

MFPE ADVOCATE

MONTANA FEDERATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

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MFPE ADVOCATES FOR MONTANA'S PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

MFPE is the largest union in Montana and features a remarkably diverse membership. MFPE is also affiliated with the National Education Association (NEA), America's largest union. Unlike MFPE, NEA has been slow to recognize its diverse membership. However, that is now changing thanks to MFPE member Patrick Wayne, a Social Service Technician for the Child and Family Services Division of DPHHS.

During the NEA Representative Assembly in July, Wayne introduced New Business Item #5, which directs the NEA to "review all existing governing documents (e.g. Policy Statements, Legislative Program, Resolutions, Constitution, and Bylaws) and where appropriate direct that these documents incorporate language that is democratically inclusive of all NEA members." The new business item further directs that "NEA shall use inclusive language in all future communications."

As he proposed this change to the gathering of over

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MFPE MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW

On July 1, CSCT staff employed by Western Montana Mental Health Missoula-area voted to join the Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE). On October 1, CSCT staff employed by Western Montana Mental Health Thompson Falls-area did the same.

Joining MFPE means CSCT staff now have representation in the workplace and the right to collectively bargain with their employer.

Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT) is a joint effort between Montana school districts and providers to deliver emotional and behavioral support to students at school. CSCT staff help students with a range of issues that affect their

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FEAVER

BY MFPE PRESIDENT ERIC FEAVER



Gasp if you want. The 2020 elections are not so far away. And there are lots of folks running in crowded primaries for key statewide positions. MFPE is right now working at deciding who among the plethora of candidates we think will stand up for us and the work our members do.

In this regard, MFPE has already endorsed Melissa Romano for superintendent of public instruction. In 2016, Melissa narrowly lost to the incumbent. We believe she can and will win in 2020. The incumbent superintendent has done nothing to defend and enhance Montana public schools. She has in fact thrown her minimal weight in with the public school privatization for God and profit gang. Public school communities, students, and educators deserve a champion, a leader with vision and commitment to build on what we already do well for even brighter educational opportunities for all our children, not some, all. Melissa is that champion.

Just a handful of days ago the MFPE board of directors sitting as our political action committee interviewed the gubernatorial candidates (we invited them all) who accepted our invitation to sit with us and answer a few questions. See list below. These questions do not exhaust the universe of issues we face but they

capture the essence of things most critical at this moment in time:

Gubernatorial candidate questions:

When governor:

1. Will you oppose and if necessary veto legislation to privatize pre-k through higher education with income tax credits, pay vouchers, educational savings accounts, and charter schools?
2. Will you propose and sign legislation to fund voluntary public p-k for 4-year olds across Montana?
3. Will you oppose and if necessary veto legislation to truncate or end public employee defined benefit pension plans?
4. Will you oppose and if necessary veto legislation to require public employee unions to recertify; eliminate payroll deduction; authorize union members to resign membership at any time; and/or repeal exclusive representation?
5. Will you engage in comprehensive, pre-budget negotiations with MFPE and vigorously support in the subsequent state legislature the tentative agreement the two parties reach?
6. Will you work to enhance state employee longevity payments; create career ladders; augment pay pursuant to high cost work locations; provide parental leave; and maintain the state's contribution to state and university employee health insurance?
7. Will you support tuition free 2-year public schools of higher education and expand lottery revenues dedicated to university system scholarships for all qualified Montana high school graduates?
8. Will you propose and sign legislation to create a statewide school employee health insurance pool or a

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MFPE MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW |

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ability to be successful in school as well as other areas of life. Support services include individual sessions, group sessions, family support, lunch group, and in-class support.

“The decision to form a union was based solely on our desire to improve working conditions for employees and services for our clients,” said Patrick Shourd, behavior specialist. “Those who serve in the trenches deserve to have their voices heard.”

Seventy-two CSCT staff employed by Western Montana Mental Health in Missoula cast ballots in the union election. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of joining MFPE, with 71 staff members voting for representation and collective bargaining rights.

Following the organization of CSCT staff in Missoula, four CSCT staff in the Thompson Falls area voted for representation and collective bargaining rights in October. Their action adds another CSCT local to MFPE's growing number of affiliates.

