



Winter 2017



# Connections

NEWS TO KEEP YOU ENGAGED IN THE PROFESSION YOU LOVE

## 2018 Legislative Session

The 2018 legislative session is scheduled to run from Jan. 8-March 8. Although this is a short session there is no shortage of things that need to be done. As we discussed in the November *e-Connections*, the state Supreme Court ruled that the Legislature has not fulfilled its obligations to fully fund education. As retirees we know that years of legislative neglect have resulted in many issues that need to be addressed such as increasing the Medicare supplement, allowing retirees to substitute without penalizing their monthly pension, and the list goes on. Our classified staff, aspiring teachers and students all have serious issues that need to be addressed. As union members and educators, WEA-Retired is united with WEA in our advocacy for our students, our public schools and our profession.

The WEA, along with WEA-Retired, has adopted a **Unity Agenda for the 2018 Legislative Session** to address the needs of all of us involved in public education. All issues in the Unity Agenda are equally important -- placement on the list does not indicate priority.

### Unity Agenda for the 2018 legislative session

- **United for retired educators**

Restore cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for Plan 1 retirees, increase health care subsidy for all

- **United for higher education employees**

Provide full and equal collective bargaining rights for community and technical college faculty

- **United for K-12 classified and certificated employees**

Fix the flawed 2017 education funding plan, including raising the levy lid, improving the staff funding formula and passing a school construction budget

- **United for aspiring educators**

Approve student loan forgiveness

- **United for our students**

Support the right of all students to a quality public education, regardless of family background or immigration status, including safe schools legislation and protecting financial aid for undocumented students



## The President's Corner

By Neva Luke

WEA-Retired President

The legislative session starts Jan. 8 and WEA-Retired will be participating in the events and lobby days noted in this newsletter. The first Olympia-based event is the Jan. 10 Day of Unity. WEA will have a team from every council and WEA-Retired will be represented by some members from our Legislative Work Team. The goal is to hand deliver the Unity Agenda to every legislator and ask for a commitment on the priorities.

WEA-Retired Lobby Day is in February! WEA-Retired will join with RPEC (Retired Public Employees Council) for a Lobby Day on Monday, Feb. 5. Both the Legislative Lobby Day meetings and the reception will be the same day. A boxed lunch will be served at Hotel RL Olympia (Red Lion) at 11 a.m., followed by training. Beginning at 1 p.m., bus transportation will be provided to the Capitol for meetings with legislators. Members will visit legislators in their legislative district as a team, along with their RPEC counterparts. The RPEC Council office will be making meeting arrangements with legislators for members.

From 4-5 p.m., transportation will be provided back to Hotel RL Olympia. The reception (6-8 p.m.) is intended for members to mingle and interact with legislators and members of both WEA-Retired and RPEC. Light hors d'oeuvres will be provided during the reception, but those attending are encouraged to enjoy a meal prior to the reception at their own expense. There is a restaurant onsite at the hotel and many nearby as well.

WEA/WEA-Retired will be covering the costs of the first 50 members who send in the registration form, which must be postmarked by Friday, Jan. 5. This includes the registration fee, a boxed lunch, shuttle bus, the reception, hors d'oeuvres, soft drinks, and training materials. There will also be a no-host cash bar at the reception.

WEA-Retired will reimburse mileage only for the Executive Committee and the Legislative Work Team who also attend the Legislative Work Team meeting at 10 a.m. and then participate in the Lobby Day. In general, no overnight hotel expenses will be paid for due to the shortened schedule. However, if you are coming from a very long distance or have other extenuating circumstances, please contact Neva Luke to discuss a possible exception. If you have any questions, email Neva Luke at [nluke@washingtonea.org](mailto:nluke@washingtonea.org) or call 253-765-7067.

Visit <http://forms.washingtonea.org/Forms/retiredlobbyday> to complete the 2018 WEA-Retired Legislative Lobby Day registration form. Please remember, the deadline is Jan. 5, 2018.

# WEA-Retired Delegate Nomination Form for the 2018 WEA RA

WEA Representative Assembly will be held in Spokane, April 19-21, 2018.

- Nominees for WEA-Retired delegate must be retired and not hold a contract with a public school district.
- Nomination forms must be postmarked by Jan. 16, 2018.
- Nominees must agree to attend all sessions.
- All nominations must have the consent of the nominee. Self-nomination is acceptable.
- Delegates are elected annually to serve one year.
- Biography of 50 words or less is optional and will be used only if a run-off election is necessary.

I nominate the following RETIRED member to be a delegate to the 2018 WEA Representative Assembly.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/state/zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address if available \_\_\_\_\_

UniServ Council \_\_\_\_\_ Retirement/separation date \_\_\_\_\_

## DELEGATE FUNDING

WEA-Retired Board of Directors approved a policy June 9, 2010, regarding the funding of delegates to the WEA Representative Assembly. In accord with that policy, WEA-Retired leadership has determined that WEA-Retired can afford to fully fund 20 delegates to the WEA Representative Assembly. If there are more than 20 nominees, then delegates will have some out-of-pocket expenses.

