

THE PENDULUM



NTA

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UNIONS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO OPPOSE CON/CON

BY DARRELL KUHN

New York voters have a little less than five months to make an official decision that could end public education in the state. On November 7, 2017, Election Day, New York voters could choose to have a Constitutional Convention, which might put public school professionals' livelihoods at risk.

According to information obtained by Newburgh Teachers Association President Stacy Moran, the state constitution establishes the fundamental rights we enjoy as New York citizens and public employees. Some of those rights include the guaranteed right to a free public education, prohibiting reductions

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in public pension benefits, rights to workers' compensation, rights to union membership and collective bargaining, and requiring the state to provide for social welfare needs.

Unions could and should work together to inform the voting public that the overall quality

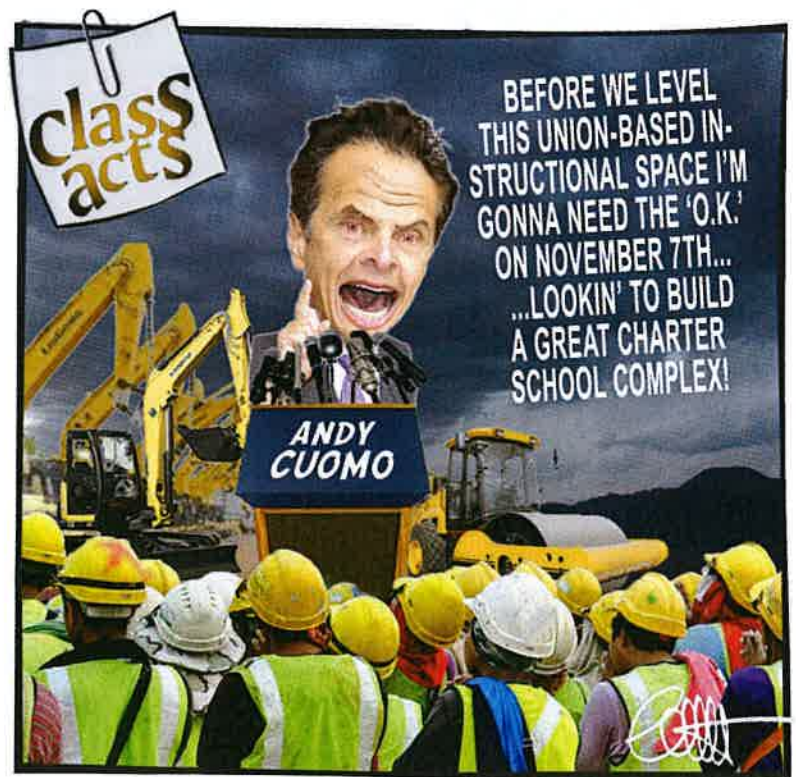
of life for New Yorkers could decrease if a Constitutional Convention takes place. Jen Costabile, the NTA's head delegate at Newburgh Free Academy, said that teachers unions are unique.

"Public school educators have been an island in a sea of laborers, which makes it difficult to get support," Costabile said. "Other unions don't see us as one of them. I think other unions for police and firefighters would be supportive if they understood our common struggle, which is being portrayed through the media as public enemy numbers one and two (with police officers and educators). The improprieties of one individual in these fields is often used to represent everybody."

Costabile explained that it would help members of all unions to educate themselves and

each other about a Constitutional Convention's consequences.

Newburgh Enlarged City School District educators should have received a VOTE NO pledge card for the Constitutional Convention earlier this spring. Please fill it out and return it to your head NTA delegate.



TRUMP AND CUOMO SHARE THE SAME VISION OF DESTROYING PUBLIC EDUCATION

BY DARRELL KUHN

Despite New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo's progressive rhetoric, his record on supporting public education is not impressive.

In fact, his statements about public education sound similar, if not identical, to United States President Donald Trump's.

The Alliance for Quality Education created a video showing and explaining how the Democratic governor and the Republican president mirror each other when it comes to public education. The video demonstrates that Cuomo and Trump have the same talking points to sell the same policies to attack public schools.

