

The Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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We are one. We are everywhere.

Today, Apr. 4, on the job, in our schools and in our communities, we will remind our elected officials that workers' rights are human rights and those rights will not be destroyed.

Today is the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was shot while working to gain collective bargaining rights for sanitation workers in Memphis.

Today labor unions, civil rights organizations and religious leaders will stand together across this country for the same human rights and human dignity for working men and women. We will remember the courage and determination of Dr. King and those workers who endured assault and arrest as they walked a picket line for two months.

We will stand together as one with public workers across this country whose bargaining rights are under attack, with private workers who can't get bargaining rights and against those politicians and their allies who want to silence our political voice.

The effort cannot and does not stop after today. There is plenty you can do to keep the fight alive. Suggestions are posted at <http://we-r-1.org/>. Get involved!



your ballot. You will need your PIN number.

3. Online: Go to the web address included with your ballot. You will need your PIN number.

Turning the clock back three decades

When this issue of *The Voice* went to press, Senate Bill 5 was on its way to the governor to sign into law, scratching out many of the gains unions have made over 27 years of struggle.

Following four hours of debate, the Ohio House voted 53–44 to approve the bill. The Senate then agreed with the House, once again voting 17–16 for passage.

OEA President Patricia Frost-Brooks commented: “Combined with this state budget proposal, S.B. 5 will lead to an ongoing crisis in schools and public services for every Ohio community. We believe the people of Ohio will reject S.B. 5 through a citizens’ referendum.

“We do not believe the people of Ohio elected leaders with a mandate to cut school funding, take away collective bargaining rights and privatize public schools, but that is the sum effect of the legislation now moving so quickly through the Ohio General Assembly.”

The bill eliminates automatic longevity pay increases in favor of a merit pay system for all public workers. It stipulates that seniority cannot be the chief criterion for determining layoffs.

The bill also:

- Requires public workers to pay at least 15 percent of health insurance costs
- Limits the issues that may be bargained
- Bans payroll deductions supporting most political action committees
- Prohibits a bargaining unit from requiring fair share fees as a condition of employment
- Removes provisions defining employee picketing and “direct dealings” by public employees with employers during labor negotiations as unfair labor practices
- Prohibits the compensation of a supervisor being automatically tied to the compensation negotiated for bargaining unit members
- Requires the State Board of Education to develop a performance-pay system for teachers
- Removes jail time and/or fines for contempt-of-court orders enjoining strikes
- Allows specified entities to file a petition for decertification with SERB based on at least 30 percent support of employees in bargaining unit.

The Columbus Dispatch quoted many of the legislators who fought this bill including Sen. Bill Seitz, R-Cincinnati, one of six Senate Republicans who voted no. “This is a fundamentally rigged process.”

Rep. Matt Szollosi, D-Oregon: “These are not numbers

Get out the vote for Hayden

Ballots for the STRS Board election will be mailed in early April. OEA and OFT both have endorsed CCS teacher Taiyia “Tai” Hayden for the STRS Board. Let’s help her get elected.

Why is this election important? For Ohio’s teachers, the benefits provided by STRS represent our economic security in retirement. Yet we continue to see political attacks aimed at the pension benefits of public employees—benefits we work for and pay towards throughout our careers serving Ohio’s students.

Why Tai Hayden? As a member of the STRS Board, Hayden has taken a balanced approach. She shares our view that employees, retirees and employers must all play a role in improving the long-term solvency of the pension system. In January, she voted against a plan to shift even greater cuts onto active teachers. Furthermore, Tai has the training, experience and compassion that makes her an ideal candidate for this very important role.

Voting begins as soon as ballots are mailed and closes May 2. Members will have three voting options:

1. Mail: Fill out the ballot and return it in the postage-paid envelope.
2. Phone: Call the toll-free number included with



Taiyia “Tai” Hayden

on a page or lines on a graph, they are people with families...and they do not deserve to be slapped in the face and put further into harm's way because liberty groups or tea party groups or whoever is pulling the Republican strings right now have demonized public workers."

The Cincinnati Enquirer opined that any overhaul of collective bargaining should have been conducted in a more balanced and reasoned manner, stating: "...this process is tainting an overhaul of public employment practices that is eminently worthwhile and necessary—in fact, long overdue—but should be done in a more reasoned, collaborative manner. The process should produce at least a credible level of buy-in..."

"It is shameful that Ohio Republicans pushed the S.B. 5 collective bargaining bill through the Senate on Wednesday using the sort of tactics that congressional Democrats were justly criticized for using during the health-care reform debate."

