



NEWS & VIEWS



BEA Political Action Committee makes Endorsements

This July the *BEA* Political Action Committee spent up to two days interviewing local candidates for the upcoming November election. Each candidate completed a questionnaire and spent time with the committee members discussing the education issues facing the 2007 Montana Legislature. Based upon their responses to the questionnaire and the personal interviews, the *BEA PAC* endorses the following candidates:

- DON REED** HD 44
- DICK SKEWIS** HD 47
- WANDA GRINDE** HD 48
- DOUG HARPER** HD 46
- KENDALL VAN DYK** HD 49
- ROBYN DRISCOLL** HD 51
- GARY BRANAE** HD 54
- BOB MAXSON** HD 55
- BOBBIE LARSON** HD 57
- ARLENE BECKER** HD 52
- RAY TRACY** SD 23
- MARGIE MACDONALD** SD 25



A special thanks to the *BEA* members of the Political Action Committee for their time and involvement in the endorsement process: *Rod Gottula, Skyview; Julie Seedhouse, Will James; Barb Fettig, Skyview; Tracy Crabtree, Skyview; Jeff Greenfield, Senior; Lon Drollinger, Central Heights; Noreen Burris, Miles Avenue; Mike Joyce, Adult Ed.; Diane Welhaven, Riverside; and Allan Audet, BEA president.*



**Not Registered?
Want to Vote Absentee?
Call BEA, 248-9812,
to get the forms.**

REMEMBER TO VOTE NOV. 7!



FEAVER Takes AFT Office

MEA-MFT president Eric Feaver is one of the seven new vice presidents elected by delegates attending the summer 2006 AFT Convention in Boston. AFT president Edward J. McElroy, secretary-treasurer Nat LaCour and executive vice president Antonia Cortese were also reelected.



Important 2006 Election Dates

- General Election:** November 7
- Close of Voter Registration:** October 10
- Absentee Application:** Aug. 24 to Noon, Nov. 6
- Absentee Ballots Available:** September 22



Are you unsure of your polling site or your House or Senate District? Check this information at the Yellowstone County Election Office's website and enter your name and birth date.

<https://secure.co.yellowstone.mt.gov/elections/secure/rvoterinfo.asp>

MEAMFT | MEA-MFT COPE Committee On Political Action Endorsements

- JON TESTER:** U.S. Senate
- MONICA LINDEEN:** U.S. House of Representatives
- JOHN WARNER:** Montana Supreme Court Justice
- JIM RICE:** Montana Supreme Court Justice

Saturday Live — Sept. 30



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**14th Annual Saturday Live
Sept. 30, 2006
Pioneer Park
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

The Education Foundation extends a heartfelt thank you to all the teacher volunteers. Their hard work always makes *Saturday Live* a huge success!

"Out of state Billionaires" want to decide the future of our profession!

Don't let your guard down—even if these initiatives don't make it to this election cycle; the initiatives could return.

Vote NO on CI-97!



CI-97, CI-98, and I-154 ruled invalid

◆ On September 13, after illegal signatures were discovered, District Judge Dirk Sandefur ruled that **CI-97, CI-98, and I-154** were invalid.

◆ On September 19, District Judge Honzel ruled **CI-97** invalid because it contained at least two amendments to the Constitution. Montana law states each constitutional initiative can address only one constitutional amendment. Both of these District rulings have been appealed to the Supreme Court.



Despite two court rulings, **CI-97** is still on the ballot. If passed, **CI-97** would force Montana to slash funding for vital public services. If state funding stops, officials must raise fees and local property taxes. Voters in Colorado, the only state that has such a measure, recently voted to overturn the initiative.

- ◆ *Don't let your guard down—even if these initiatives don't make it to this election cycle, they will return.*
- ◆ *If you vote early, it will be imperative that you mark the ballot NO on CI-97!*
- ◆ *The Supreme Court is scheduled to rule on the two cases in October. If the Supreme Court rules against the District Court decisions, the votes will be counted.*

VOTE NO! on CI-97

Consider this:

- ◆ The **CPI** (Consumer Price Index) has averaged a 2.5 to 4.0 range for the last few years.
- ◆ Population growth, while increasing, has not been significant.
- ◆ Locally, insurance increases have averaged around 15%.
- ◆ Energy costs have a direct impact upon the cost of labor and consumables, at far greater rate than the **CPI** figures.
- ◆ The greatest concern: the devastating effects **CI-97** would have on public education and public programs.

Colorado is the only state to enact a law similar to CI-97. TABOR, the so-called "Taxpayer's Bill of Rights," was repealed by popular vote because it was strangling public services and degrading the the quality of life for the people of that state.



