



2016 Election Forum



On Wednesday, November 18th we had a packed house as we conducted our first Education Forum for state candidates. We partnered with Colorado WINS, the state employees union, to host a panel of our members as speakers while candidates, who are seeking the endorsement of AFT Colorado in 2016, sat, listened, and asked questions. The panel spoke about K-12 issues as they pertain to testing, struggles within the Department

of Human Services, state budget constraints, and retirement security. The candidates were engaged and appreciated the in-depth look into what our public servants endure. With nearly one hundred candidates and members in attendance, we believe (and were told by many) this was a great success! Thank you to all the members who attended. It is important elected officials hear from our members rather than just paid staff.



The 2015 election season came to a close with some wins and losses for school districts and public education in Colorado. The Douglas County community recognized the importance of focusing on students and education, instead of political agendas--by a wide margin. While Denver County voted to continue down the same road in DPS, one that is seen by many as too focused on reform and not on improving the education of all students and the quality of all schools.

Regardless of the outcomes of elections, our members continue to serve their communities selflessly and with devotion to students of all levels from preschool to higher education. Thank you for your professionalism and dedication to public education.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Courtney Smith, President, AFT Colorado, President, Douglas County Federation

Colorado School Board Races

AFT Colorado locals were involved in two school board elections last month – Denver Public Schools and Douglas County School District.

In Denver, the Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees (DFPNSE) Local 4463 supported Michael Kiley for District 5 and Robert Speth for At-Large. These two candidates would have challenged the current rubber stamp-style board majority run by board president Happy Haynes (who was being challenged by Speth). Despite a strong field effort supported by our members, as well as, the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA), Kiley lost by a sizeable margin to Lisa Flores. On election day, Speth held the lead by a few hundred votes at midnight, but overnight more ballots were counted and Haynes won by fewer than 1,000 votes. Unfortunately, the reform candidates were once again victorious. We can expect to see the expansion of charter schools and closing traditional neighborhood schools.

In Douglas County, challengers to the current board majority won three seats on the seven-seat board in what could be considered a “shellacking” – beating the incumbents by around 18 points. Douglas County Federation (DCF) members undoubtedly helped in that win – reaching out to thousands of union households during weekly phone banks. While this is not a majority on the board, we now have three dissenting voices that can publicly question the current board’s actions and bring a focus back to students and classrooms.

General public voter turnout came in at 41.6%, but our DCF union and household members voted at a rate of 81.2%. For all union households (not just DCF but plumbers, pipefitters, etc., in Douglas County), the vote rate was 48%. This is proof that when union members are informed, we vote at a higher rate than the general public which is why member-to-member phone banks are a key component of our political program.



Making Memories and Staying Connected

Celebrate the New Year with union member only savings from Union Plus.

There's a discount for just about everyone on your list. From clothing and flowers to gift certificates, even movies, plays, sporting events, computers, travel and more.

Don't forget to stay connected with 15% off AT&T wireless service.

UnionPlus.org/AFTDiscounts

Credit approval required. New two-year service agreement may be required. Offer cannot be combined with any other discounts. Only the shared minutes and data for AT&T Mobile Share plans are discounted. Offer available to union members and retired union members.

Memorial to Fallen Educators The National Teachers Hall of Fame



Two years ago, AFT participated in the dedication of the Memorial to Fallen Educators located in Emporia, Kansas. “News reports reveal that American educators have been losing their lives in school tragedies since 1764. Members of The National Teachers Hall of Fame believe that it is time to recognize and honor these brave educators for their dedication to their jobs and to their students. Therefore, plans have moved forward, in partnership with Emporia State University, to create a monument and memorial area that will be a permanent tribute to educators who literally “gave their all” for their profession.

