

Legislative Program For the 115th Congress

PREAMBLE

NEA works to fulfill the promise of a democratic society by promoting the cause of quality public education; advancing the education profession; expanding the rights and furthering the interests of education employees; and advocating human, civil, and economic rights for all.

The NEA Representative Assembly, through adoption of the Legislative Program, sets forth the federal legislative policies that facilitate accomplishment of the strategic objectives in pursuit of the Association's mission.

NEA is committed to excellence in education through a true partnership of the federal, state, and local levels of government. NEA continues to work with its affiliates to advance NEA's strategic priorities: quality public education for every student; ensuring the highest possible teacher and education support professional quality; supporting school system capacity; building public, parental, and business support for public education; strengthening association capacity building; and providing administrative services and program support.

NEA members are central to educational excellence, and their compensation, status, and personal economic security must be significantly upgraded. NEA

seeks provision of federal resources and programs to assist state and local governments with education reform and with their responsibility to enhance educational excellence and to assure equitable educational opportunity as well as to assist in the provision of resources for the maintenance and operation of public schools, colleges, and universities.

NEA also seeks adequate protection and enforcement of civil and human rights and preservation and advancement of good public policy in pursuit of racial and social justice. *NEA supports* federal legislation consistent with its principles in these areas and strongly opposes legislation detrimental to these goals. NEA is engaged in a campaign to preserve and promote public education in the United States. This campaign includes an Action Plan to ensure "Great Public Schools for Every Student." NEA will advance the Legislative Program to the maximum degree possible and work to improve current laws governing elementary and secondary education.

The Legislative Program has been grouped in the following manner—

High Quality Public Education— Legislative issues designed to address the many factors that impact the quality of public education directly in the classroom or school.

Supporting Student Learning, Growth, and Development—Legislative issues intended to create the best possible conditions for all children in support of both their development and education.

A Voice in the Workplace—Legislative issues linked directly to some of the most basic employee issues faced by all education employees.

Good Public Policy—Legislative issues related to ongoing concerns of national importance to both NEA members and the rest of the nation.

I. HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION

a. STUDENT LEARNING, GROWTH, AND DEVELOPMENT

NEA supports

- federal programs that provide assistance to public schools to achieve excellence and to meet the needs of students at the preK through post-secondary levels, including those who are English Language Learners or who have special needs;
 - federal programs to enhance educational programs and improve student performance in all curricular areas;
 - a “whole child” approach to learning, teaching and community engagement that encourages parental and community involvement in all aspects of a child’s education; addressing multiple dimensions such as students’ physical, social, and emotional health and well-being;
- ensures equity, adequacy, and sustainability in resources and quality among public schools and districts; and ensures that students are actively engaged in a wide variety of experiences and settings within and outside the classroom;
 - programs that promote the infusion of the arts and design into student learning of science, technology, engineering and math as a means of fostering student creativity, innovation, and inventiveness;
 - programs that provide all students—pre-kindergarten through graduate school—support in developing advanced critical thinking and information literacy skills and mastery of new digital tools;
 - programs and policies designed to achieve equity in education funding, resources, and opportunities;
 - federal programs to assist schools in educational reform and restructuring efforts;
 - programs to provide assistance to local school districts to provide optimum class size;
 - federal programs designed to increase the high school graduation while ensuring that all pathways to post-secondary learning are developmentally appropriate for individual learners;
 - federal programs that promote GED or high school completion for all, including incarcerated individuals;
 - federal programs that promote taking college aptitude tests prior to senior year in high school;

- programs that equitably assist schools and communities in rural and urban areas to meet the unique needs of their students;
 - education programs that ensure equitable educational opportunities for English Language Learners and migrant students;
 - adequate funding for programs and personnel in the overseas schools for the dependents of military personnel;
 - broadening the criteria by which pedagogical practices, are evaluated and approved for federal funding;
 - a nationwide cohesive protocol to expedite the confidential informational exchange/transfer of all student records between education settings;
 - including school library/media programs taught by a certified or licensed media specialist (teacher/librarian) in the list of core subject areas in any education legislation;
 - allowing students who successfully meet the state's graduation requirements to be counted appropriately for federal accountability purposes as graduates not drop-outs if it takes the student more than four years to graduate.
- legislation allowing parents to opt their children out of all standardized tests without penalty for students, parents, educators, or schools;
 - legislation that grants all states flexibility to waive required annual testing and to design assessment programs that assess student learning at least once in elementary, once in middle, and once in high school;
 - federal legislation for, and implementation of, assessment plans that completely conform to NEA Resolutions;
 - appropriate alternative options to standardized testing for measuring individual progress and proficiencies of students with special needs, including the ability to test students at their functioning level rather than their grade level, and/or limited English proficiency;
 - allowing students who receive at least half of their instruction in a language other than English to be given the option of testing in the language of instruction. Where the assessments do not exist, they should be developed.

ASSESSMENTS

NEA supports

- truth-in-testing legislation that provides for public release of information regarding the content (questions and answers), validity, reliability, and scoring of state tests required under federal law;

NEA opposes

- the use of standardized tests for mandated determination of a student's future or as an indicator of school success;
- federal requirements to make significant decisions about schools, educators, or students based on students' test scores, including statistical models of student growth or "value-added" statistical projections;

- narrowing of the curriculum through an emphasis on test preparation;
- mandatory and/or coerced participation of students in the administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Exam;
- testing systems that require excessive amounts of time spent by educators on test administration and related activities and not on primary job responsibilities;
- using the word “failing” to label and grade our lowest performing public schools;
- the use of standardized tests as an indicator of equity and opportunity for students.

b. CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

NEA supports

- federal programs to facilitate and enhance school readiness;
- federal assistance for early childhood education programs, including Head Start;
- mandatory full-day kindergarten attendance for children, and the federal resources necessary to do so;
- early childhood development and education services by certified personnel for all children, with access ensured regardless of income;
- federal resources to enhance the availability and quality of public school child care and early education programs, including preschool and before- and after-school programs;

- federal resources to support early childhood education programs that are school based, school linked, or established with formal partnerships with community-based organizations;
- coordination with the public school system of those child care services delivered by nonpublic providers and assurance of standards of excellence, nondiscrimination, and the separation of church and state;
- stringent educational, health, and safety standards to protect and enrich preschool and school-age children, including strict regulation and enforcement to ensure trained and licensed child care and development workers and qualified volunteer personnel;
- incentives for employers to establish quality child care programs at or near the work site.

c. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA supports

- positive involvement of parents, guardians, or designated caregivers in the schools;
- federal programs to assist parents in gaining parenting skills and in understanding child growth and development;
- programs to provide incentives for appropriate parental and community involvement in schools;
- federal support for development of full-service community schools and wrap-around services that coordinate the delivery of educational, developmental, family, health; including

mental health services for students and their families that address trauma and adverse childhood experiences; and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations; give students, families and communities access to such services; support parent, family and community involvement in schools; and integrate services to ensure that schools function as comprehensive community centers;

- federal programs that assist parents in ensuring their child’s success in school, using research-based best practices;
- ensuring student information distributed to parents is in the language the parent understands best.

NEA opposes

- forced conversion of public schools to charter status through “parent trigger” legislation.

d. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

JUVENILE JUSTICE

NEA supports

- collaborative community efforts including programs to increase citizen and business group involvement in assisting and reclaiming youth who display disruptive or violent behavior and/or who have dropped out of school, and support for businesses that employ disadvantaged youth in training programs for more employment opportunities;

- access to effective rehabilitation, support services, and educational programs, including vocational, career and technical education, for incarcerated juveniles and juvenile offenders;
- improved education programs about the serious effects of participating in any aspect of the illegal drug trade;
- development of a national database about illegal gang-related activities through information from law enforcement agencies, juvenile courts, social services, schools, and community groups for interstate and intrastate use;
- development of collaborative programs among family, school, community, business, social services, and law enforcement agencies in the effort to reduce illegal gang-related activities;
- the separation of juvenile offenders from adults in correctional facilities;
- legislation that requires the reporting of the over-representation of minority youth in juvenile correctional facilities;
- legislation to eliminate complete solitary confinement as a form of punishment for juvenile offenders incarcerated in juvenile detention facilities;
- policies to expedite the confidential exchange/transfer of all student records between correctional and education settings.

NEA opposes

- policies that encourage the breakup of families;
- prosecuting, detaining, and imprisoning youth in the adult criminal justice system.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

NEA supports

- federal assistance for locally designed, voluntary community service programs that give all youth the opportunity to serve while enhancing their academic experience;
- federal assistance for state review of tort reform or other protective measures to address liability questions facing schools conducting voluntary programs.