“Through our union, members have strength in numbers to accomplish things individual employees cannot,” said MFPE President Eric Feaver. “Together, we have a seat at the table. Together, we have the freedom to advocate for the highest quality services. MFPE members work in every corner of this state and are dedicated to the people and communities they serve. MFPE is excited to welcome Missoula and Thompson Falls CSCT staff to the MFPE family.”



“Thank you to MFPE for helping Thompson Falls CSCT teams to organize a new local union!

We are excited about not only improving working conditions, wages, and benefits for ourselves, but also being able to provide more ethical and quality care for our clients. We can't wait to see where this takes us!”

– Chris Magdalene, CSCT Thompson Falls





MFPE members Senator Cohenour, Representatives Keogh, Woods, Ryan, and Funk answer questions during a MembersWIN webinar

MFPE MEMBERS ENCOURAGED TO RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

MFPE is reaching out to members across Montana to encourage them to run for office, from the local-level to statewide office. MembersWIN is a program aimed at recruiting and preparing MFPE members to campaign for and win elections.

Since launching MembersWIN, MFPE has hosted two webinars featuring MFPE members who currently hold elected office. Currently, 16 MFPE members have announced their intention to run for the Montana Legislature in 2020.

If you or someone you know is interested in running for office, please visit mfpe.org/memberswin or contact MFPE Political Director Lauren Caldwell at lcaldwell@mfpe.org

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FEAVER |

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pathway for school employees to enroll in the state employee health insurance pool?

9. Will you help create a state revenue collection system that is adequate, equitable, balanced, simple, progressive, and universal?

10. Will you work with MFPE to recruit and appoint qualified, experienced persons to serve on critical policy making state boards and commissions such as the board of public education, board of regents, board of personnel appeals, MPERA, TRS, and board of investments?

If and when we endorse a gubernatorial candidate, our endorsement will depend in large measure on how they respond to these and other front and center questions we will ask.

Finally, we have also invited Republican and Democratic gubernatorial candidates to a candidate forum at our 3d Annual MFPE Conference, April 3-4, Helena.

Hope to see you there.

Get involved!



MFPE is run by members like you. That's why we want to know what you care about most. Please take a moment to tell us which issues you'd like to hear more about from MFPE at **mfpe.org/interests**



Learn about upcoming MFPE events, professional development opportunities, meetings, and more at **www.mfpe.org/mfpe-events**



Interested in learning more about your MFPE benefits? Visit **mfpe.org/benefits-of-membership**

MFPE ADVOCATES FOR MONTANA'S PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

over 8,000 NEA members, Wayne stated, "NEA is no longer a union of only educators and has not been for some time. NEA is a union of public employees, all of whom NEA should recognize wherever possible in its governing documents and communications."

Shortly after Wayne made his case, the assembly voted overwhelmingly to support the proposed new business item.

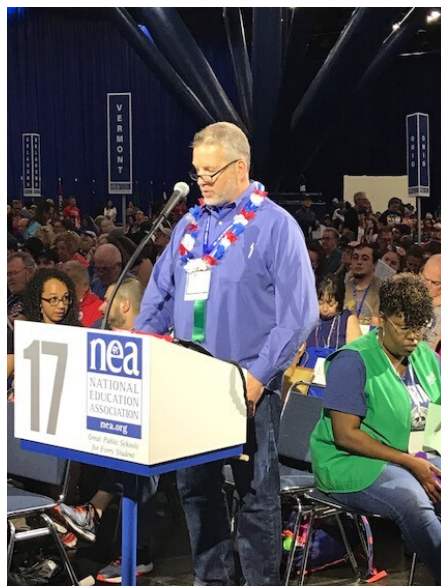
Fellow MFPE delegate Glen Southergill, an associate professor of communication at Montana Tech, gave Wayne accolades for his efforts. "Patrick Wayne spoke with a number of us in the spring. He wanted to learn more about the process, and how to approach making changes within the union," said Southergill, MFPE's NEA Director. "Patrick, as one delegate of 8,000, was singularly responsible for proposing a highly progressive change in the largest union in the nation. We supported it and worked together as a team, of course, but really he did a great deal to advance our cause."

Wayne gave his rationale for his actions upon his return to Montana. "I'm proud to say that MFPE regards all its members as public employees," he stated.

