

The Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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Governor's message to Ohioans

Gov. Kasich didn't say much about the massive battle being waged at the Statehouse over collective bargaining rights.

Despite the protests that have been almost continuous since discussion began on Senate Bill 5, our new state chief, delivering his State of the State address on Tuesday, talked mainly, in rambling and unscripted fashion, about his personal agenda to "save the state" by repairing the budget and creating jobs.

Kasich made only one reference to the rapidly advancing effort to dismantle collective bargaining laws. He said bargaining reforms in the public sector will help the state control costs and allow cities to "share things" more easily.

The Ohio Education Association issued a carefully worded statement after Kasich's address, agreeing with the need to examine the state's budget and expressing a willingness to work with him in the effort—but emphasizing that education is an important aspect of Ohio's ability to grow.

"For our state to remain strong and become stronger, Ohio will need to invest in high quality public education that develops an educated workforce to help grow our economy," said OEA President Patricia Frost-Brooks.

Kasich's speech was much-anticipated. He has built a reputation as a maverick who plans to keep his focus on reforming Ohio's budgetary processes, no matter what roadblocks are forced into his path.

In his speech, he did little to shed light on how he plans to do this, except to point out that Ohio's taxes are too high and business costs have soared, limiting our state's ability to attract jobs; and that sectors such as prisons, health care, agriculture and education need to continue their work streamlining expenditures, reforming processes and expanding options.

He called for more school choice and instruction leading to marketable skills.

"Got a report, 63,000 unfilled jobs in Ohio," he said. "You meet with these CEOs and they say, we don't have the workers. We don't have the skills."

He also said: "Education, K-12 and post-secondary, of course it's critical to our economic future. But I want to tell you, more choice, more accountability, more dollars in the classroom instead of bureaucracy, will improve our schools."

He referenced the documentary film, *Waiting For "Superman,"* and decried school lottery systems that exclude many students who want access to different kinds of programs. "Shame on us," he said. "It's unacceptable. You deny a kid an education, a secure education, you're killing their future."

Only a few months after taking office, Kasich has ignited incendiary debate.

CEA, along with OEA, has been making our voice heard in the debate over changes to collective bargaining.

Last week, the Ohio Senate narrowly approved reforms to the bargaining process that, if echoed by the House,

would force firefighters, police officers—and teachers—to cede control of wages, benefits and workplace conditions to the cities and school districts where they work.

Such efforts are sweeping the nation. This week in Wisconsin, 7,000 protestors stormed their statehouse in response to legislation strikingly similar to Ohio's. The measure restricts the limits beyond which most government workers may collectively bargaining for wage increases and requires public workers to pay more toward their pensions and health insurance.

S.B. 5: Next steps

At the time this edition of *The Voice* went to press, S.B. 5 was undergoing consideration in the Ohio House. House Speaker Bill Batchelder replaced two Republican committee



members on the House Insurance and Commerce Committee, ostensibly paving the way for an easy passage to the House floor. Proponent testimony had occurred in the committee on Mar. 9, and CEA members Karen Andermills (Oakmont ES) and Greg Mild (Northgate Ctr.) were scheduled to deliver opposition testimony on Mar. 10. Published reports indicate hearings on S.B. 5 could conclude this week and go to the House floor for a vote.

If S.B. 5 is voted to the House floor, Ohio Representatives could make additional amendments to the legislation prior to a vote. If amendments are made and S.B. 5 is voted out of the House, a temporary Conference Committee made up of members from both chambers will convene. The Conference Committee will merge both versions of S.B. 5, and the Ohio House and Senate will then vote on the merged bill.

If both chambers vote to send the bill to Gov. Kasich, he can sign it into law or veto it. If he signs it, as we expect him to do, S.B. 5 would take effect after 90 days.

But the fight is not over. We are making plans now to take the issue of collective bargaining to Ohio voters in the November General Election. To start the process of getting S.B. 5 off the books, a "down payment" of 1,000 registered voters' signatures with the proposed changes to the law must be submitted to the Ohio Ballot Board. Following the board's approval, approximately 231,000 signatures of registered voters throughout the state must be gathered before the end of the 90-day period following Gov. Kasich's signature. If enough signatures are gathered, S.B.5 would be put on hold until the November General Election. The voters will then decide the future of collective bargaining.

Celebrate women's contributions

March is National Women's History Month. This year's theme is "Our History is Our Strength." Unions are a big part of this history. For more than 100 years, women have been asserting their right to safe and equitable working conditions—progress we stand to reverse if S.B. 5 becomes law.



