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## What every member should know about...

### POLITICAL ACTION

Political action is imperative for two reasons: To elect friends of public education and preK-12 and higher education employees To pass or defeat ballot proposals that affect education and our members

#### Elected Officials

In the selection of candidates for whom we will support we, through locals unions, survey members to determine issues they feel most strongly about and those of the greatest importance to them. This is done in the spring of even numbered years.

Decisions are made based on information about the candidate's background, voting record, public platform and through personal interviews. We also are involved with the decision making process with the state and local AFL-CIO, and AFT in presidential races. As the MFT&SRP makes determinations that are issue based, support may be given to candidates of both major parties.

The final vote to endorse is made by the MFT&SRP Administrative Board. This list of endorsements includes candidates running for U.S. Congress, the Michigan Legislation, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals and education boards.

#### Ballot Proposals

The MFT&SRP is actively involved in ballot proposals that affect our members. For example, in 2000 the state federation and our locals played a major role in defeating public school vouchers. In 2002, we were involved in defeating the proposal to take tobacco settlement money out of public education.

Supporting endorsed candidates and impacting the outcome on ballot proposals involves educating members, mobilizing members to actively support these candidates or initiatives, and raising political action funds.

#### Political Action Committee (PAC)

The MFT&SRP maintains a Political Action Committee (PAC) that collects voluntary contributions from members that are used to support candidates at the state level who support our issues. The AFT raises PAC funds to support candidates at the federal level and makes contributions to Michigan candidates upon the recommendations of the MFT&SRP. Many locals maintain their own PAC, again funded through the generous voluntary contributions of its members. Most often these funds are used to support local candidates that favorable impact their school district, particularly local school board candidates.

Locals usually run a PAC fundraising drive once a year, yet, some prefer to raise funds in both the fall and spring. No regulations restrict how many times a union can collect only how these funds can be collected. Regardless of what union is collecting the contributions the state requires the name and address of each contributor. It is therefore best to make contributions by check, on which the information is printed, or through payroll deduction. Naturally, cash is always accepted but the name and address must accompany it.

Only PAC money can be given in support of candidates. Money collected for the purpose of political action must be kept by the union in a separate account and can not be collected with or as part of member dues.