UNION MEMBERSHIP IS A RIGHT

BY REPRESENTATIVE CASEY SCHREINER

As I've had the opportunity of traveling thousands of miles around our great state, some of the most inspirational, insightful and enlightening conversations I've had the honor to engage in are with my fellow MFPE brothers and sisters. Whether it be teachers from local school districts, university system employees, or my fellow state workers, it never ceases to amaze me how our MFPE members are engaged and understand that union membership is a right we must be willing to fight to protect. It has been a long while since there was a time that unity and solidarity were more important. While the work that public employees do is truly the work that matters, the fact remains



*Patrick Wayne addresses the
NEA Representative Assembly*

"However, as I continued to educate myself on the structure of our union and its affiliates, I discovered that the NEA was not very inclusive of people who work outside the education field. Social workers, highway workers, highway patrolmen, and others have no recognition in the documents and communications of the NEA."

Because of Wayne and MFPE, America's largest union is now revising its communication efforts to embrace its entire membership, which includes public employees in virtually every sector. It is remarkable that a union of 24,000 is shaping the direction of NEA, a union of 3 million and it's a testament to the new strength of our union following the merger of MEA-MFT and MPEA.

"I just wanted to help make life better for my coworkers," said Wayne. "I'm convinced that unions are not something we pay others to do for us. Unions are us and we need to do the hard work."

that public employees are often in our states' political cross-hairs and our members can be easy targets for elected officials who have never spent a day in our shoes. Remember though, no matter how low our chip count can feel, we have the one thing that so many others either feign or strive for... solidarity. As long as we have each other's backs, we shall always overcome. Thanks for all you do.



*State Representative
and MFPE member
Casey Schreiner
with his family.*

2019 MFPE EDUCATOR CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

Nearly 1,500 Montana educators and public employees attended the 2019 MFPE Educator Conference in Belgrade October 17 through 18. The MFPE Educator Conference is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for educators to deepen their expertise and benefit the students they serve.

“The MFPE Educator Conference is all about professional development - the best kind of professional development: teachers teaching teachers. A Montana tradition,” said Eric Feaver, MFPE President.

The conference featured over 500 training sessions and keynotes from 18 curriculum groups. State and university system employees also took part in this year's conference as participants and presenters. MFPE partnered with the Montana Professional

Teaching Foundation to host the annual Celebration of Teaching dinner the evening of October 17. During the celebration, the foundation honored 2019 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence winner Shelly Stanton along with several other outstanding Montana educators who have received state and national distinctions in their fields of expertise.

Former Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau served as the celebration's keynote speaker. She highlighted educators' dedication to their communities, students, and professions and called for needed investments in public education. Now serving as Seattle Superintendent of Schools, Juneau emphasized the importance of collaboration with educators and their unions to make lasting impacts in the lives of students.



Get ready!



The 2020 MFPE Educator Conference will take place at C.M. Russell High School in Great Falls on October 15-16. Stay up-to-date at mfpe.org/edconference

UPCOMING MFPE EVENTS

Learn more at mfpe.org/events

December 17, 2019

MFPE PRE-RETIREMENT WORKSHOP (MPERA ONLY)

MSU-Bozeman, Student Union Building
Ballroom B, 751 W. Grant St.

January 24-25, 2020

MFPE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Helena

February 12, 2020

MFPE PRE-RETIREMENT WORKSHOP

Custer County District High School
20 S. Center Ave.
Miles City

February 22, 2020

MFPE WESTERN MONTANA REGIONAL TRAINING

Missoula

Visit mfpe.org to register

February - March, 2020

MFPE REGIONAL MEETINGS

See mfpe.org for locations and dates

April 2, 2020

MFPE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Helena

April 3-4, 2020

MFPE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Helena

Every MFPE local is invited to send at least one delegate. Delegate registration to begin in February. For more information visit mfpe.org

July 2-6, 2020

NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Atlanta, GA

July 27-30, 2020

AFT CONVENTION

Houston, TX



Visit mfpe.org and never miss important updates, news, and more!



MFPE MEMBERSHIP

DOESN'T COST. IT PAYS.



- Learn more about your member benefits at mfpe.org/benefits
- And learn about the incredible discounts and services you're entitled to as a MFPE member at mfpe.org/benefits-of-membership/nea-aft-member-benefits

