

WHAT IS THE 65% SOLUTION?

State Rep. Joe Stengel (Littleton) tried unsuccessfully to get a scam through the '05 Legislature to mandate that 65 cents of every education dollar be spent "in the classroom." Patrick Byrne, CEO of Overstock.com, is leading a national movement to get this on state ballots. Rep. Stengel is collecting signatures to get it on the 2006 Colorado ballot and the Independence Institute has jumped on the bandwagon.

CEA opposes this phony funding gimmick and ask you to "Decline to Sign" when you see the petitions this fall-winter.

Why do we ask you to reject this ballot issue? It's deceptive, divisive, and dishonest.

DECEPTIVE. The proposal is a gimmick promoted by long time, anti-public education individuals and groups, trying to make people think they're improving K-12 funding. They are simply rearranging the education budget without expanding it – re-slicing the K-12 funding pie without making the pie larger.

DIVISIVE. The proponents admit this is a political ploy to pit teachers against other school employees. It will force districts to choose teachers over other employees and the consequence will be layoffs or the privatization of much needed jobs: school nurses, counselors, bus drivers, food service workers, custodians, all of whom help students every day. And it's a one-size-fits-all idea that ignores the differences among urban, suburban, and rural schools. Parents, teachers, and school board members know best how school dollars must be spent, not out-of-state groups and Too Extreme think-tanks that want to put their phony funding measure into the Colorado Constitution.

DISHONEST. This so-called "solution" isn't one at all. It's a public relations scheme promoted by voucher supporters whose stated motive is undermining public education. It hijacks Amendment 23 by taking away districts' decision making authority to spend funds generated by local property taxes. In order to really improve K-12 funding, we need a significant infusion of more money. Rep. Stengel's Phony Funding idea doesn't do it.

PROFESSIONAL PAY

We're Proud to Say 'We're Worth Professional Pay'

As the national voice of more than 2.7 million public education employees, NEA knows that too many educators have been denied professional pay for too long. Attracting and retaining qualified school staff -- K-12 teachers, higher education faculty, and education support professionals (ESPs) -- requires salaries that are competitive with those in comparable professions.

Toward this end, NEA supports a minimum salary of at least \$40,000 for all teachers in our nation's public schools and at least a living wage for every education support professional. NEA also supports higher compensation for higher education faculty and staff.

K-12 public school teachers

Classroom teachers are paid less than those who work in other professions requiring similar education and responsibilities. If you combine the lower pay with the rising demands and pressures of state standards and the federal "No Child Left Behind Act," it's no wonder that more and more teachers are leaving the profession for greener financial pastures.

Teacher turnover is a huge problem. Some 20 percent of new public school teachers leave the profession by the end of the first year, and almost half leave within five years. Pay-related turnover is especially high for minorities, males, and teachers under the age of 30. And the economic reality of teaching means that many who do stay are working second jobs to meet their families' basic needs.

Teachers aren't the only ones affected by inadequate paychecks. Compensation is a teacher quality issue, as surely as other traditional teacher quality issues such as recruitment, teacher preparation, and professional development. Having highly qualified teachers is essential to student success -- but who in the future will be lured into a profession with wages that start low and fail to keep pace with comparable careers?

The bottom line: Professional salaries help attract and retain high quality teachers who help students achieve at higher levels.

WHAT IS THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE AND WHY AM I GETTING EMAILS AND LETTERS FROM THEM?

The Independent Institute is referred to as a “Free Market Think Tank” by many.

If you have opened your home or school email; or received a letter from the Independent Institute, saying nasty and evil things about the Colorado Education Association or the National Education Association, you are not alone.

The Independent Institute is an anti-tax - pro voucher organization based in Golden, Colorado. You will recall that the President of the I.I., Jon Caldara, was one of the leading opponents of Referendum C and D. Now that the election is over Caldara and his so called “Think Tank” have returned to one of their favorite pastimes. Targeting our members.

Their latest ploy is to inform our members of how to revoke their Every Member Option assessment.

The CEA already informs it’s members about the EMO. The information is published in the CEA Journal that is delivered directly to all of it’s members and is also printed on the CEA and NEA Membership & Salary Deduction Authorization form. This edition of the *Ski Country Educator* contains information about the EMO.

So why does the Independent Institute believe they need to do our job of informing our members?

The CEA has been successful in the legislature at defeating the Voucher movement. The CEA was successful in helping to pass Amendment 23 which guaranteed increased funding for public education. The CEA was successful in helping to pass Referendum C, which did away with the TABOR so called ratchet effect for five years.

The Independent Institute figures if they can reduce or do away with our ability to raise money for political action it will seriously effect our ability to fight against vouchers and increasing tax dollars for education.

If you receive an email from the I.I., tell your district to contact the I.I., and kindly ask them to stop spamming their employees. If you receive a home email or a letter, contact the I.I., and ask them to remove you from their mailing list.

HAVE YOU REGISTERED WITH NEA DUES TAB?

If you are a new member, a continuing member, or a retired member of NEA, you are eligible for the NEA Dues-Tab free insurance provided by the **NEA Members Insurance Trust**.

Since 1985 this valuable free coverage has been provided to all members to help them protect their loved ones. Over the last 20 years it has paid out \$27.5 million to members’ families and about \$2 million was paid out last year alone.

Your coverage is guaranteed and will be there for you as long as you remain a member. **Benefit payments range from \$1,000 to \$150,000** depending on the circumstances. NEA Dues-Tab insurance is just one of the ways that the NEA Members Insurance Trust helps make members’ lives better.

To register your beneficiary, call 1-800-637-4636 or visit www.neamb.com/duesstab today.

Public Schools Produce Shining Stars

Taken from “A special Supplement to the Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News - Annual Report 2005-2006 Colorado Public Schools” - Thursday, October 27th, 2005

Among the thousands of outstanding graduates of Colorado public schools, there are internationally know astronauts, authors, actors and athletes. There are doctors and lawyers, bankers and educators...Did you know the following prestigious people attended Colorado public schools?

Chauncey Billups - Detroit Pistons basketball player

Jeremy Bloom - Olympic skier

Don Cheadle - Academy Award nominated actor

Judy Collins - Folk singer

Dr. James Heckman - Nobel Prize, economics

Jack Swigert - Astronaut

Harold Watson - Inventor of moon camera

Wellington Webb - Former Denver Mayor

W. L. Edwards - Naval Officer, engineering professor, Office of Homeland Security, *Graduate of Roaring Fork High School*