Names and dates have been inscribed to remember educators like those killed at Sandy Hook Elementary in December 2012, Chuck Poland, the school bus driver hero killed in January 2013 in Alabama, Dave Sanders (Columbine), as well as teacher Robert Bailey, who was killed in Illinois in 1882, Christa McAuliffe who perished in the Challenger explosion in 1986, and Goddard, Kansas, Principal Jim McGee, who was killed in 1985.” (taken from the nthfmemorial.org website)

The names of AFT members are listed on the memorial. At the time, the memorial included names from K-12 education. AFT has asked that they expand the memorial to include Higher Education. They have agreed to do so.

If you are aware of anyone from the higher education sector (faculty, administration, classified/support – public and private) who should be included on this memorial, or, have a recommendation from the K-12 sector, please note the following:

- They do not have to be AFT members.
- Staff in all positions who have been killed in the line of duty –could be from violence or a natural disaster or tragic accident. (*‘Line of duty’ includes in school or out-of-school on assignment (i.e., a field trip or a sport/game).*)

If you have a recommendation of an individual whom you feel fits this criteria please send the name to shamilton@aftcolorado.org. Any background information you can provide will be helpful.

For more information on the memorial go to: <http://nthfmemorial.org/>

2016 Legislative Session

The 2016 Legislative Session begins January 13th. AFT Colorado has been busy meeting with state legislators, house and senate leadership, community allies, and other unions to build a proactive agenda that helps working families.

With 2016 being an election year, we know we are going to see numerous contentious bills that both sides of the aisle will utilize as campaign messages. At AFT Colorado, we will be focusing on affordable higher education, student loan debt, retirement security, pay equity and we will continue to monitor the state budget.

AFT Colorado will be holding our local lobby days as usual this year in addition to participating in the Colorado AFL-CIO Labor Day at the Capitol. Please contact your local president for dates.



AFT COLORADO
STANDING TOGETHER: MAKING A DIFFERENCE
Committee on Political Education (COPE) Deduction

www.aftcolorado.org 720-440-9759

What is COPE? COPE is how AFT Colorado raises and collects voluntary political contributions from members. COPE is a non partisan political education committee. These voluntary funds are used statewide to help back candidates and committees that support education and labor. There is one reason AFT Colorado needs to grow our COPE program, **YOU**. With the current economic environment our priorities are vulnerable and are constantly being targeted for reduction. Education budgets, programs, and services are often first on the chopping block when states face dwindling tax revenues. Along with decent working conditions, retirement, and health care. All vitally affect our lives. A strong COPE program will protect our various interests.

At the local level COPE is essential. AFT Colorado will use your voluntary funds to assist in school board races, levies, and referendums in your district. Reductions in state education aid and inflation have made local budgets even more of a challenge. We use COPE dollars to work with labor and education friendly supporters on both sides of the aisle.

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

BILLING ADDRESS _____

BILLING CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

MOBILE PHONE _____  wish to receive periodic text messages and accept the associated charges.

HOME EMAIL _____ LOCAL _____

WORK LOCATION _____

PAYMENT

*Due to the associated fees, we prefer that you sign up for **bank draft** payment.*

MONTHLY COPE AMOUNT \$5 \$10 \$15 \$OTHER _____

BANK DRAFT ***PREFERRED METHOD*******

Fill out below or simply attach a voided check.

BANK NAME _____

ROUTING NUMBER _____ ACCOUNT NUMBER _____

CREDIT/DEBIT CARD: If you choose this method, we will follow up with you to change to bank draft at a later date.

CARD TYPE: VISA MC

NAME ON CARD _____

CARD NUMBER _____ EXP DATE _____

I hereby authorize a monthly contribution to the AFT CO COPE (AFT CO COPE) in the amount indicated above. This authorization is signed freely and voluntarily and not out of any fear of reprisal, and I will not be favored nor disadvantaged because I exercise this right. I understand this money will be used to make political contributions by AFT CO COPE. AFT CO COPE may engage in joint fundraising efforts with AFT COPE and/or the AFL-CIO. This voluntary authorization may be revoked at any time by notifying AFT CO COPE in writing of the desire to do so. Contribution or gifts to AFT CO COPE are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions cannot be reimbursed or otherwise paid by any other person or entity.