NEA opposes

- federally required community service as a qualification for student financial assistance;
- use of community service workers to replace regular employees.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

NEA supports

- elementary and secondary school counseling and other pupil services, including school psychology and school social work and school-based student assistance program staff, provided by appropriately certified and/or licensed professionals;
- establishment of administrative structures to facilitate effective integration of counseling into the entire education experience;
- grants to expand and implement counseling programs provided by appropriately certified and/or licensed school counselors;

- school staffing ratios of specialized instructional support personnel to students at the levels recommended by nationally recognized professional associations.

SAFE SCHOOLS

NEA supports

- federal initiatives to prevent and combat violence and drug abuse in schools;
- federal assistance for mental health services to students, including support from social workers, psychologists, nurses, counselors, and other student service professionals as part of a comprehensive program to prevent school violence;
- the establishment and implementation, in consultation with school personnel and parents, by each school district of a well-publicized and uniformly enforced disciplinary code that promotes non-discriminatory practices to provide an orderly learning environment;
- appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of school personnel required by federal programs to make visits to students' homes;
- removal from the classroom of violent and/or disruptive students, including regular, exceptional, and students with an individualized education plan, and placement of those students in an appropriate alternative public school setting that meets their educational needs;
- removal from school buses and other areas of the school property of violent/

- disruptive students, including regular, exceptional, and students with individualized education plans, with no cessation of educational services;
- federal programs that promote the equitable enforcement of truancy laws;
 - disclosure to affected school personnel of relevant information/documentation concerning students who have exhibited violent behavior;
 - provision of a school environment that properly protects students and employees from environmental health and/or safety hazards;
 - legislation that protects children and educators from “cyber-bullying”
 - facility design and construction practices that promote improved air quality in all school facilities;
 - avoidance or reduction of pesticide and other toxic chemical applications in all school facilities and grounds; furthermore, NEA encourages notification of employees and the public of the product used, location, and date of application prior to its use;
 - prompt and ongoing federal assistance, through grant and/or loan mechanisms, for school districts to identify and eliminate health and safety hazards and report their findings and activities to the public;
 - sufficient training and proper safety protection for school personnel or others charged with identifying and/or removing health and safety hazards;
 - establishment of scientifically based nuclear-safe and waste-free zones surrounding schools;
 - a ban on the sale to the public of military and autoloading firearms with a capacity of firing 10 rounds or more from a single clip;
 - significant penalties for criminal actions involving use of guns or other weapons;
 - restrictions, including a mandatory waiting period or instantaneous computer checks, to allow universal background checks for felony convictions or mental illness, on the manufacture, distribution, and/or sale of handguns in order to ensure a safe school environment;
 - federal assistance for the development and implementation of a unified school safety crisis prevention/awareness plan;
 - federal legislation to outlaw gun trafficking and “straw purchases”;
 - federal assistance to help develop emergency response systems for schools;
 - legislation that protects students and staff from bullying, harassment, and intimidation by other students and staff;
 - lifting the ban that prevents the Centers for Disease Control from conducting research on gun violence in this country;
 - protecting an individual from non-consensual invasions of normal expectations of privacy, such as a person knowingly making or recording and sharing a photograph, motion

picture, videotape, or other video recording of another person's intimate areas without the consent of the person being recorded.

NEA opposes

- school discipline policies that apply pre-determined consequences without taking into account associated circumstances;
- discriminatory enforcement of school discipline policies;
- legislation mandating arming educational professionals with firearms.

f. SCHOOL CHOICE

NEA supports

- the provision of federal funding assistance to public charter schools that meet the following criteria:
 - have open admission policies and are tuition free;
 - are nonsectarian in their programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations and are not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
 - are fiscally accountable and subject to the same federal and state audit requirements as other public elementary and secondary schools in the state;
 - have clear objectives, missions, and goals for which they are periodically assessed and held accountable to the public;
 - directly involve school employees in their program design, implementation, and governance;

- meet the needs of at-risk students and those requiring special education services;
 - have adequate start-up resources and funding mechanisms that do not harm the district or other traditional public schools in that given district;
 - meet equivalent safety and health standards as required for existing public schools;
 - comply with all federal, state, and local laws and policies regarding due process, nondiscrimination, and equitable educational opportunity;
 - have a teaching force that is state certified or licensed;
 - operate on the basis of voluntary participation by students, faculty, and staff;
 - ensure all school staff the same collective bargaining rights provided other public school employees under state law or by local practice;
 - comply with the regular, periodic assessment and evaluation of student learning;
 - are chartered or supported by local boards of education.
- parents' right to choose, at their own expense, a nonpublic education for their children;
 - holding all private, nonpublic schools, corporations, companies, and organizations engaged in educating preK–12 students under 22 years of age and that accept any governmental/public funding, accountable under the same provisions of federal law as public schools.

NEA opposes

- the provision of federal funding assistance to private corporations and individuals for the establishment and operation of charter schools for profit;
- public funding of sectarian schools and public funding that enables nonsectarian preK–12 nonpublic schools to provide educational services that are available to students in public schools to which they have reasonable access;
- tuition tax credits for elementary or secondary schools;
- the use of vouchers or certificates in education;
- federally mandated parental option or “choice” in education programs;
- preferential treatment for nonpublic schools that receive federal funds under current law or concealment of financing, materials, and services received by nonpublic schools from public funds.

g. EDUCATION FUNDING*NEA supports*

- maintenance of support for public education by exclusion from federal taxation of state and local property, sales, and income taxes, and interest paid on state and local bonds and other debt instruments;
- federal funding for public elementary and secondary education through a program of general aid and categorical assistance;
- adequate funding for school support programs, including aid for the

disadvantaged; assistance for English Language Learners; education for individuals with disabilities and for the gifted and talented; career and technical education; immigrant education; migrant education; refugee education; programs for medically fragile students; desegregation assistance; second and subsequent languages and international studies programs; American Indian/Alaska Native education; Native Hawaiian education; developmentally appropriate gender identity and LGBTQ equity education programs; magnet schools; programs for arts in education; child nutrition programs; school-based health programs; mental health and pupil services; technological improvements; school construction, renovation, and repair; impact aid; aid for school libraries; and Gear-Up; and TRIO programs, including Upward Bound and Talent Search;

- greater funding of federal programs that otherwise reduce state or local resources available for public education;
- use of the latest federal census data available in distributing federal funds;
- a federal census procedure that contributes to a fair and accurate distribution of federal education program funds;
- federal funding for postsecondary education including programs of institutional, scholar, and student support, and including legislation to reduce or eliminate tuition costs in public higher education;

- grants to support vital research functions;
- efforts to:
 - ensure stable, adequate, and equitable funding of public schools historically receiving revenues derived from state and federal lands and natural resources;
 - ensure the sustainable use of these public lands and resources by current and future generations;
- student financial assistance to ensure access and choice for all students who wish to pursue postsecondary education regardless of personal financial means;
- support for the historically Black colleges and Hispanic serving institutions, Native American and Tribal Colleges, and developing institutions;
- a full partnership role for the federal government in assisting local school districts and postsecondary institutions by redirecting national priorities in order to provide substantial increases in federal education funding.

NEA opposes

- withholding funds from or otherwise penalizing school districts or education institutions that refuse to cooperate with the Department of Defense by providing information on or permitting testing of their students;
- provision of federal funding to schools and/or postsecondary institutions that practice discrimination;
- federal control of local schools;
- diverting public funds to nonpublic schools;

- any program or policy that requires the reduction or elimination of due process or job protection rights as a requirement for federal funding;
- any misuse of federal funds by school districts and /or public institutions.

h. EDUCATION EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

NEA supports

- programs and policies supporting diversity in the teaching profession;
- programs to encourage and support the recruitment of talented individuals, particularly minorities, to enter and remain in the teaching profession;
- development and retention, through programs including scholarships and loan forgiveness, of current and future teachers for the pursuit of excellence in our nation's schools and post secondary institutions;
- provision of financial support during the student teaching process;
- federal support for paid professional practice residency programs for beginning teachers;
- federal initiatives to enhance compensation for all public school and postsecondary personnel in order to improve the quality of education and assist in attracting and retaining talented individuals;
- federal initiatives to create affordable housing options for educators and

assist educators in accessing such housing;

- federal initiatives that support educators' ability to live where they work;
- training for pre-service, early career, and experienced educators that defines the school-to-prison pipeline and includes strategies for peer-to-peer, educator-to-parent, educator-to-student, and student-to-educator communication; and that provides an understanding of educational trauma and its impact on a student's education.

NEA opposes

- the imposition of any new federal criteria that have the effect of limiting eligibility for teacher preparation programs, except when those criteria have a demonstrable relationship to candidates' future effectiveness as teachers.