Consider these benchmarks:

- On Mar. 8, 1857, textile and garment workers in NYC demonstrated against low wages and 12-hour workdays. An Army unit fired on the women, but they stood fast.
- In 1863, women in Troy, N.Y., organized the Collar Laundry Union. They went on strike; and, as a result, won an increase in wages. In 1866, their strike fund was used to aid the Iron Molders Union, building a lasting relationship with that men's union.
- The first two national unions to admit women were the Cigarmakers (1867) and the Printers (1869).
- Suffragist Susan B. Anthony used her paper, *The Revolution*, to help working women organize in their own interests. One such organization formed in 1868 and became known as the Working Women's Association.
- In the 1890's, Margaret Haley and Catherine Goggin of the Chicago Federation of Teachers rallied their peers (and the city government) for improved pay, retirement benefits and tenure. They laid the foundation for the American Federation of Teachers.
- In New York, Grace Strachan and the Interborough Association of Women Teachers fought for Equal Pay for Equal Work.
- This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire that killed 146 women who either died of smoke inhalation or jumped to their deaths because they could not escape the rooms where they worked. This tragic event led to workplace safety reforms.

Take some time to remember the sacrifice—by women—that led to your job protections. Teach your students about the power of human determination. For more information, visit these sites:

- National Women's History Project: www.nwhp.org/
- Library of Congress Women's History Resources: www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/237_path.html
- U.S. Women's History Workshop: www.assumption.edu/whw/
- International Women's Day and Women's History Month: www.nea.org/international/intlwomen.html#challenges

Bargaining update

The CEA Bargaining Team will meet with the members of the Board's team on Saturday, Mar. 26. Both teams will be trained by a mediator on how to write bargaining proposals. Following the training, the bargaining team will formulate proposals based on the bargaining priorities package voted on by the Legislative Assembly on Mar. 3. Members of CEA's and the Board's team will meet in April to exchange proposals.

As in past years, CEA and the Board will utilize the Enhanced Conventional Bargaining (ECB) model. Under the ECB model, both teams present their bargaining issues to the other side. Each side is allowed to ask questions that help them to better understand the other side's issues. After this meeting, both sides present their interests on the other side's issues.

CEA will continue to update you on bargaining activities as they occur.

TBS: Make your voice heard

Now more than ever, we need friends among our elected officials. Fortunately, we have a well-respected and powerful tool: TBS (Teachers for Better Schools).

TBS is our political-action arm, a separate entity from CEA developed to keep its eye on the political arena. It raises money for political candidates, levy and bond campaigns and other ballot issues affecting Columbus teachers and the school community. It carefully studies the issues and informs all of us about the voting behavior and stated positions of our elected officials.

At election time, it screens candidates for various offices and makes endorsement recommendations to the CEA Board of Governors and the CEA Legislative Assembly.

Like it or not, it is elected leaders who decide our fate. Senate Bill 5 will weaken the voice of educators and weaken our participation in the political process. Now more than ever, it is important to raise funds, support TBS and get out the vote.

CEA does not use dues money to promote individual candidates or issues. Instead, we ask you to donate to TBS. To join TBS, ask your faculty representative for a TBS membership form or download a form from the CEA website at <http://bit.ly/fWiKPY>. Sign up now. This is something that teachers can do now to fight for our future and the future of public education and collective bargaining.

Special notes

- ❑ **Senior FRs** must submit requests for **alternative interview panels** to the CEA President **prior to interviewing** by fax (253-0465). These are the buildings/units that have been approved since the last edition of *The Voice*: **Buckeye MS, Colerain ES, CAEC, Columbus Global Academy, Dana ES, Nurses, Oakmont ES, Shepard Ctr., West HS, Westgate ES and Westmoor MS.**
- ❑ The **CEA Travel Group** is offering a fabulous trip to **Spain and Portugal** from **June 10–21**. See Madrid, Toledo, Avila, Salamanca, the Shrine of Fatima, Coimbra and Lisbon and many other nearby sights. The cost for the trip is **\$3,532, airfare included**. A **deposit of \$500** is due by **Tuesday, Mar. 15**, to Marty Adler, Bexley Travel, 2940 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43209. Only 12 spaces remain available. Call Carol, Rick or Ezetta at CEA (253-4731) for more information.
- ❑ Some CEA members may be able to deduct a portion of their **union dues** on their **income tax returns**. If you are a **full-time employee** and are on **Pay Plan A** (21 Pays), you can deduct **\$774.96**. If you are on **Plan B** (26 Pays), the amount is **\$774.07**. If you have **switched from Plan A to B**, the amount is **\$720.18** and if you **moved from Plan B to A**, **\$828.85**. **Half-time employees** on **Plan A** (21 Pays) can deduct **\$436.46** and **Plan B** (26 Pays) would allow a **\$436.46** deduction.