Please check one of the following statements:

I understand I could have some out of pocket expenses and I am willing to cover those expenses.

I understand I could have some out of pocket expenses and I would prefer my name be removed if that is the case.

Return WEA Representative Assembly nomination forms to:

Jan Curtis

718 Russell Road

Snohomish, WA 98290-5617

Deadline: Forms must be postmarked no later than Jan. 16, 2018.

# 2018 WEA-Retired Annual Meeting and Officers Nomination Form

WEA-Retired will convene its annual meeting in Federal Way on June 6-7, 2018. This year delegates will elect a secretary as well as board directors.

Non-chapter units are: **Kent (2), North Central (3), Puget Sound (7), Rainier (4)**, WEA-Sammamish (10), Seattle (6), Soundview (2), **Spokane (3)**, Summit (3), **Vancouver (4), WEA-Cascade (5)**, WEA-Eastern Washington (6), WEA-Lower Columbia (4), **WEA Midstate (6), WEA Olympic (8), WEA-Riverside (5)**, and WEA-Southeast (7). New board directors will be elected for the units in **bold print**. The number in parenthesis is the number of delegates the chapter is allowed in addition to the board director.

Chapter units are: **Pilchuck (9)**, WEA-Tacoma (4), WEA Chinook (12), and WEA Fourth Corner (9). The units in **bold print** will be electing a new board director this year. The number in parenthesis is the number of delegates the chapter is allowed in addition to the board director. Chapter units should elect their delegates by **March 15, 2018**.

**This form can be used for nominating delegates from ALL councils, board directors and secretary. Nominees for chapter units will be forwarded to the chapter leader to be included when the chapter elects its delegates. Non-chapter delegates will be elected during a meeting of WEA-Retired Board of Directors in January.**

All nominees must be WEA-Retired members. More than one name can be submitted for each position. You can nominate yourself and/or another retired member. If you nominate someone other than yourself, you must have the consent of the nominee. Fifty words or less biography for each nominee is optional.

**Mail this nomination form to: Jan Curtis, 718 Russell Road, Snohomish, WA 98290-5617 no later than Jan. 16, 2018.**

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Retirement/separation date \_\_\_\_\_

Your email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

I nominate the following retired members for each position.

	Delegate	Chapter		Board Director	Chapter		Secretary	Chapter
1			1			1		
2			2			2		
3			3			3		
4			4			4		

# Public education in the context of the U.S. Dept. of Ed.

By Barbara Galler

*Neva's notes: Every month, our editor, Barbara Galler, writes a piece to help us stay informed about the big picture of public education. Barbara wrote about the WA State Supreme Court's McCleary decision in the November e-Connections. This month our editor shares how educators reacted to Betsy DeVos's visit to our state, and researched Betsy DeVos background.*

The optimism of the McCleary story was darkened by the national “resetting,” aka, Trump’s election. Betsy DeVos, his billionaire, theocratically inclined, pro-privatization secretary of education, recently appeared at a conservative Washington think tank fundraiser in Bellevue. Educators from across the state convened in the streets surrounding the event’s hotel and gave voice to our students’ needs. Carrying signs questioning DeVos’s lack of knowledge, experience, and zest for public education, composed crowds stood their ground in a rainy October late afternoon-into-evening, and demanded fairness and justice in our nation’s longest-held and valued institution, public education.

It is important to know the background and goals of Betsy DeVos so we can understand what is driving the national education agenda and how it may affect our state.

## Curriculum vitae for Betsy DeVos

### Goals:

- To serve as the 11th Secretary of Education in charge of \$69 billion and 4,200 employees
- To encourage and allow parents to use taxpayer-based vouchers to send their children to private and/or religious schools
- To encourage the charter school corporatization of public schools
- To rescind at least 72 regulations impacting special education children’s needs
- To scrap the Obama-era federal rules protecting possible victims of sexual abuse by allowing colleges to use a higher standard of evidence for the alleged attacker
- To redact Obama-era loan protections for college graduates

### Education:

- Graduated: Holland Christian High School, Holland, Michigan
- Graduated: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a business degree, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979

### Experience:

- Political activist and “donor of \$200 million in right wing causes, including monies to help fund nearly every prominent Republican running for national office for decades” (Mother Jones cited by [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org))
- \$44 million to the Michigan Republican Party, GOP legislative committees, and Republican candidates since 1997 ([www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org))
- Various positions in the Michigan and national republican parties. Helped make Michigan’s charter schools “among the least regulated of the nation, with about 80% of the state’s charters run by private companies” ([www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org))