**EDUCATION EMPLOYEE
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

NEA supports

- funding for induction programs for new teachers and education support professionals;
- establishment and funding of professional development opportunities designed and directed by teachers and education support professionals;
- initiatives to support the development of cultural competence among all educators;
- national efforts to improve the professionalization of teaching;
- programs that provide adequate opportunities, experiences, and

resources for education practitioners to teach and learn from peers;

- opportunities for staff development and in-service training for all education employees;
- access to relevant, high-quality, interactive professional development in the integration of digital learning;
- the establishment of state or locally based paraeducator certification programs, coupled with requirements that school districts provide paraeducators with the necessary training and professional development;
- requirements for state credentialing of participating nonpublic school personnel;
- assurance of professional development for all postsecondary members;
- federal initiatives that respect state certification requirements for teachers.

NEA opposes

- federal programs that would weaken state credential and/or licensure requirements;
- mandating arbitrary education requirements for paraprofessionals.

**NATIONAL BOARD FOR
PROFESSIONAL TEACHING
STANDARDS**

NEA supports

- the continuation of federal funding for the operation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and, especially, the continuation and enhancement of the

specific federal appropriation used to help defray the cost of candidate fees.

EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

NEA supports

- federally funded independent academic research and development programs;
- participation of classroom teachers and other appropriate school employees in research efforts;
- dissemination of research findings to the classroom level;
- collection, through the National Center for Education Statistics, of accurate and timely data for education decision making.

NEA opposes

- politicization of federal research programs.

i. SCHOOL MODERNIZATION

NEA supports

- federal assistance for school construction, maintenance, renovation, and repair;
- federal assistance to public schools for the purpose of funding new construction or retrofitting sites to provide safe environments against the impacts of natural forces such as tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.;
- federal assistance to implement sustainable school construction practices that provide healthy, productive,

energy-saving and cost-effective buildings.

EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

NEA supports

- direct federal assistance to educational institutions for technology, equipment, accompanying peripherals and software, including maintenance, service, and training of users of the technology;
- direct federal assistance to enable public schools and colleges to provide broadband Internet access for their students and employees;
- continuation and expansion of the federal E-Rate program to support technology access in public schools;
- requirements that acceptable use policies designed with input from education employees and signed by parents/guardians and students—including but not limited to policies addressing Internet safety and security, e.g., access to “social/new media”—be in place in schools before allowing student access to the Internet;
- federal programs and policies that promote equity in the accessibility of technology and telecommunications in urban and rural communities;
- federal assistance to upgrade, service, maintain, and keep in working order all equipment and materials;
- achievement of equity in the distribution of federal funds for technology, equipment, and materials;

- the transfer and transporting of excess materials, supplies, books (if not outdated), and equipment from federal schools that are closing to school systems in American Samoa;
- revision of copyright law to provide that education employees own the copyright to works that they create in the course of their employment;
- revision of copyright law to provide a digital age instructional exemption that would allow education employees and students to use copyrighted works in distance education under the same conditions as in traditional education.

NEA opposes

- revision of the copyright law in a manner that would limit educators' fair use of copyrighted material or the first-sale provision of copyright law;

j. IDEA SPECIAL EDUCATION

NEA supports

- the provision of appropriate educational opportunities within a full continuum of placement and service options for children with disabilities and sufficient resources to achieve these ends, with 100 percent federal funding for federally mandated educational services;
- reduction of class size and case load commensurate with the added responsibility of providing appropriate educational services to students with disabilities;
- union representation for education employees who are charged with violations of students' rights;
- preservice and in-service training components as well as appropriate financial resources and personnel to support education employees who work with individuals with disabilities;
- teacher, certificated related service providers, and parental involvement in the determination of placement of children with disabilities;
- the right, without fear of reprisal, of a teacher or related service employee to refer for diagnosis a student thought to be in need of special education services;
- federal policies that require implementation of the individualized education plan (IEP) in the appropriate setting as determined by an appropriately constituted IEP team;
- the rights of teachers and related service providers and paraprofessionals to have their individual professional comments documented within the IEP process;
- the right of teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals to appeal to an independent arbitrator any aspect of an IEP, including the failure of a school to provide services and resources called for in the IEP;
- plans that provide appropriate adaptive technologies to meet individual students' needs;
- the right of teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals to advocate on behalf of students with

- disabilities, to inform parents of their rights under IDEA, to object to a local education agency's administration of the IDEA program, to advocate for timely and appropriate, relevant student accommodations, and to otherwise actively participate in the entire IDEA process without retaliation;
- simplification of administration and procedures and reduction of paperwork;
 - assurance that children with disabilities are free from corporal punishment;
 - the appropriation of federal financial resources to support employment of professional/certified school nurses to provide safe, quality medical services for students with disabilities;
 - flexibility within all assessments so that they meet specific needs of students with disabilities;
 - federal legislation that encourages states to implement appropriate standards for certificates of completion for students with special needs;
 - federal legislation that encourages states to revise the pre-referral process for identification of all students who may be eligible for special education services and expedite the initiation of the special education assessment process;
 - completing the reauthorization of IDEA in the timeframe called for in the law.

NEA opposes

- shifting responsibility for financing traditional education-related services from the public sector to private providers, except in those limited circumstances in which the student would not receive necessary, specific services in the absence of contracting out such services that meet the following criteria:
 - hire persons or entities with demonstrated experience and expertise in providing high-quality service;
 - use a competitive bidding process that is open to a range of potential vendors, nonprofit organizations, and school employees who are provided with equal information and access to district records;
 - do not receive higher per-pupil allocations than public schools for comparable services;
 - include full financial disclosure of the arrangements between the district and the service provider with guaranteed timely access to financial and other records to the public and subject to independent financial audits as part of the written contract;
 - do not compromise community labor standards (public employee wages and benefits);
 - ensure that employees who work directly for the private person or entity are represented by a collectively bargained contract, if available, or have the same rights provided other public school employees under state law or by local practice;

- comply with all federal, state, and local laws and policies regarding civil rights, nondiscrimination, and due process.
- the removal of special education professionals from the provision of direct services to students with special needs.

k. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

NEA supports

- providing financial assistance sufficient to enable all students to pay for college tuition, textbooks, required technology, and appropriate expenses and to allow all students to remain in college, provided they are making satisfactory progress;
- emphasizing needs-based financial aid through grants, rather than loans;
- full federal funding of financial assistance programs including, but not limited to, Pell Grants, including summer and winter sessions;
- direct student loans for college and university students;
- a one-year grace period before students are required to begin repayment of student loans;
- legislation to provide individuals in bankruptcy reasonable options for discharging student loans;
- loan forgiveness for students who become educational employees in public education institutions;
- reduction in the student loan default rate without undue limitation on access to postsecondary education for any qualified student;
- assurance of equitable educational opportunity;
- diversity in enrollments through programs that facilitate minority and other students' entrance into and completion of postsecondary education regardless of their immigration status;
- access to higher education and in-state tuition for in-state residents regardless of immigration status, as well as paths to legalization for undocumented high school graduates;
- federal programs, including provision of resources for instruction, research, and media materials, that enhance effectiveness of and advance excellence in two- and four-year postsecondary education institutions;
- federal programs to enhance educational programs and improve student performance in all curricular areas;
- programs that encourage the recruitment and retention of post-secondary students from ethnic, tribal, and linguistic minorities, as well as those who are not citizens, and programs that address the educational needs of such students;
- promotion of research and development of knowledge, including access by students to advanced technological resources and teaching;
- assurance of equal treatment for two- and four-year institutions;
- solutions that provide fair and equitable treatment for contingent employees in higher education;

- requiring that 50 percent of courses at postsecondary institutions be offered physically on campus, as opposed to through distance learning;
- retention of the Higher Education Act requirement that for-profit higher education institutions receive at least 10 percent of revenues from sources other than federal student aid funds;
- restoration of the dependents education allowance under Social Security;
- exemption from taxation and/or withdrawal penalties for Individual Retirement Account and 403(b) savings used for an individual's or his/her dependents' postsecondary education;
- exemption from taxation of educational scholarships, fellowships, or awards;
- full deductibility of interest on educational loans;
- provision of mental health services and treatment to all students who need it, including the removal of barriers to obtaining such treatment;
- federal funding for the development and implementation of mental health protocols for all faculty and staff involving students in need of mental health services;
- federal funding for programs to assist postsecondary institutions to develop emergency response plans;
- the promotion of articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary institutions (as well as between different post-secondary institutions) when the content of those agreements has been determined by educators from both sectors;
- abolishing all student loan predatory lending practices;
- terms on federal and private student loans that support the educational and professional goals of lower and middle class borrowers, while protecting them from predatory lending practices, through strong federal regulation of loan products, fair consumer protections, reasonable terms and interest rates, and accommodating repayment options;
- exempting all federal loan forgiveness amounts from federal income taxation for all public service employees;
- consistent definitions of higher education part-time and contingent faculty work to ensure equality and consistency of protections under the law;
- resumption of and adequate funding for the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty and inclusion of data collection on both tenure-line and contingent faculty;
- a more comprehensive work supplement from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that would include contingent academic workers and would be conducted at regular intervals beyond the 2017 update;
- transparency about higher education faculty working conditions in order to prompt colleges and universities to accurately disclose to the public the working conditions of all of its faculty and professional staff, including numbers, compensation, and access to institutional support of part-time contingent faculty.