Colorado—1992 to 2004

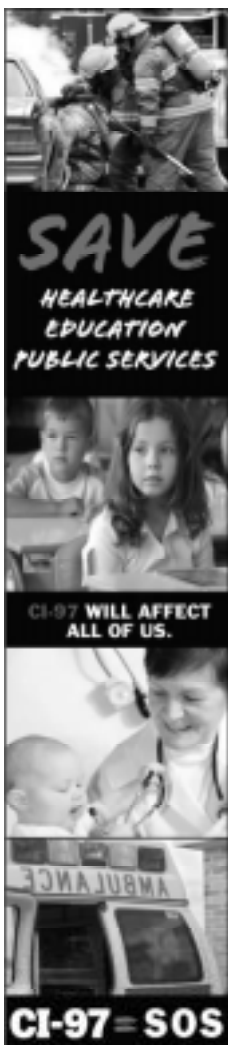
What TABOR did (or didn't do)

- ◆ Colorado dropped from 35th to 49th on spending for K-12 education.
- ◆ Colorado dropped from 35th to 48th on spending for higher education.
- ◆ Colorado's population of uninsured children doubled.
- ◆ Colorado dropped from 23rd to 48th for funding access to prenatal care.
- ◆ Colorado dropped from 24th to 50th concerning the vaccination of children.
- ◆ Colorado dropped 20th to 48th for providing health insurance to poor non-elderly adults.
- ◆ State highways and infrastructure deteriorated due to lack of funds quality of life for people of that state.



CI-97 would limit government spending by capping state expenditures using a formula that considers the **CPI** and population growth.

On the surface, **CI-97 appears to** provide Montana the opportunity to increase its budget as needed to address inflation. A closer look reveals that is NOT the case.





Ballot Issues —2006

The MEA-MFT Committee On Political Education (COPE) approved these voting recommendations which will appear on Montana ballots this November:

VOTE NO! on CI-98

CI-98 is another attempt to recall judges. The only purpose of CI-98 is to try to remove judges for the decisions they make, before their terms are up. Montana statutes already provide for the recall of public officials, including state court justices or judges, for physical or mental lack of fitness, incompetence, violation of the oath of office, official misconduct, or conviction of a felony offense. A constitutional provision for disciplining and removing judges through a judicial standards commission also exists.

VOTE NO! on I-154

I-154 would allow property owners to file "takings" claims against the government if a government action allegedly devalues their property. Under I-154, any new regulation that impaired a landowner's right to use or improve real property must either be waived, or the owner must be compensated for the amount he would have made. Since governments have no spare money for such payments, they would have to waive rules which would be detrimental to land-use planning, environmental concerns, conservation measures and habitat protection.

VOTE YES! on I-151

I-151 would raise the state's minimum wage, frozen since 1997 at \$5.15 an hour, to \$6.15 an hour in January 2007—or to the level of the federal minimum wage if it is higher. After that, the state's minimum wage would be adjusted annually by a cost-of-living index. The current minimum wage of \$5.15 is a decade old. I-151 retains the current provision of state law that provides that the minimum wage is \$4 an hour for businesses with gross annual sales of \$110,000 or less.



Wavebreaking News: Hoyt goes sailing



Along with 30 other teachers in the nation, BEA member Brett Hoyt will participate in the 2006 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Teacher at Sea (TAS) program. This 10-year old program has enabled more than 460 teachers to gain firsthand experience of science and life at sea. Hoyt teaches through the Adult Education

program at the Yellowstone County Detention Facility as an on-site teacher for student inmates.

NOAA gives teachers a clearer insight into the ocean planet. Kindergarten through college-level teachers go to sea under the tutelage of scientists and crew. Then, armed with new understanding and experience, the teachers bring their knowledge back to their classrooms.

11 BEA Members achieve NBC Certification

Eleven BEA members joined the ranks of the nation's top teachers in November 2005 when they and four more Montana teachers achieved their National Board Certification.

On September 29, at a special reception at the Capitol in Helena, Governor Schweitzer will award each recipient a \$3000 check from the state of Montana. As negotiated in the Master Agreement, SD2 recipients will also receive an additional \$2000 annual compensation for the 10 years the certification is in effect.

National Board Certification is the highest certification a teacher can earn. The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation provides financial and technical support for teachers during the certification process. Contact Erik Burke at eburke@mea-mft.org for details.

Susan Daly Fifth Grade Eagle Cliffs Elementary	Jacquie McDonald Mathematics Senior High School	Diana Mysse Art Skyview High School
Kathy Pfaffinger English teacher Skyview High School	Linda Jones Spanish Skyview High School	Kim Busch Fourth Grade McKinley Elementary School
Mari Jane Orner Librarian Arrowhead Elementary School	Linda Boyer Spanish Senior High School	Judy Rigler English Skyview High School
Jeff Meide, Ph.D. Technology Education West High School	Karen Rice Second Grade Arrowhead Elementary School	

Other Montana Winners:

Angela McLean Social Studies Anaconda High School	Shelley Pelc Librarian Helena Public Schools
Carl Straub Special Ed Teacher, Connections Program Helena High School	Andree Anderberg Information Specialist/Library Helena Public Schools



During the month of October, Hoyt will be on the **RONALD H. BROWN**, one of 18 NOAA ships, working to install a data buoy off the coast of Chile. His studies will focus on global warming, fishery studies, tsunami warning, weather patterns and predictions.