*See U.S. Dept. of Ed., continued on page 6.*

## *U.S. Dept. of Ed, continued from page 5.*

- In 1989 created the Dick and Betsy DeVos Family Foundation, giving, in 2015 alone, \$11.6 million to aid in the development of leadership, health and human services, arts and culture, churches, ed reform, civic and community, and general education ([www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org))
- Help fund “dark money” American Federation of Children 501(c)(4) and its affiliated 501(C)(3) Alliance for School Choice, major donors to ALEC, American Legislative Exchange Council, a conservative group financing right-wing state legislators and congressional candidates who want to privatize public education and almost every aspect of government ([www.prwatch.org](http://www.prwatch.org))
- On the board of Acton Institute, a global think-tank that seeks to incorporate the business model with religious and moral values, while also seeking to infuse religious institutions and academia with an appreciation of the business model ([www.acton.org](http://www.acton.org))
- Finance chair for the American Dream PAC in Michigan in the most recent election cycle, which gave Michigan legislative candidates \$1.45 million in June and July alone -- over a seven-week period, an average of \$25 per day, in efforts to stop new legislative oversight of charter schools ([www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org))

### **Wealth:**

- Married Dick DeVos, Amway and family-owned Orlando Magic Basketball Team, and minority stake in Chicago Cubs heir
- Heir to her father’s billion dollar Prince Corporation (auto parts)
- Brother Erik, former Navy SEAL and CIA operative, founded government services company, Blackwater USA
- Total assets for Dick and Betsy DeVos: \$583 million-\$1.5 billion

## **WSARA Senior Champion Awards**

**By Mary Lindsey**

WEA-Retired members were well represented at the fall Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans Senior Champion Awards banquet fundraiser to support political action.

Attorney General Bob Ferguson was honored this year as the “2017 Senior Champion” for his continual work on behalf of seniors concerning healthcare issues and fraud protections. The award was accepted by Solicitor General Noah Purcell on behalf of the attorney general who was unable to attend the event.

The keynote address was given by Alex Lawson, Social Security Works, executive director. His talk was passionate focused on the good, the bad and the ugly. His update on attacks to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security were the bad and the ugly. The good (and hopeful) was the power of the people to stand up and speak up and that Medicare works, public education works, and Social Security works.

WEA-Retired is an affiliate of WSARA along with many other retiree unions, community groups and individuals.

# WEA-PAC

By Simone Boe, WEA Staff

Entirely funded and overseen by current and retired educators like you, WEA-PAC is the state political action committee.



You know from experience that elected officials make decisions daily about current teacher salary, class size, benefits AND our retirement. It's important we build our political voice as retirees sign-up to be WEA-Retired members. At \$15 a year, WEA-PAC uses those contributions to endorse pro-public education candidates up and down the ballot. WEA works hard to protect your pension and healthcare benefits and one of the priority pieces of legislation this year is to restore cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for Plan 1 retirees and increase health care subsidy for all. We can't do this without legislators who support us. **Pictured:** WEA staff member

Simone Boe and WEA-Retired member Maureen Ramos.

Please consider joining today. Your \$15 a year (or more if you'd like) adds to the collective voice for education and allows current educators and retirees to work together to support our profession. Sign up online at [www.washingtonea.org/ourvoice/wea-pac/](http://www.washingtonea.org/ourvoice/wea-pac/) or contact Neva Luke at [nluke@washingtonea.org](mailto:nluke@washingtonea.org) for a form.

## Mark your calendars for these important activities in Olympia -- and plan to join us!

Jan. 10: First Day of Unity

Jan. 15: MLK Day, Education Rally in Olympia

Jan. 29: WEA ESP Lobby Day

Jan. 31: WEA Lobby Day

Feb. 5: WEA Retiree Lobby Day (Joint Day with Retired Public Employees Council of Washington)

Feb. 19: WEA Higher Ed Lobby Day

Feb. 28: Final Day of Unity



**Pictured:** WEA-Retired members were well represented at the fall Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans Senior Champion Awards banquet fundraiser.



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## ***Key dates***

*January 5: Deadline for NEA delegate ballots*  
*January 5: Deadline for Lobby Day registration form*  
*January 8: First day of the Legislative Session*  
*January 16: Deadline for WEA Retired WEA-RA nomination form*  
*January 16: Deadline for WEA-Retired Annual Meeting and Officers nomination*  
*February 5: WEA-Retired Legislative Lobby Day*



## **Connections**

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*Connections* is published by Washington Education Association-Retired four times a year. We invite your comments and contributions.

### **President**

Neva Luke

*WEARetired@WashingtonEA.org*

### **Vice President**

Mary Lindsey

*malscomputer@aol.com*

### **Editor**

Barbara Galler

*bgaller2@comcast.net*

### **Editorial Board**

Lee Ann Prielipp, Sandy Kokko, Kit Raney

P.O. Box 9100

Federal Way, WA 98063-9100

*[www.WashingtonEA.org/retired/](http://www.WashingtonEA.org/retired/)*