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Your Lawmakers Are Waiting to Hear From You!

The NSEA Lobby Team in Carson City is requesting that you contact your legislators and urge your colleagues to do the same. Lawmakers are discussing educator salaries and it is imperative they hear from you. Urge them to OPPOSE pay cuts!

Tell your lawmakers that it is important for everyone to come to the table and share the burden to help this state continue to offer the services the taxpayers need and require. Ask them to include all sectors—businesses, state government, local government, etc. [Click here](#) and use the simple steps to contact your legislators.

Please Contact Your Members of Congress on Two Important Federal Issues

Congress has adjourned for a two-week recess that will last from April 6-17 and Members are home in the state and in their districts. The recess offers an important opportunity to reach out to them about two important issues that need immediate action: the FY2010 budget and pension reform.

Issue #1 BUDGET

Last week, both the House and Senate passed slightly different versions of the FY2010 Congressional Budget Resolution. NEA supported both bills, as they build on the historic increases for education included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, from early childhood through post-secondary education and training. However, the House version provides a higher overall funding level for domestic spending and also includes language that would pave the way for early action on important health care reform. Therefore, NEA will be urging conferees (once named) to accept the House version.

The House passed its budget by a vote of 233-196. No Republicans voted for the budget. Twenty Democrats voted against it: Representatives Barrow (GA), Boren (OK), Bright (AL), Childers (MS), Donnelly (IN), Foster (IL), Griffith (AL), Kosmas (FL), Kratovil (MD), Kucinich (OH), Markey (CO), Marshall (GA), Matheson (UT), McIntyre (NC), Minnick (ID), Mitchell (AZ), Nye (VA), Perriello (VA), Taylor (MS), and Teague (NM). Many of the Democrats who voted against the budget are first term Members of Congress and members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Democrats.

The Senate budget passed by a vote of 55-43, with all Republicans and two Democrats – Senators Bayh (IN) and Nelson (NE) – voting in opposition.

Action needed: Contact Members of Congress during the recess and urge them to support the House version of the Congressional Budget Resolution. Also, thank Members who voted for the initial House and Senate versions and express disappointment to those who voted in opposition.

Talking Points:

- Please support a final FY2010 Congressional Budget Resolution that provides the higher funding levels for domestic priorities included in the House-passed bill as well as language that paves the way for action on health care reform.
- Investing in education strengthens the economy – including early childhood programs and K-12 education as well as programs to make college more affordable.
- The House budget builds on the historic increases for education included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- And, it helps more students attend and complete college by increasing the maximum Pell Grant.
- The House budget supports efforts to reform health care so that everyone has access to quality, affordable and comprehensive coverage.

Go to <http://www.nea.org/home/LegislativeActionCenter.html> to take action today!

Issue #2

PENSION REFORM

NEA is working aggressively to secure legislation that would address the dire financial impact of the Pension Protection Act (PPA) on employer-sponsored defined benefit pension plans. NEA and its pension counsel Doug Greenfield of Bredhoff and Kaiser have compiled information outlining the devastating impact of the PPA rules on NEA affiliates, and have put together a proposal to address the immediate issue – the Separate Liability Funding Solution. Under this proposal beginning with the 2008 plan year, sponsors of defined benefit pension plans – regardless of whether such plans are single employer or multiemployer plans – would be permitted to split their funding obligation into two separate portions.

Action Needed: Contact Members of Congress during the recess and urge them to support immediate action to address the pension crisis.

Talking Points:

- The private employer-sponsored defined benefit pension plan system is in crisis. Economic turmoil and market instability are creating enormous volatility in defined benefit pension plan asset values.
- The current crisis will have severe negative effects on private pension plans, reducing benefits, undermining retirement security, and, if prompt action is not taken, causing significant job loss and impairing the economic recovery.
- The Separate Liability Funding Solution does not promote the underfunding of pension plans. Employers will be obligated to make greater contributions for the 2008 and 2009 plan years than they did for prior plan years.
- Most sponsors of pension plans are solid, responsible employers that can afford to fund their plans under normal conditions. Extraordinary, once-every-other-generation, market conditions should not be permitted to wipe out pensions and seriously damage the financial health of employers.
- Small service sector employers – such as NEA affiliates – who sponsor defined benefit pension plans will be severely damaged financially if they are not provided a longer period to fund the extraordinary, short-term investment losses.
- The Separate Liability Funding Solution is simple, understandable, and fair.

Go to <http://www.nea.org/home/LegislativeActionCenter.html> to take action today!

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