NEA opposes

- the use of withdrawal or incomplete grades as a basis for reducing or eliminating financial assistance to students who must interrupt their education for justifiable reasons;
- denying federal student aid funds to college students based on their immigration status or their enrollment in appropriate remedial courses;
- denying federal financial aid to college students who have been convicted of misdemeanor, nonviolent drug offenses;
- the use of draft registration as an eligibility criterion for financial assistance;
- use of dropout rates or completion rates in accountability measures used to qualify institutions for public financial support.

*ADULT EDUCATION**NEA supports*

- lifelong learning for adults through public schools and postsecondary institutions;
- special efforts to end illiteracy;
- coordination of adult education efforts with K–12 programs or postsecondary institutions;
- the provision of additional federal funds for adult, continuing, and alternative education programs;
- digital literacy.

I. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION*NEA supports*

- the efficient and effective provision of adequate resources to local career and technical educational authorities, including K–12, secondary, and/or postsecondary institutions to maintain, enhance, and expand quality career and technical education programs;
- federal resources for programs that prepare students effectively for the high-technology environment that will exist throughout their working lives;
- direct federal assistance to secondary education agencies and postsecondary agencies and/or institutions for purchase or lease of up-to-date equipment for career and technical education programs in response to changes in the job market;
- the provision of equity and access to quality career and technical education programs for those underserved in the past, as well as for traditional students, and the use of career and technical education as a tool for eliminating biases in employment opportunities;
- the involvement of teachers and other appropriate education employees, parents, and students in development of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs;
- coordination of career and technical education programs with other employment and training programs through public education

- institutions;
- cooperation with the business community in the implementation of career and technical education programs;
- effective school-to career initiatives;
- lowering Perkins funding allocation base limits to allow smaller school districts to participate in the program.

m. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

NEA supports

- adequately funded and culturally sensitive programs for English Language Learner students that provide meaningful instruction in other curriculum areas through such programs as bilingual education and English language development and result in functional proficiency in English;
- federal legislation that emphasizes the development of multicultural/multilingual education programs in all public schools receiving federal monies;
- federal programs that help attract and retain a robust pool of clinically-prepared bilingual teachers and paraprofessionals through programs that are created in full participation with English Language Learner credentialed and licensed teachers, and implemented and sustained by credentialed and licensed English Language Learner teachers in all public schools receiving federal monies, to identify, counsel, tutor, and nurture bilingual students through their secondary schooling and postsecondary education;
- adequately funding culturally sensitive, ongoing professional development opportunities for general and special education teachers, as well as ESPs, to help them support English Language Learners in attaining the academic and language proficiency targets;
- federal requirements that any state or local curricular reform is aligned with state-adopted content standards and English language proficiency standards;
- a second generation of English language proficiency assessments aligned to the new ELP standards;
- accountability systems that implement a growth model approach to measuring the academic progress of English Language Learner students;
- federal requirements that states develop comprehensive processes and plans for appropriate identification of all English Language Learners based on a state-approved language assessment. The results of this assessment will also determine eligibility for all tested subjects in English;
- federal requirements that states develop guidelines to govern use of test accommodations based on scientific research that do not invalidate the assessment for English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

NEA opposes

- discipline policies that disproportionately affect students who are English Language Learners by creating a disparate impact on these students which contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline.

n. FEDERAL IMPACTED AREAS*NEA supports*

- programs for school districts that require special assistance due to federal activity or policy;
- payments to ensure quality education for all children in school districts impacted by federal installations or activities or on American Indian reservations;
- forward funding of such payments for programs administered by the Department of Education;
- special standards for severely impacted districts;
- 100 percent of entitlement for school districts whose boundaries are coterminous with a military reservation and for school districts that are more than 50 percent impacted with federally connected pupils;
- adequate compensation to state and local governments for revenues lost as a result of federal property, presence, activity, or policy;
- assistance to communities and individuals adversely affected by closures of or cutbacks in federal installations or federally funded activities.

o. FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION*NEA supports*

- separation of church and state in federal education programs;
- continuation of the Cabinet-level U.S. Department of Education;
- direct federal funding to local education agencies for provision of classroom instruction;
- elimination of unnecessary paperwork;
- full federal funding for any state and/or local programs or activities mandated by federal law, while recognizing that the lack of full funding should not preclude the mandate if it relates to civil rights or other constitutional protections;
- vetting or piloting any new legislation, initiative, program, or mandate as to its additional impact, specifically, but not limited to, workload impacts.

NEA opposes

- erosion of the role of the U.S. Department of Education or undermining the appropriate federal role in public education through legislative, budgetary, regulatory, or other measures;
- federal legislation, that is not related to civil rights or constitutional protections, that places mandates on states without full funding.

BLOCK GRANTS

NEA supports

- adequate funding for block grants to states for appropriate education programs;
- compliance of block grant programs with health and safety and civil rights laws;
- fiscal accountability and review for block grant programs;
- inclusion of teachers and other appropriate personnel in the planning process for block grant programs.

NEA opposes

- use of block grants as a budget-cutting device;
- use of block grants as a means of undermining programs to meet specific targeted needs;
- use of block grants to provide unconstitutional assistance, whether direct or indirect, to nonpublic schools.

II. SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

a. CHILDREN'S HEALTH

NEA supports

- access to quality prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal care services;
- development and maintenance of health care programs for children;
- federal programs that promote childhood obesity prevention and support for healthy lifestyle choices, including fostering good nutrition, fitness, and overall wellness;

- adequate funding for Medicaid and the Supplemental Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to ensure health coverage for uninsured children, with the eventual goal of single-payer healthcare coverage for all residents of the U.S. aged 22 years and under;
- federal resources to ensure quality, safe health care standards for all children, including strict regulation and enforcement by professional/certified school nurses;
- the development and enforcement of health and safety standards specifically for children for exposure to hazardous substances;
- federal funding for local development and delivery of curriculum about the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) to empower students to protect themselves;
- legislation that provides that a licensed professional health care worker is present in every school for the duration of the student school day;
- legislation that provides for the inclusion of physical education and health education in appropriate federal education programs;
- programs for the prevention and treatment of perinatally transmitted drug dependency in infants and for remediation of special problems associated with such dependency;
- label warnings of the detrimental health effects of tobacco and alcohol sold domestically or internationally;

- label warnings of the detrimental health effects of herbal and/or natural performance enhancing and weight control dietary supplements;
- legislation requiring warning labels on everyday products that may be misused as inhalants and funding/creating programs to educate the public as to the detrimental health effects of such product misuse;
- messages about the health and safety implications of alcohol consumption, tobacco use, and substance abuse;
- elimination of direct and indirect broadcast advertising of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products;
- pregnancy-related counseling and support services, including prenatal care, for youth;
- federal funding for development and delivery of curriculum about blood-borne pathogens, thus empowering students to protect themselves from these life-threatening conditions;
- ensuring the ability of health care professionals and other related education support professionals to communicate with language minority parents, to the extent practicable, in the language the parent understands best;
- adequate funding to ensure quality, safe health standards for all learning environments by ensuring proper custodial procedures and staffing.

SCHOOL NURSES

NEA supports

- federal funds to support safe, quality health care standards by professional/certified school nurses;
- federal programs to help achieve a school nurse-to-student ratio of one school nurse to every 750 or fewer students at each site that is appropriate to provide quality school health care;
- federal programs to enhance school-based health programs;
- establishment and funding of programs to support safe, quality medical practices provided by professional/certified school nurses;
- federal funds to support professional/certified school nurses who can communicate effectively with English Language Learners and their families.

