



# P.E.A. Patch



Volume 33 Issue #3

January, 2016

## A note from your president

What will the new year bring? It's funny how turning the page on the calendar gives us hope. Hope for change or improvement in our lives with the end game being a happier and more prosperous year. The reality of the new year is here and the hope that sparked the promises we made to ourselves ultimately requires ACTION to fulfill them.

**The same is true in education.** We have hope for a fully funded education system with smaller class sizes, fewer assessments, less mandates and that our evaluation will be more about conversations and less about artifacts & evidence. We hope for more local control of what and how we teach and that we can simply focus on what we value most, teaching and helping our students learn.

The stark reality is hope alone doesn't affect change.

What ACTION are you ready to take to improve education from the bottom up, instead of the top down? How can you support your colleagues and speak up for the type of school and learning environment you want your students to experience when they walk through the door? Remember, working together, we can turn our hopes into our daily reality by taking ACTION.



**Peninsula Education Association**  
**Affiliated with**  
**Washington Education Association &**  
**National Education Association**

5209 Pt. Fosdick Dr. N.W. Suite 203  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335

[president@pea.comcastbiz.net](mailto:president@pea.comcastbiz.net)

President: Carol Rivera      Office: 851-8710  
Cell: 250-2918

Vice President : Sheri Ahlheim  
(Peninsula High School)      530-4400

Secretary: Colleen Bowlan  
(Peninsula High School)      530-4400

Treasurer Karin Ashabraner  
(Goodman Middle School)      530-1600

**Website: [Peninsulaea.com](http://Peninsulaea.com)**  
**Facebook: Peninsula Education Association**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WHY WEA and many PEA MEMBERS ARE WEARING RED THIS MONDAY, please read the article by Sheri Ahlheim on the next page.**

## Looking for WEA-RA delegates!

PEA is looking for delegates to represent our members at the WEA Rep Assemblies. We will be sending 8 delegates to the state meeting (April 7-9 in Spokane) How do you become a delegate? Don't wait for someone to nominate you – simply nominate yourself by contacting the PEA office between January 11th—February 5th and Rep Council will approve the delegates. If there are more nominees than the 8 allotted spots, we will vote in buildings on Wednesday, February 10th and the delegates will be announced on February 11th. PEA strives to have a diverse group of delegates across grade levels, job descriptions and underrepresented ethnic groups. Please consider attending and creating a diversified delegation truly representative of PEA

## PSD Continuing Educational Programs & Operations (M&O) Levy

On Feb 9th, voters in the Peninsula School District boundaries will vote to renew the existing levy. Here are the 2016 Levy facts:

- The levy represents 24% of PSD's total operating budget.
- 78% of the levy funds district staffing:  
(46% certificated & 29% classified staffing costs)
- The remainder of the levy funds:  
Professional Development, Curriculum and Programs, Safety & Security, Maintenance Projects, Technology & Athletics

**Proud to be Union—Sheri Ahlheim**

I'm Sheri. I'm a teacher who won't be retiring for a while... You may have been receiving e-mails and letters from "Bruce, a retired teacher" encouraging you to demand a refund from the PEA. Unlike Bruce, I'm a teacher who understands the value of paying membership fees to my Union. You see, I am the Union, just like you, too, are the Union. Our union is a living, breathing organization, and it's only as strong as our active membership -- and right now we Union members need to be there for our Union because it's under attack. And if we're not very careful, our Union may soon become history.

I want to tell you about multipronged attacks which are being made on public Unions across our country. Bruce represents "Choice For Teachers," a front for the ALEC-funded, Union-busting Freedom Foundation (link below). They're a Political Action Committee, founded and supported by the Koch brothers. They're hoping to fool enough uninformed teachers into opting for that refund so that our Union will be weakened. They want our Union membership reduced to such an extent that we will no longer be able to afford a full-time President to represent our interests or bargain on our behalf.