"There is no failed policy more in need of urgent change than our government-run education monopoly," Trump is seen and heard saying in the video.

The video points out that Cuomo has called the public school system a monopoly he wants to bust. Cuomo wants "to break what is in essence

one of the only remaining public monopolies."

Trump has publicly stated that he wants to privatize public education with private school vouchers. He also wants to cut public funding for the neediest public schools, the video explains. Cuomo wants to carry out the same objectives.

According to its website, www.aqeny.org, the Alliance for Quality Education is a coalition mobilizing communities across the state to keep New York true to its promise of ensuring a high quality education to all students regardless of their zip code. The website lists and explains the AQE's platform for student success. This platform includes promoting quality teaching for every student, early childhood education, community schools, parent and family engagement, financial equity, a positive school climate, a challenging and engaging curriculum, and teaching and learning, not standardized testing.

The video titled "Trump and Cuomo: Education Buddies" is on YouTube.

Newburgh Teachers Association President Stacy Moran said that four years of "Trump budgets" and United States Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos' policies could be disastrous for public education.

"Trump has already rolled back the healthy school lunch standards that (former First Lady) Michelle Obama pushed for through his Secretary of Agriculture," Moran said. "De-

Vos refuses to protect students who may be discriminated against by charter schools or by a voucher system."

Moran said that U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) has started a DeVos Watch that will hold the U.S. Department of Education accountable.


Several educators have wondered if Cuomo would soften his stance on public education to distance himself from Trump, especially if he is considering a presidential run in 2020. Moran believes the state's teachers union, New York State United Teachers, carried out a successful push back campaign against Cuomo after his "disastrous" 2015 state budget.

"His (Cuomo's) approval rating plummeted, and that is why he is changing his rhetoric about public education," Moran said.

Moran added that she has not heard any discussions from teachers unions about who they should endorse for the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election yet.

"They would endorse the candidate who was the most supportive of public education," Moran said.






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NTA HAPPENINGS



Events that have happened and will happen!

WHAT: NFA GRADUATION

WHERE: ACADEMY FIELD

WHEN: THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2017.

RAIN DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2017

WHAT: THE NTA 2017 FRIEND OF EDUCATION AND RETIREMENT AWARDS DINNER

WHERE: DUTCHESS MANOR, 263 ROUTE 9D, BEACON, NY

WHEN: DOORS OPEN AT 5 P.M.

WHAT: NTA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

WHERE: NTA OFFICE, 52 PIERCES ROAD, NEWBURGH, NY

WHEN WAS IT: MAY 17, 2017

WHAT: NTA HEAD DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

WHERE: NTA OFFICE, 52 PIERCES ROAD, NEWBURGH, NY

WHEN WAS IT: MAY 24, 2017

2016-2017 AN OVERALL SUCCESS FOR THE NTA

BY DARRELL KUHN

The 2016-17 school year was busy for Newburgh Teachers Association members, but several goals were realized.

NTA President Stacy Moran explained that the union negotiated and ratified a new Annual Professional Performance Review plan. The Teachers Assistants and Per Diem Substitute Chapters also ratified new collective bargaining agreements. The TA contract, according to Moran, included a raise, no increase in health insurance costs, and an increase in longevities. The Per Diem contract included a raise and new language that compensates substitutes whose assignments are changed when they arrive at their building.

"Our phone banks were well-attended, and all three of our endorsed candidates were elected to the Newburgh Enlarged City School District Board of Education," Moran said. "Our Local Action Project (LAP) has successfully strengthened our political action and our ties with the community. Our first ever book giveaway at the

Newburgh Armory Unit Center was very successful. We were able to give away more than 500 books thanks to the generous donations of our members.

"We have engaged our members and the community surrounding the issue of voting NO

to the state Constitutional Convention in November, and we continue to get the word out," Moran added. "Our Leadership Conferences have been very well-attended and well-received."

One of Moran's goals was to improve communication so every NTA member has a voice in their union. Although there is always room for improvement,

Moran said she believes the union has done that.