OEA and other public employee associations denounced the amended version that was approved. It contains thousands of pages of new budget language, including more than 10 percent in cuts to both public schools and state colleges.

Frost-Brooks said: "Nothing is more essential than creating jobs and providing high-quality educational opportunities for children. But our legislators are ignoring and short-changing these essential functions of state and local government and schools."

OEA Vice President Bill Leibensperger said: "These amendments really shine the light on what this bill is all about, which is silencing the voice of people who collectively bargain on behalf of their members and, in our case, on behalf of the children we work with."

Know your Governor

The CEA Constitution and Bylaws designate the Board of Governors (BOG) as the Association's executive arm. This week's *Voice* features Bonita Agnew, Governor of District 11. Bonita is an art teacher at Parsons ES and Ft. Hayes Arts and Academic HS. She has been involved in various CEA committees and is currently a member of the Reform Panel.

Agnew was the first Governor of District 11, elected to the position in the spring of 2002. Unlike Districts 1 through 9, District 11 is comprised of city-wide units. The CEA members in this district work out of district offices and some work at multiple locations throughout the school system. Units in District 11 include: 17th Ave. Service Center, Art, Gifted & Talented, Hudson St. Warehouse, Kingswood Center, Latchkey, Music, Northgate Center, PAR, Phys. Ed., Pupil Services, Safety & Security and Shepard Center.



Bonita Agnew

Want to fight back? Join TBS

Members are calling the CEA office asking why we are not running ads on TV and radio. The answer is that it is too early. But it also costs millions of dollars. Outsiders already have funneled \$5.6 million to support Senate Bill 5.

You can help us gain headway. You can join Teachers for Better Schools (TBS) so that CEA members can do our part in raising money needed to support a referendum on SB5. TBS is CEA's political-action arm. It's a separate organization that



relies on your voluntary contributions to remain effective. We need all 4,500 members to join.

Thanks to all members who attended a 10-Minute Meeting about TBS and who joined or increased contributions to TBS. If you want to know more about this powerful organization or to find out how you can contribute by payroll deduction, call CEA at 253-4731.

Thanks for putting books in children's hands

The Columbus Education Association's Reach Out and Read book campaign ended on March 11. In these uncertain times, the CEA membership donated more than 2,900 books valued at approximately \$22,500. CEA, Nationwide Children's Hospital and the community applaud you for your generosity.



Special thanks go to Alexa Reck and Barnes & Noble for their continued support of our campaign. We would also like to thank CEA-R for their contributions and Gerry Curran (Independence HS) and the Ancient Order of Hibernians for their \$500 donation to the campaign.

This effort would not have been a success without the support of the CEA officers, staff, Board of Governors and the Faculty Representatives in our buildings. Your help and donations are greatly appreciated.

A very special thank you to the Reach Out and Read Committee Faye Love (Linden STEM Academy), Robin Lucas (Winterset ES) and Vern Miller (Yorktown MS) for their work on the campaign and assistance with the culminating activity at Africentric Early College ES on Mar. 18.

Congratulations to Cheryl Jackson (Yorktown MS). She is the winner of the NookColor!

Columbus City Schools has the most generous teachers in the country. Our collective efforts will make it possible for the children in our community to start school ready to learn.

Special notes

- ❑ **Voting to elect a CEA Minority Governor At-Large** will end on Monday, Apr. 11. **Tally Day** is Tuesday, Apr. 12.
- ❑ The **Columbus Council on World Affairs** recently named **Mifflin HS teacher Todd Decker International Teacher of the year**. He was chosen because of his role in helping Mifflin HS build a more supportive intercultural environment. He is the first educator from the Columbus City School District to receive this award.
- ❑ The **deadline** for applications for **CEA scholarships for graduating high school seniors** is **Friday, May 6, at 5 p.m.** Two scholarships are available: the **\$1,500 Christa McAuliffe Scholarship** awarded to an education student and the **\$1,000 CEA General Scholarship**. Both are renewable for up to four years but at a reduced level from the first-year award. CEA members can go to <http://bit.ly/eSj3rJ> to download the application form.
- ❑ The **Capital District** is offering **scholarships** to members who are interested in attending the **OEA Leadership Academy** to be held **Monday, Aug. 1–Wednesday, Aug. 3**. If you are interested, go to <http://bit.ly/bmfDgB> to complete a scholarship application form. The **deadline** for submitting the scholarship application form is **Thursday, Apr. 14**.
- ❑ **Senior FRs** must submit requests by fax (253-5052) for **alternative interview panels** to the CEA President **prior to interviewing**. These are the buildings/units that have been approved since the last edition of *The Voice*: **Clinton ES @ Hubbard** and **Indianola K-8**.