NEA opposes

- requiring school employees, other than professional/certified school nurses, to perform medical procedures.

b. CHILDREN'S SAFETY

NEA supports

- establishment and funding of programs and standards to protect children from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect, both domestically and internationally;
- federal legislation mandating a regularly updated tracking system used for identifying and locating

- registered sex offenders with appropriate safeguards;
- development of collaborative programs among family, school, community, business, social services, and law enforcement agencies in the effort to reduce family/domestic violence, especially as it affects children;
 - legislation to assist in developing programs to protect children from danger, ill health, or hunger;
 - federal requirements that manufacturers add a bittering agent to all poisonous household products;
 - cooperative public and private efforts for the identification, location, and return of missing children;
 - federal assistance to schools and communities for implementation of effective staff, youth and student suicide prevention programs, including professional development for teachers and education support professionals in suicide prevention, alertness, intervention and postvention programs for prekindergarten through higher education;
 - minimum standards for youth camps and school bus safety, including school bus capacity guidelines with student safety as the first priority;
 - legislation restricting the number of students to be transported to and from school on a school bus to no more than two students per seat and no standees;
 - federal funding for technology and training to enhance school bus safety, including products that assist drivers with pre- and post-trip inspection and route planning, and training to prevent and/or respond to safety threats;
 - federal legislation mandating a test for drugs and alcohol of any driver involved in an accident while transporting students, within the mandated three-hour timeframe, that is admissible in a criminal prosecution;
 - a federal ban on the importation, sale, or distribution in the United States and its territories of video games that promote hatred or violence toward a particular group or groups of people;
 - federal regulation on the sale or distribution of games that have gratuitous violence as an integral part of their play;
 - legislation that protects children and youth from Internet pornography or computer-generated pornographic images, consistent with First Amendment protections;
 - additional support systems and shelters for victims of family violence;
 - legislation that requires timely pre-employment criminal background checks for all school employees who work with children in schools and facilitates the interstate sharing of this information while protecting employee due process rights;
 - legislation that facilitates the timely interstate sharing of information in appropriate screenings of volunteers who work with children in schools.
- NEA opposes*
- the use of corporal punishment in any education agency.

c. CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

NEA supports

- federal support for school meal programs that follow age-appropriate guidelines to provide adequate, appetizing, and nutritious foods;
- provision of nutrition assistance to families unable to meet basic nutrition needs;
- legislation that requires examination of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) food safety, and adequate labeling of GMO foods, and private right of action to enforce GMO food labeling requirements.

d. CHILD POVERTY/ HOMELESSNESS

NEA supports

- court-assured payment of designated child support;
- total federal assumption of the cost and operation of welfare programs based on standards of human dignity;
- a minimum wage indexed to the cost of living and extended to all employees.

e. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

NEA supports

- federal support for collaborative efforts by education and community leaders to implement appropriate local policies and incentives for exemplary in- and out-of-school programs to prepare youth for meaningful employment;

- paying youth at least the federal minimum wage;
- partnerships of public schools/post-secondary education with government, labor, business, and community-based groups in development and implementation of job training and retraining programs;
- strong, effectively enforced laws governing the employment of minors in order to protect young people's health and safety as well as their time for education.

NEA opposes

- the diminution or supplanting of public career and technical education by federally funded public or private training programs.

f. SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ DEPENDENCY

NEA supports

- federal assistance to schools and communities for the establishment and funding of education programs that address prevention of substance abuse and rehabilitation of victims;
- development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based drug and violence prevention programs that link community resources with schools and that integrate services involving education, vocational, and job skills training and placement, law enforcement, health, mental health, community service, mentoring, and other appropriate services;

- improved and expanded drug treatment and rehabilitation programs that ensure access to all who need these services;
- education programs to prevent substance abuse;
- education programs to prevent the use and/or misuse of herbal and/or natural performance enhancing and weight control dietary supplements by students;
- standardization of laws prohibiting the production, distribution, and sale of illegal drugs and of the paraphernalia associated with their use;
- repeal of agricultural subsidies for tobacco;
- effective coordination of federal, state, and local enforcement/interdiction efforts;
- federal law to require tobacco-free educational institutions.
- the preservation of educational employees' rights when working with violent children;
- just cause for any disciplinary action with guaranteed due process through final and binding arbitration;
- equal protection of public education employees under workers' compensation;
- amendment of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to guarantee covered public employees a 15-minute break for each three hours worked and a minimum 30-minute, duty-free lunch period;
- safe, hazard-free working environments for public education employees, with inspection and control standards equal or superior to those of Occupational Safety and Health Administration;
- protection of federal employees' rights to medical treatment of their choice for on-the-job injuries in a workers' compensation claim;
- protection of public school labor contracts from capricious cancellation;
- full worker protection rights for school personnel who are federal employees;
- protection against retaliation for government employees who seek to expose financial abuse and fraud in government programs;
- legislation to ensure availability to individuals of adequate insurance coverage at fair rates and affordable liability coverage at fair rates and affordable liability coverage for public institutions;

III. A VOICE IN THE WORKPLACE

a. SCHOOL EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

NEA supports

- a federal statute that would guarantee meaningful collective bargaining rights to the employees of public schools, colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions, and that allows for the continued operation of state statutes that meet federally established minimum standards;
- improvement in the federal employment compensation law for public education employees;

- a mutually designed, comprehensive personnel evaluation and accountability system with procedural guarantees and due process in every school system;
- testing as one of a number of elements for determining original certification;
- expansion of Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code to include group long-term health care insurance premiums;
- assurance of the welfare and economic security of all postsecondary members;
- employment protection for school employees who act to protect students expressing their first amendment rights;
- efforts to ensure contingent educational professionals the rights to unemployment benefits during breaks between academic terms;
- legislation protecting guest education workers against retaliation for fully participating in protected activity;
- legislation to end the discrimination and harassment of school employees based on their accent, language, cultural, and ethnic background;
- legislation that protects the privacy of educators by forbidding the inclusion of personally identifiable information in longitudinal data systems and other publically available databases that track student performance, evaluations and other data.

NEA opposes

- denying employees bargaining rights solely because they participate in a site-based decision-making program, a faculty Senate, or other system of collegial governance;
- mandatory testing of school employees for HIV/AIDS;
- the sub-contracting or contracting out of public school services and/or positions when qualified educational personnel are available;
- restrictions on the political rights of government employees;
- federal initiatives that mandate or promote traditionally defined merit pay or incentive pay schemes or other pay-for-performance systems that link teacher compensation to student performance;
- federal legislation giving financial incentives or pay to teachers based solely on the subjects or fields in which they teach;
- the transfer of school employees into persistently low-performing schools without their consent;
- reduction in workers' compensation benefits provided to employees as a result of an on-the-job injury;
- any requirement that public employees use leave before becoming eligible for disability or workers' compensation benefits;
- requirements that education employees identify undocumented immigrant students and/or parents;
- the testing of teachers as a criterion for job retention, promotion, tenure, or salary increments;

- use of student test scores as an evaluative measure for education employee performance appraisal, job assignment, job retention, promotion, tenure, and/or school performance, unless such tests are shown to be developmentally appropriate, scientifically valid, and reliable for the purpose of measuring both student learning and a teacher's performance;
- the use of student test scores to determine educator compensation;
- any program or policy that requires the abrogation of collectively bargained contract language as a requirement for federal funding.

PARITY BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYEES

NEA supports

- fair treatment of public employees, including those in public education, unfettered by governmental attempts to solve governmental economic problems at the expense of such employees;
- treatment of public employees equitable with that of private sector employees.

NEA opposes

- wage limits or controls on employee or retirement benefits or rights restrictions that single out public over private employees;
- the privatization of public sector jobs designed to reduce employee benefits;

- the privatization of public services and public sector jobs customarily provided in the public sector.

UNION REGULATION

NEA supports

- amendment of the federal postal statutes to enable recognized employee organizations to use employer internal mail systems in public school districts and postsecondary institutions;
- amendment of the National Labor Relations Act to prevent the permanent replacement of employees who participate in a strike;
- repeal of the so-called right-to-work provision of federal labor law;
- amendment of the Landrum-Griffin Act to permit required proportional representation of minorities in union governance;
- amendment of the National Labor Relations Act to overturn the *Yeshiva* decision by specifying that college and university faculty are not managers but are employees with collective bargaining rights under law.