"Moving forward, I would like to emphasize to all members that they are the NTA," Moran explained. "With everyone's support and participation, we can accomplish all of our goals. We will continue to try to improve member engagement."



UNIONISM TRAINING AND REVIEW AT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

BY MATT BARBERO

With more than 34 participants and presenters, the annual Newburgh teachers Association Leadership Conference was held on Saturday, April 1. Stacy Moran, our union president, and Angela Pace, the NTA's Labor Relations Specialist, presented and discussed numerous topics, bringing many issues to the forefront for our union representatives to understand in greater detail.

In order to emphasize the importance of spontaneity, mass appeal, and the fact that good ideas should be at least as impulsive or more so than bad ideas, the leadership conference began with a video of The Dancing Man (<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=fW8amMCVAJQ>). This video emphasizes the spontaneity of a good idea catching on like wild fire. The dancing man begins to dance at a concert, influencing all of those around him. Quickly, onlookers become participants, demonstrating how rapidly positive energy becomes contagious. With a positive beginning, the mood was set for an informative day's agenda.

After The Dancing Man, the conference proceeded with a dialogue regarding the adverse effects of a proposal for local charter schools to receive \$1 million from the Newburgh Enlarged City School District budget. Certainly emphasizing the necessity for the NTA to be proactive in its efforts to educate the public about the issue of charter school funding, the dilution of the NECSO budget or such a proposal became a greater concern. Public funding of a quasi-private school as well as the negative impact that

such a cost-ineffective action will have on our children's education within the district and beyond, is an educational reform issue that parents, educators, and administration should learn.

With each participant adding to a Post-its-filled bulletin board, a review of the participants' understanding of union procedures, reiterating what our union representatives already know about representation for our rank and file members was constructed. As this part of the conference progressed, our union representatives swapped stories and experiences that they have had, and they compared their outcomes. Not being a union representative, each time I attend such a conference I learn much about how procedural issues are handled when dealing with members, administration, parents, and students.

Although much of what I saw on that Post-its-filled bulletin board outlining and reviewing details of engaging union representation appeared to be common sense, I also understand that when issues arise repeatedly during the course of a teacher's career, it is easy to deprioritize the issues they arise. I was pleased to learn that our union representatives are well-versed in the rules and regulations of dealing with the numerous problems that arise more and more frequently among our members, and that confidentiality and the importance of listening skills were but a few of the more important aspects of the advice given during this session.

Past practices in dealing with the use of various ways in which union representatives reference and utilize resources necessary to assist union members were also offered. Many of the available resources discussed, such as social media and anecdotes, were informal and unofficial in nature. Others were by-the-book references like the Newburgh Constitution and the New York State United Teachers Legal Benefits Advice Service. In dealing with specific instances wherein union representatives reviewed the

notes from Principal-Delegate Meetings throughout the years, specific agenda items from meetings with several principals throughout the district were reviewed in great detail. Using a playacting format, scripts were read, putting the participants in the union representatives' shoes who dealt with the principals in question. Later the notes were discussed, the mood of the meetings reviewed, and the outcomes of such dealings put into their proper perspectives.

With Angela Pace at the helm, the discussion of detailed accounts used for training purposes developed into more specifics regarding educational law. Certification requirements,



THE NTA AT WORK: NTA MEMBERS DISCUSS UNION ISSUES AT THE ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE. THE CONFERENCE CONVENED ON APRIL 1, 2017 AT THE NTA HEADQUARTERS AT 52 PIERCES ROAD IN NEWBURGH. (PHOTO BY MATT BARBERO)

probationary appointments, bumping, and resignations were all covered in great detail. Later, moving on to the more routine but no less important issues that affect us all on a day-to-day basis, advice on such issues as searching students' bags and pocketbooks, breaking up fights, as well as referral tracking were all covered. Advice was given on how to handle each scenario.

As an NTA member, it is imperative to understand policy and procedures and more so that our representatives have an even greater in-depth understanding of these regulations. Our union representatives are well-trained, knowledgeable, and most of all, caring about the specific needs of our members. Attending the annual leadership conference is an experience that I am glad to have been able to participate in for the past two years.