NOAA's Teacher at Sea program accepts applications from currently employed K-12 and college/university teachers, both American and international. Teachers can be at sea from a week to a month. Most teachers take advantage of cruises offered during the summer, but cruises take place throughout year. Applications for the 2007 field program are available on the NOAA Teacher at Sea website, www.tas.noaa.gov

Log onto the website in October to check on Hoyt's reports.



Know Your Master Agreement Black Out Days

With the newly adopted language, the District may call as many as 30 Blackout Days on an "as needed basis."



Section VIII

Subd. 5. Teachers will be granted discretionary leave for personal business with pay during each school year upon written application through the principal to the Superintendent. Exceptions may be made during periods of emergency, when there is an unusual number of teacher absences because of illness or when there is an inadequate supply of substitute teachers (**known as Blackout Days**). **The number of Blackout Days will not exceed 30.** The Superintendent will notify the Association when such periods of emergency occur when some leaves may not be granted. **Notification of the Blackout Days will occur at least three (3) working days in advance.** Notification of intention to or application for permission to take a leave for personal business under this Section should be submitted to the principal at least **eight (8)** but shall be no less than **two (2)** working days, except in the case of emergency.

With the newly adopted language the District has the discretion to call up to 30 Blackout Days on an as needed basis. As you have probably discovered there are no pre-determined Blackout Days on the adopted calendar. To help monitor the number of absences on a daily basis employees are encouraged to call the sub-finder on the day they put in a leave request for a discretionary day. This will help ensure there will be enough subs to cover all classes. Recently, some schools found themselves without enough subs to cover the absences. This was due to last minute sick-leave requests putting the need past the number of available subs.

Be aware the District has the ability to require a Doctor's certificate as specified in the language below.

Subd. 8. The School District may require a teacher to furnish a medical certificate from a qualified physician as evidence of illness, indicating such absence was due to illness, in order to qualify for sick leave pay. In the event that a medical certificate will be required, the teacher will be so advised before he/she returns to school.



Credit Verification Deadline

Submit official transcripts by Oct. 1 so salary adjustments can be made effective the beginning of this school year. Verification must be furnished to SD2 Human Resources. If the official college transcript is not available, grades slips will be accepted, pending the availability of the official transcript. However, the transcript must be furnished by Dec. 31. (see Article VII Compensation, Section 9 Salary Adjustment, Subd. 5 of the Master Agreement for exact contract language.)

Member Benefits

AFT+ Student Loan Consolidation Program AFT and the Collegiate Funding Services offer members the opportunity to consolidate their eligible student loans into one loan with a fixed interest rate and a choice of payment plans. No credit check or fees are required. Interest rates can be further reduced with on-time payments and automatic debit. Call 1-800-936-4976 or visit www.aft.org/afplus/consolidation



2006 Sept.-Oct. CALENDAR



- ✓ September 30 Montana Educator Forum
- ✓ October 1 Verification Due for credit hours
- ✓ October 11 BEA Board of Directors
- ✓ October 17 Representative Council
- ✓ October 19 & 20 MEA-MFT Educators' Conference

MEAMFT News

BEA members Julie Seedhouse and Barb Fettig have spent the last year cochairing the planning committee for the 2006 MEA-MFT Educators' Conference in Billings. The event will occur on Oct. 19 & 20 at Skyview High and Castle Rock Middle School. Conference books, distributed by BEA Building Representatives, provide information on registration, schedules of events, sectionals, maps, renewal credits and more. If a BEA member has not received a conference book, call the BEA office at 248-9812.



Attend the Conference for Free

- ◆ Last spring, MEA-MFT Representatives decided to waive the registration fee for all nontenured MEA-MFT teacher members currently working in Montana and all other MEA-MFT members with three or fewer years of work experience in their current employment.
- ◆ To receive this fee-waiver, MEA-MFT members must pre-register by Oct. 7 at www.mea-mft.org. or postmark the registration form in the Conference book by Oct. 7.

Rewiring for Retirement Workshop Offered

Through MSU-B Outreach. Evey LaMont is offering a six-hour workshop on Oct. 3, 10, and 17, (two hours each night) or a full day on Saturday, Nov. 11. The class will survey retirement preparedness and expectations, explore careers in retirement, and use a variety of tools and techniques to help you make the best choices. The course fee is \$69. For more information or to register, go to www.msubillings.edu/outreach.



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