

NEA-NM Retired

Report on the NEA Retired Annual Meeting and the...

The NEA Retired Annual Meeting convened on June 27 in St. Paul, Minn. under the able, first-year leadership of President Sarah Borgman from Indiana. NM Retired delegates, Mary Lou Cameron and Eduardo Holguin, were joined by NM guests, Lucille Martinez-Holguin (NEA pre-retired) and Eloy Gonzales (NEA-NM Retired) where another 500 attendees participated in the two day conference. Delegates deliberated over new business items, heard reports, voted in internal elections, raised money for the NEA Fund, and celebrated NEA Retired's 35th birthday replete with birthday cake and serenaded by NEA President Lily Eskelsen-Garcia.

Here are some meeting highlights:

MEMBERSHIP

NEA Retired continues to grow coming in well over 315,000; more than 10% of NEA's total membership.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Three \$2000 scholarships were presented to aspiring educators enrolled in teacher preparation colleges. Funds are voluntary contributions collected from Retired state affiliates during the year and at this meeting.

GPO/WEP

Congress continues to move at a snail's pace on most things including any possible solutions to these two issues which lessen retirement benefits for many retirees. The best option (Senate 915/House 1205) would eliminate both and is too expensive. The other option (House 711) would benefit a few retirees while switching the burden to many more retirees.

THE FUND

NEA Retired again came through raising over \$30,000 in 2 days.

JANUS and KENNEDY

The widely anticipated, yet still appalling announcement of Janus decision left the room seeking information and direction. NEA Legal Counsel, Alice O'Brian, and NEA Senior staff member, Mary Kusler, both spoke about NEA's years-long preparation for this outcome. It's cut 111 staff, trimmed all departments, and is shortening or eliminating meetings as it prepares to stave off concerted attacks (already started in NM) against our membership by Far Right groups funding drop campaigns against us. **(NOTE: One of the effects will be an increase in NEA Retired dues in the 2019-2020 membership year. Now is the time to lock in the lower dues amount by having your friends and colleagues join NEA/NEA-NM Retired Life and never worry about dues hikes again.)**

NEA only has 88,000 fair share fee payers that were directly affected by the decision. Our focus needs to be in keeping those members who by phone, email, or letters will be encouraged to drop their membership. All this is happening at the same time we want to strengthen and widen our Red For Ed campaign which has shown the power of educators' voices.

Then the other shoe dropped...Justice Kennedy resigned which signals the distinct possibility of losing more workers' rights, womens' rights, voters' rights, and civil liberties just as we began the

...NEA RA

The first day of our caucus meeting coincided with the Minneapolis version of the national marches to reunite immigrant families. Many of the 7500 delegates and family members participated in the 20,000+

throng that marched in the sweltering heat and was widely covered on national news as one of the largest nationwide.

Twenty-seven NM delegates started their days at 7 am meetings and ended their days at 6 pm. They deliberated 129 new business items, adopted a Community Schools policy statement, added a resolution on racism, voted on internal elections, celebrated the National Teacher of the Year along with NEA's ESP of the Year and the first-ever Higher Education Member of the Year. They also resoundingly recognized our RED For ED states which took their frustrations to the public, to the streets, and to their state capitols...(and won), and delegates also prepared for making NEA a leaner, meaner, more agile union. Here are a few highlights:

CREDENTIALS

6,178 delegates; 2003 ethnic minority delegates = 32%;

31 states met Bylaw 3.1g goal for ethnic minority representation including NM!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Over 3 million members

Clean audit report

Strong financial position entering these unsettled times:

Current ratio is 7.8/1 means NEA has \$7.80 in assets for every \$1.00 in liabilities

2/1 ratio is considered to be good.

2 YEAR BUDGET

Projecting \$28M loss in revenue in first year due to membership losses caused by Janus

Has cut \$33M from budget.

Will allocate those extra \$5M in investing in states/locals and in growing and strengthening our union.

THE FUND

Delegates spoke with their voices and their wallets by raising \$1.5M for the NEA Fund going into the November elections. NM delegates, once again, answered the call by raising over \$410/delegate and placing 5th in the Per Delegate Average category.(Federal Education Association- members who teach across the globe in government schools- came in first averaging over \$800/delegate!)

OBSERVATION

President Lily Eskelsen-Garcia ran an effective and efficient meeting and had certain measures passed that could lead to lopping off a day from the RA schedule, saving money for NEA, states, locals, and delegates.

"The times they are a changin'" and so must the NEA in order to meet its mission and goals for our members and our students. What doesn't change is OUR commitment to public education, human/civil rights and our union.

Next Year: Houston

Please forward this to other NEA-NM Retired members you know and also see this and other reports on the NEA-NM Retired page at www.nea-nm.org

Respectfully submitted by

Eduardo Holguin

NEA-NM Board representing Retired