NEA opposes

- inclusion of labor unions in the Hobbs Act or similar legislation.

b. SCHOOL EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SECURITY

NEA supports

- a stable and secure retirement benefit for all education employees as

- essential to providing and maintaining a high quality education system;
- availability of voluntary Social Security coverage to eligible school employee groups where initiated by those groups in states in which public employees are not covered by Social Security;
 - total repeal of the Social Security Offset/Government Pension Offset as well as proposals that provide incremental steps toward total repeal of the Government Pension Offset, which will establish equity between public and private sector employees as well as restoring to eligible individuals and survivors the full Social Security benefit earned by their spouses;
 - total repeal of the Social Security Offset/Windfall Elimination Provision as well as proposals that provide incremental steps toward total repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision for members who have qualified for retirement or disability benefits from both Social Security and another government pension system;
 - adequate federal insurance of state or local retirement and/or deferred compensation plans that are invested in institutions protected by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation;
 - portability of pension rights and benefits through retention of retirement rights and assets;
 - the right of an individual to transfer tax-sheltered savings to purchase retirement credit without adverse tax consequences;
 - equitable retirement credits and/or buyback rights;
 - fiduciary and reporting standards to inform members and to protect assets and earned benefits of retirement systems;
 - standards for vesting and portability, ownership, and military or Peace Corps service credit;
 - federal legislation ending discriminatory policies of residency requirements for military service credit in state retirement systems;
 - protection of members' retirement income through automatic escalator clauses;
 - use of Section 125 plans for retired educational personnel, with the respective retirement fund designated as the employer;
 - reinstatement of the three-year period for recovery of members' retirement contributions.
- NEA opposes*
- mandatory coverage of public employees under Social Security for employee groups that have declined coverage;
 - merger of Social Security with any other public employee pension plan;
 - diminution of retirement income;
 - supersession of substantially equivalent or superior state retirement statutes by federal standards.

c. PENSION FUND PROTECTION

NEA supports

- public employee pension fund protection including, but not limited to, the following principal features:
 - maintenance of accurate minutes of trustee proceedings in order that all funding transactions will be visible to participants and the government;
 - regulation of selection of investment managers, adoption of investment objectives, and monitoring of the manager's performance;
 - active investment of resources so that funds are fully and productively invested at all times;
 - requirements that investments be socially and fiducially responsible;
 - regulations covering payments to beneficiaries in the proper amount as long as the fund remains solvent;
 - annual audits;
 - actuarial valuation at least every three years;
 - annual reports to the Department of Labor and to the members of the pension fund;
 - a requirement that employers fully fund all promised retirement benefits including post-retirement medical benefits;
 - a prohibition on reduction of basic pension benefits, cost-of-living adjustment provisions, or post-retirement medical benefits to employees who have become vested in the plan;
 - an emergency provision that all benefits of a plan that becomes insolvent through fraud or poor

investments would be paid by an agency such as the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC);

- the right to hire their own staff, i.e., executive directors, investment officers, and legal counsel;
- a requirement that retirement boards have at least one retired member elected to the board;
- a requirement that retirement boards be in charge of investments as well as benefits.
- federal standards to assume that the expected rate of return on pension fund investments is commensurate with the expected risks of the investment;
- eligibility of public employee pension fund representatives for appointment to creditor committees established to settle corporate Chapter 11 bankruptcies;
- public employees' ability to make pre-tax contributions to 401(k) and similar pretax plans for retirement savings, in addition to existing retirement plans;
- requiring all member pension plans to have as a basis an adequate and fully funded defined benefit plan;
- strengthening private defined benefit plans through greater funding flexibility, including but not limited to, extending the plan funding period in excess of seven years.

NEA opposes

- taxation of public employee pension benefits;
- taxation of health care benefits provided to retirees;
- mandatory defined contribution plans.

d. GENERAL EMPLOYEE RIGHTS*NEA supports*

- legislation that advances the rights of workers to organize and collectively bargain;
- strengthened occupational health and safety standards and programs with diligent enforcement;
- legislation that provides protection and support for lactating mothers;
- legislation mandating employers to offer short-term disability policies that include maternity leave;
- reducing the hours of service required for educational employees to qualify for the Family and Medical Leave Act or any other law that guarantees leave for family or medical reasons.

NEA opposes

- policies that encourage the replacement of unionized workers by non-represented individuals in welfare-to-work programs;
- policies that diminish employees' rights to be paid extra compensation for overtime work;
- federal legislation that would have the effect of diminishing, undermining, or circumventing collective bargaining rights.

IV. GOOD PUBLIC POLICY**a. PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELL-BEING***AFFORDABLE HOUSING**NEA supports*

- federal support for housing affordable to low- and moderate-income individuals through incentives for construction and rehabilitation and fiscal policies that put fiscally responsible mortgage loans within reach;
- federal initiatives to create affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income individuals;
- policies that support housing stability for students;
- federal interventions and supports to assist homeowners at risk of losing their homes;
- establishment and funding of support programs for homeless, low-income, or abandoned students, including after-school enrichment programming and required transportation;
- legislation, including programs of assistance, to lessen the problem of homelessness in the United States;
- aligning the current United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness to that of the United States Department of Education definition of homelessness.

CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

NEA supports

- requirements for increased daily educational programming appropriate for young children, including verbatim highlighted captions in commercials and educational children's programming as a means to help children learn to read;
- partial reservation of cable television capacity for educational uses;
- funding for the National Endowment for the Arts;
- adequate public financing for public broadcasting;
- equal time requirements, reinstatement of the fairness doctrine, ascertainment, affirmative action in broadcast regulations and the media ownership rules in the Telecommunications Act of 1996;
- federal legislation to preserve historically significant lands and structures;
- community centers that support arts education and foster an appreciation of the arts;
- a national monument to educators to be located in Washington, D.C.

ENERGY

NEA supports

- development and implementation of a long-range national energy policy that reduces dependence on foreign sources of energy; emphasizes research on, development of, and rapid conversion to environmentally safe

energy sources; and encourages conservation of current energy sources.

NEA opposes

- curtailment or closure of schools as a first resort in energy crises.

ENVIRONMENT

NEA supports

- protection of the environment and natural resources;
- the establishment and maintenance of federal wilderness areas, recreation areas, refuge areas, and designated local green areas;
- strict regulation of facilities that dispose of, store, or handle medical, toxic, or other hazardous materials;
- financial protection of individuals impaired by hazards;
- reduction in the rate of deterioration of the environment through incentives for product concentration, use of biodegradable packaging materials, decreased volume of original packaging limited to that required by the legitimate dictates of health and safety, waste recycling, and other means as feasible;
- standards and timely enforcement and funding for safeguarding against pollution of the air (e.g., acid rain), water, or food by chemicals or radiation;
- public access to quality water supplies that are free of poisons, toxins, and pollutants that meets EPA requirements;

- stronger federal action in solving the problem of toxic waste dumping;
- legislation to hold all companies completely financially responsible by removing liability caps on compensation for any environmental, social, and economic disruption or destruction for which they are responsible;
- legislation that ensures regular testing of water sources for all schools and communities and timely reporting of results to parents and communities.

NEA opposes

- weakening of environmental health and safety efforts through underfunding, laxity in regulatory standards, or other means.

HEALTH CARE

NEA supports a national health care policy that will mandate universal coverage with the highest quality health care at the lowest possible cost. Health care reform must:

- guarantee coverage for the uninsured;
- control costs so that premiums and health care services are affordable to all, regardless of income or employment status;
- incorporate provisions and standards related to medical safety and quality;
- result in comprehensive health care coverage that includes but is not limited to medical, surgical, hospital,

behavioral health, prescription drug, dental, vision, hearing, and long-term care services;

- provide patients with a choice of health care providers;
- include preventive, wellness, rehabilitative, and disease management programs;
- make use of health information technology to reduce medical errors and administrative costs;
- ensure the continued right to maintain employer sponsored health care benefits, including the ability to bargain benefits above any established floor and the exclusion from taxes of the cost and/or value of health care benefits.

In pursuit of this goal, *NEA also supports—*

- a tax-supported, single-payer health care plan for all residents of the United States, its territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, adoption of which shall be supported at whatever level of government is appropriate, as well as steps that would move our nation closer to this goal, so the maximum amount of money is used for benefits (matching Medicare's low overhead);
- establishment and funding of federal research efforts, including those devoted to health care issues specific to women's health concerns;
- coverage for full men's and women's reproductive health care;

- coverage for audiological services and/or devices including the diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss, and/or devices including hearing aids;
- a major federal commitment to HIV/AIDS and other blood borne pathogens research to develop a preventive agent, effective treatments, and a cure;
- a national program of long-term care, including home health care for the chronically ill, including those with cognitive or mental impairments;
- strict federal standards for staffing, safety, health care, and nutrition services provided by nursing homes;
- tax exemptions for health insurance premiums and benefits;
- allowing retired state and local government employees to pay health care premiums with pretax dollars;
- parity for mental health coverage;
- expansion of mental health services and the coordination with public schools on the provision of such services;
- government oversight and regulation of managed care plans – including Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs), Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), and other health benefit delivery systems – to ensure that quality, comprehensive, and appropriate services are not limited or denied simply for financial reasons;
- a comprehensive Medicare/Medicaid system with protected benefits, including prescription drug benefits and benefits for home health care, mental health services, medical transportation services, and nonmedical aid;
- Medicare as a social insurance program available on an optional basis to all school employee groups or individual active or retired education employees in states in which public school employees are not covered by Medicare;
- open enrollment for the purchase of Medigap insurance;
- qualification relief for members who elect into Medicare too late to qualify with the required 40 quarters;
- the provision of low cost, accessible, and high quality prescription drugs for all individuals, including prescription drugs imported/reimported from other countries meeting all applicable safety laws of the United States, as long as such importation/reimportation encourages the utilization of evidence-based medications; and addresses incorrect dosages, sale of expired prescription drugs, and sale of drugs with inadequate usage directions;
- directing the federal government to negotiate prescription drug prices and use subsequent savings to fill the “donut hole” in Medicare Part D.