At first, opting out of the Union might seem like an economical choice. It saves a teacher about \$2 a month. But what are the personal consequences if you do opt out of our Union? Any teacher who opts out is no longer covered by liability insurance. Any teacher who opts out loses their voting and ratification rights. Any teacher who opts out won't be eligible for free or reduced price WEA sponsored professional development classes. Any teacher who opts out will only receive cursory representation in the event of a grievance. And perhaps most importantly, if enough teachers opt out, our Union membership will lose the benefit of the full-time President to represent our interests with the School District and our legislators in Olympia -- simply put, without our President we'll have nobody to advocate on our behalf, and we'll be forced into silence and that will effectively be the end of our Union.

It's not just Unions in Washington State that are under attack. This is a national level effort, funded by ALEC and their billionaire backers. At the very heart of their effort is the goal of destroying the ability of Unions to represent workers everywhere. If they succeed there will be no more collective bargaining for livable wages. If they succeed, you'll have no representation if your employer chooses to terminate your employment. If they succeed, the professional middle class will be gutted.

You've probably heard about "Right to Work" laws. In states like Wisconsin, where these laws have been enacted, public employee wages have fallen by 10% and are continuing to drop. Without Unions to protect them, without the power of collective bargaining, public employee wages in those states are going to decline even more.

But it gets worse. The biggest attack against Unions is at the national level. The US Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the case of *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association* beginning next Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. If the ruling on this case goes against the Union it will become the law of the land. The immediate effect will be that all Union members will be automatically dis-enrolled and Union membership will become an "opt in" rather than an "opt out" option. Without membership dues, our Union won't be able to maintain a full time President represent us or hire high quality legal help when any of us need it the most. As a result, the restrictions on School Districts being able to terminate employees without due process will be undermined and the ability of your Union to bargain on your behalf for better wages and better working conditions will be severely impacted.

I am extremely nervous about how the Supreme Court will rule on *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association*. Even though Unions and collective bargaining are something which was previously affirmed in the 1964 *Abood vs. Detroit* case, many of the current Justices seem pre-disposed toward overturning that ruling. After the disastrous *Citizens United* ruling of 2010, it seems clear they intend to give the ultra-wealthy 1% even more power while further undermining the middle class.

I don't know about you, but I plan to go down fighting. I will use my voice. I will vote. I will write, phone, and e-mail my legislators. I will work with the PEA to make a stronger Union. I have already joined WEA-PAC to help fund our students' access to a quality education. I hope to attend my first WEA Representative Assembly this year, and possibly even the NEA convention.

It's important that we all recognize the benefits the PEA provides us. Our Union bargains our contract, including our salaries, benefits, working conditions; our Union then keeps the District administrators honest and makes sure they follow that contract; our Union ensures we all get a fair evaluation process that protects both our interests as professional educators and the interests of our students.

Please contact me, or any Union representative, if you have questions or concerns. I am the Union. You are the Union. Together, we are the Union. If your Union is not meeting your needs, use your voice, get involved, and make things right.

I will be wearing red on Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup> as the Supreme Court takes up the *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association* case. Please join me in wearing red as a show of solidarity for our Union and teachers Unions all across the country -- our future depends on it.

And finally, if you receive any correspondence from that lying ALEC mouthpiece, "Bruce, a retired teacher," do what's right: unsubscribe from the spam e-mailers and toss his letter into the circular file.

Information of the Freedom Foundation:

[http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Evergreen_Freedom_Foundation)

[Evergreen Freedom Foundation](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Evergreen_Freedom_Foundation)

<http://www.thestand.org/2015/12/irs-complaint-groups-501c-status-bogus/>

Information on the Friedrichs vs. CTA case:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ben-spielberg/friedrichs-v-california-t\\_b\\_8910396.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ben-spielberg/friedrichs-v-california-t_b_8910396.html)

<http://curmudgucation.blogspot.com/2016/01/friedrichs-for-dummies.html>