. If you want to protect your pension, you must get involved. If you believe that student achievement is more than a test score, you must get involved.

Over the next two months we will be emphasizing the importance of this November's election and providing you with information about endorsed candidates at the national, state, and local level. It is critical that we unite behind these endorsed candidates. Collectively, we can make a difference in these elections. Make no mistake; all of these elections will have consequences.

As public school employees, each new school year brings a fresh start and a sense of renewed energy. Let's work together and use that energy to elect the right candidates.

Brian Geoffroy, President

September 1, 2016