NEA opposes

- shifting of health care costs to the insured;
- any means test for Medicare;
- any capping of general fund support for Medicare B;
- any shift of the cost of health care under Medicare/Medicaid to the beneficiary and/or his or her family;

- any new barrier to eligibility for benefits under Medicare;
- mandatory coverage of public employees under Medicare for employee groups that have declined coverage;
- diminishing any health benefits received by active or retired members that have been achieved through state legislation or collective bargaining.

JOBS/ECONOMY

NEA supports

- full employment, including job training and development programs;
- federal incentives to enhance income security, education, job training and placement, child care, and family support services;
- educational and rehabilitation (jobs) programs for incarcerated individuals;
- legislation that discourages employers from the practice of outsourcing U.S. jobs to other countries.

SENIOR CITIZENS

NEA supports

- increased availability of dependent care for all ages;
- a decent standard of living for the elderly, with support systems to prevent and/or treat physical and mental abuse;
- programs of assistance to lessen problems and concerns of older Americans in the United States;
- programs focused on aging in place to assist older Americans in staying in their homes.

SOCIAL SECURITY

NEA supports

- Social Security as social insurance, not welfare or a “means-tested” program;
- improved Social Security benefits for participants, especially low-income workers, dependents, and survivors;
- Social Security benefit equity for men and women through earnings sharing and/or benefit changes;
- guaranteed Social Security survivor/disability benefits for minor surviving children under the care of parents, grandparents, or other custodial adults, and for anyone under the age of 26 who is a full time student in an accredited institution of higher learning;
- repeal of the Social Security “notch” that reduces benefits for individuals born between 1917 and 1926;
- strengthening the guaranteed benefit formula of the Social Security program by raising the taxable wage base subject to Social Security tax;
- legislation that protects the integrity of the Social Security trust fund, preserving funds for benefits;
- repeal of current taxes on Social Security benefits and exemption from income tax of all Social Security benefits regardless of income;
- protection of the solvency of the Social Security system through an actuarially sound tax base that maintains the integrity of the Social Security trust fund and through the use of general revenues, if necessary;

- maintaining and/or enhancing Social Security benefits;
 - full annual cost-of-living protections for Social Security recipients;
 - Social Security reform that:
 - maintains or enhances the economic security of current and future generations who contribute to the financing of the Social Security system;
 - guarantees a foundation of retirement income that permits older family members to live in dignity and reduces the economic burden on younger family members caring for older family members;
 - provides a sound base of universal insurance protections to families faced with wage loss due to old age, disability, or the death of the family wage earner;
 - is equitable, nondiscriminatory, and ensures as a minimum standard that individuals covered by Social Security receive at least the same level of economic benefit provided by the existing system;
 - minimizes Social Security fund investment risks;
 - maintains the current, low-level costs of administering Social Security;
 - fulfills Social Security's existing commitments to covered employees and ensures current noncovered and/or covered state and local government employees their current, expected level of non-Social Security benefits;
 - is integrated with sound, long-run employment and worker training/education policies;
 - recognizes that federal investment in a better educated workforce is sound educational and employment policy that will positively impact the individual's ability to contribute to the Social Security system;
 - reflects careful deliberation concerning economic growth and labor market issues.
 - legislative rather than regulatory determination of the process by which the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and any adjustments resulting from it are calculated;
 - the federal government taxing all earned income, not just the first \$100,000, for Social Security;
 - oversight to prevent fraud, waste and abuse of the Social Security System, Medicare, and Medicaid.
- NEA opposes*
- limitations on post-retirement earnings for Social Security recipients;
 - adverse effects on active or retired members of any CPI adjustment;
 - increases in the Social Security retirement age;
 - privatization of Social Security.

b. HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

NEA supports

- guaranteeing the right to a high-quality, free and appropriate public education to all students;
- rigorous enforcement of civil rights laws, including desegregation activities, Patsy Mink Title IX Act regulations, and programs for American Indians/ Alaska Natives, through full funding and appropriate administration actions and reporting requirements;
- federal programs that provide public school educators with resources and materials to combat the influence of hate groups;
- provision of federal funds to school districts for the education of children of undocumented workers, immigrants, refugees, and members of the diplomatic community;
- legislation that clarifies the implementation of Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act in the public schools, including appropriate use of 504 plans versus Individualized Education Programs;
- revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to protect the privacy of student information by requiring specific parental or legal guardian consent before releasing student information to military recruiters;
- protection of First Amendment rights for all people, including students,

with the right to engage in robust and responsible discussion of issues in school-sponsored student media;

- federal programs that provide information to students to improve understanding about different sexual orientations and gender identity;
- federal funds to expand the capacity of the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights to engage in rigorous investigation and enforcement of Title VI complaints to expand resource equity for all students;
- federal programs that provide public school educators with the resources and materials to implement professional development for all staff on conflict resolution and restorative practices.

NEA opposes

- any governmental attempts to re-segregate public schools;
- efforts to restrict or end federal court jurisdiction in civil rights matters, including restrictions on the use of busing as an available option to achieve desegregation;
- infringement of the principles of religious freedom through the introduction of sectarian practices in the public schools;
- use of economic hardship as grounds to cease implementation of programs designed to achieve racial integration and/or educational equity;
- federal legislation that denies children's access to public education or health care based on their citizenship status or documentation;

- reducing or denying families government assistance benefits based on their child's school attendance.

FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Equal Rights, Non-Discrimination, and Protection from Violence

NEA supports

- obtaining, preserving, and strengthening basic civil and human rights under law;
- eliminating barriers restricting the individual exercise of rights;
- full equality and opportunity—economic and educational—for all, including the addition of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution;
- legislation that would prohibit religious organizations that accept federal funds from discriminating in hiring and delivery of services on the basis of race, religion, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or HIV/AIDS status;
- the use of affirmative action to redress historical patterns of discrimination;
- federal initiatives to combat racial profiling;
- legislation calling for genetic non-discrimination in employee hiring and in the issuance of health insurance by employers and health benefits providers;
- passage of a federal statute prohibiting employment discrimination on

the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression;

- federal legislation designed to combat hate crimes, sexual harassment, workplace harassment, and violence against all individuals;
- protection of individuals' rights against retaliation by superiors or coworkers after participating in due process regarding sexual harassment or workplace harassment;
- federal initiatives to combat stalking;
- legislation to stop "cyber-bullying" in the workplace and among the general public.
- enactment and enforcement of open and fair housing legislation;
- ensuring all legally married people have equal access to federal benefits regardless of their state of residence.

NEA opposes

- tax benefits to organizations that promote hatred.

Specific Populations

NEA supports

- federal legislation that ensures appropriate accessibility rights for individuals with disabilities;
- equal opportunity and responsibility for women and men in and following military service;
- recognition of the Native Hawaiians as an indigenous people who have a special relationship with the United States and a right to self-determination under federal law;

- protection of American Indian/ Alaska Native religious rights and practices;
- full veterans benefits for Filipinos who fought alongside the United States during World War II;
- national observances recognizing the contributions of ethnic-minority groups and women to this nation;
- a national holiday honoring César Chávez;
- federal legislation ensuring representation of migrant workers through collective bargaining by the organization of their choice;
- federal legislation to create a National Museum of Women's history in Washington, DC;
- repeal of the five-year waiting period for financially eligible legal non-citizens to receive federally funded health care;
- maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of federally guaranteed parental and medical leave covering the birth or adoption of a child, the serious illness of a spouse or dependent family member, or the employee's own serious illness or injury;
- statehood for the District of Columbia.

NEA opposes

- infringement of due process rights, including the right of habeas corpus;
- federal legislation that would undermine citizenship rights for all individuals born in or under the jurisdiction of the United States of America;

- immigration or visa restrictions that constitute an attack on labor unions, human rights, or national origin;
- unreasonable constraints on foreign students and their dependents in the name of national security;
- arbitrary restrictions on the civil rights of persons who test positive for HIV/AIDS;
- internment or containment of racially identifiable segments of society;
- execution of juveniles and the mentally disabled.

Privacy, Freedom of Information, and Governmental Intervention

NEA supports

- reproductive freedom without governmental intervention;
- prohibiting the government from searching for or seizing media sales records or library records that contain personally identifiable information concerning individuals;
- academic freedom;
- freedom of inquiry and freedom of the press;
- protection of First Amendment rights and privacy issues in telecommunications;
- citizen access to public records under the Freedom of Information and Federal Advisory Committee Act;
- legislation that ensures town hall meetings held by members of Congress in taxpayer funded facilities should be open to any person.

NEA opposes

- testing of individuals for drug or alcohol abuse without probable cause;
- unwarranted exchange between agencies of confidential information about a citizen without the individual's knowledge.

Slavery and Genocide

NEA supports

- action by Congress to support a demand to end slavery, genocide, violence, and atrocities worldwide;
- legislation to study possible reparations to African Americans to address the past and residual effects of slavery in America;
- stringent punishments for traffickers of forced labor and protections for victims.

Judiciary

NEA supports

- full congressional review of Supreme Court nominees and judicial appointments;
- confirmation of Supreme Court Justices and federal judges who support civil rights.

Incarceration

NEA supports

- a moratorium on capital punishment at the state and federal levels because capital punishment is being carried out inequitably with regard

to social class, race, ethnicity, gender, and other similar factors;

- reallocating funding from prison expansion for the purpose of incarceration of offenders of nonviolent crimes into rehabilitation, education, and other social services, including alternative and rehabilitative educational settings;
- rigorous protection of the rights of those detained in enforcement/interdiction efforts;
- federal initiatives to ensure the safety of those incarcerated in federal, state, and local prisons;
- legislation to reduce mass incarceration.

NEA opposes

- federal funding and support for privatization of prisons, juvenile detention centers, immigration detention facilities, and other similar facilities at the local, state, and federal level;
- federal funding and support of all aspects of the prison industrial complex and criminal justice system, from arrest through re-entry, by for-profit entities.

Other

NEA supports

- upgrading of the U.S. Institute of Peace into a U.S. Peace Academy with degree-granting authority;
- prioritizing the allocation of federal funds under circumstances of civil

emergencies for reconstitution of public services that may have been disrupted, including public education.

NEA opposes

- any legislation or constitutional amendment designating English as the official language of the United States;
- U.S. coercion of other nations to accept U.S.-produced tobacco and alcohol as trade items in contravention of these nations' laws and/or customs.

*IMMIGRATION AND
NATURALIZATION*

NEA supports

- comprehensive immigration reform that:
 - recognizes the political, economic, and labor issues underlying immigration;
 - promotes a humane, fair, and orderly system of legal immigration that advances and protects the public interest, human rights, civil liberties, and due process;
 - recognizes the importance of family unity and rejects laws and delays that undermine keeping families intact;
 - rejects the criminalization of undocumented immigrants and those who work with them, including educators; and
 - deals justly with undocumented immigrants who have worked and lived in the United States and includes a path to permanent

residency, citizenship, or asylum once background checks have been completed.

- legislation to reduce barriers that prevent legal immigrants from successful completion of the naturalization process for U.S. citizenship;
- legislation to eliminate discrimination in the immigration laws by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status in the same manner as spouses of citizens and lawful permanent residents.

NATIVE LANDS

NEA supports

- legislation to protect existing Alaska Native ownership of Alaska Native Lands Settlement Act lands;
- protection of American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian sacred sites;
- legislation to preserve and expand Native Hawaiian land ownership.

UNITED NATIONS

NEA supports

- world bodies dedicated to the furtherance of peace and human rights;
- U.S. participation in and equitable financing of the United Nations and related bodies;
- ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;

- ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

VOTING AND ELECTION REFORM

NEA supports

- election or polling reforms—including simplified voter registration procedures and an adequate number of polling places—that ensure that each member of the electorate, regardless of time zone, may cast a meaningful vote and that encourage citizens to exercise their right and responsibility to register, vote, and participate fully in the political process;
- expansion of safe and secure opportunities for early voting;
- voting reform that allows for the verification of votes cast and has security safeguards;
- full disclosure of all sources of political financing;
- right of all citizens to participate in the election process through political action committees;
- reinstatement of the personal tax credit for political contributions;
- partial public funding of federal election campaigns;
- reauthorization, including extending the full protections, and full enforcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965;
- equal voter access and enfranchisement;
- appropriate anonymous voting records to be used in disputes or recounts of elections;
- transparent disclosure of voting systems' vote counting processes;
- transparent, independent, nonpartisan oversight and audits of elections;
- public ownership of voting systems, including the software that records and counts the votes;
- federal election days as holidays;
- an amendment to the United States Constitution to enable Congress and the States to regulate the expenditure of funds for political contributions and election-related campaign speech by any corporation, limited liability company, or other corporate entity;
- a fair and reasonable system of campaign disclosure that would increase public accountability for corporations that attempt to influence elections;
- restoration of voting rights for formerly incarcerated American citizens who have served their sentences;
- automatic voter registration and vote-by-mail;
- a Constitutional amendment to give full Congressional and Presidential voting rights to the U.S. citizens in the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

NEA opposes

- voter identification requirements and other restrictions that have the effect of suppressing participation

of citizens in local, state, and national elections.

c. FISCAL POLICY

CREDIT UNIONS

NEA supports

- programs that preserve the independence of credit unions to serve their members' best interests;
- federal legislation to protect the ability of credit unions to enroll members from multiple groups of employees.

NEA opposes

- federal legislation that adversely affects credit union members.

EDUCATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY

NEA supports

- strengthening national security by increasing federal funding for education;
- national security based on a sound economy, a well-educated populace, ratification of and adherence to existing arms control treaties, and a stable world community;
- a mutual, verifiable nuclear freeze with cessation of testing, production, and further deployment of nuclear delivery systems and other destabilizing systems;
- adequate programs for the special needs of veterans;
- legislation requiring a policy of economic conversion to facilitate

the orderly redirection of resources from military purposes to alternative civilian uses, including education;

- consideration of caregiver responsibilities in the assignment of members of the armed services;
- legislation to make war-profiteering illegal.

NEA opposes

- military or economic assistance to governments that permit violations of their citizens' rights;
- federal funding extending the arms race into outer space;
- expenditure of funds on development of nuclear attack "evacuation" plans;
- restrictions on academic research by artificial imposition of the "classified" designation to deny access to non-national security information or censorship of unclassified research;
- legislation or regulations that prevent educators in the United States from teaching or conducting research in any country;
- funding privatized paramilitary organizations with public tax money;
- the use of federal dollars to build a continuous wall along our borders.

TAXATION

NEA supports

- a progressive tax system based on individual and corporate ability to pay to yield sufficient revenues to address national needs;

- a tax system that provides for education and other social needs while achieving reduction of the national debt;
- equity in taxation rates between married and single tax payers;
- equity in tax policies for spousal benefits and domestic partner benefits;
- deferral of taxation on retirement annuity contributions;
- repeal of Internal Revenue Code provisions that jeopardize the availability or tax exemption of employee benefit plans, including the taxation of negotiated severance payments prior to separation from employment;
- exemption from taxation of employee benefits, including employer paid health and life insurance, legal services, and educational assistance;
- tax exemption for accelerated death benefit payments for life insurance contracts;
- restoring the estate tax for the purpose of funding public education;
- recognition in the tax code for dependent care expenses;
- reduction or elimination of the percentage threshold required before an individual can qualify for an itemized deduction for certain medical expenses;
- exemption from tax liability for tuition remissions where available;
- exemption status within the tax code for professional business expenses, including continuing education, home office, home computers, educational travel, professional and union dues,

and designation of such expenditures as “necessary” and “ordinary;”

- full miscellaneous deductions for educational materials purchased by all educators for classroom use.

NEA opposes

- unfair tax loopholes or giveaways such as tax abatement and foreign trade zones that reduce revenues and shelter corporations and high-income individuals from paying taxes;
- any constitutional amendment imposing limitations on taxes or the federal budget;
- shifting responsibility for financing traditional governmental services from a progressive tax structure to taxes disproportionately affecting low- and middle-income individuals;
- an extension of the moratorium on Internet taxes.

TRADE

NEA supports

- public input and congressional consultation during the negotiation and ratification of international trade agreements;
- social charters that guarantee high standards of human rights, environmental, and union protection;
- inclusion of education, human rights, environmental, and labor representatives on all negotiating and administrative bodies;
- systems of checks and balances for any international trade body whose

decisions could erode democratic, human rights, environmental, or union protection.

NEA opposes

- any agreement lacking the inclusion of any social charter or other guarantees of high standards of human rights, environmental, and union protection;
- any agreement lacking a system of checks and balances on all international trade bodies whose decisions could erode democratic, human rights, environmental, or union protection;
- the adoption of Trade Promotion Authority (“Fast Track”) in Congress.