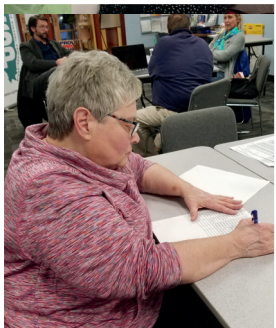




www.ieaneamembers/retired



**STAND UP!
SPEAK OUT!
BE AN ADVOCATE!**



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Printed by union workers in the IEA Print Shop

9/2019

STAND UP! SPEAK OUT! BE AN ADVOCATE!

STAND UP! SPEAK OUT! Even though we are retired, we must continue to be advocates for issues that impact education employees, retirees, and public education. Some members of IEA and IEA-Retired believe we shouldn't be involved in politics. But we must be involved. Every decision that impacts public education, educators, and retired educators is made by an elected official—or someone hired by an elected official. Everything from the kind of paper used in the classroom, to curriculum, to student discipline codes, to school schedules, to teacher evaluations plans, to teacher salaries, to ESP salaries, to pension benefits, to healthcare benefits is made by an elected official or someone hired by an elected official. That is why it is so important to be involved in electing people who have the best interests of students, school employees, and public education at heart. We must then work with these elected officials—telling them our stories about how we have been or will be affected by legislation. We must be effective advocates for the issues that are important to us. This booklet is meant to be a resource as you participate in the advocacy experience. Every day you have the opportunity to influence decisions that are being made on issues that matter to you and to people you care about.



STAND UP! SPEAK OUT! BE AN ADVOCATE!

Jim Duffy, Chair, IEA-Retired Council May, 2019

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

Be an advocate for IEA-Retired!

Being an advocate means participating in support of a cause or proposal and then taking action.

WHY DO I NEED TO BE INVOLVED?

- Every decision made that impacts public education, unions, and our retirement is made by an elected official at the different levels of government:
 - Congress.
 - General Assembly
 - School Board
- Not all politicians care about public education, unions, our pensions, the needs of retirees, or the issues of concern to retirees.

Concerned about pensions, insurance, public education, and unions?

Hearing personal stories makes issues clear to policymakers. Your personal story is powerful and makes an elected official aware of how people are affected by government programs and policies.

Why should I speak out?

- **Advocacy matters. Silence tells officials that you agree with them or have no interest!**
- You are the expert. You know how elected officials' decisions affect real people.
- You are in control. You can make a telephone call, send an email, write a letter or go to the Capitol.
- You will be listened because public officials work for you and will make time for you.
- Advocates do not need training. You have experience, knowledge, and concerns to share. You have time during the day, when activities are at work.
- **You do not have to go to Springfield; you can advocate from home.**

A GUIDE TO CONTACTING ELECTED OFFICIALS



→ Who can I contact and how can I connect with them?

Federal and State Legislators' names

- For members of the Illinois General Assembly, office addresses and phone numbers may be found under: ilga.gov
- If you don't know who your legislator is, check out the IEA's webpage. Under the "Legislative" tab, click "Contact Your Legislator," enter your address and your local legislator name(s) will appear. Click here: www.ieane.org/legislative/contact-your-legislators. You can also call the County Clerk's office and provide your address for this information.
- Check www.contactingthecongress.org to get contact information on your senators and representatives in Washington.

The Governor's Office

- Visit the governor's website at <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/gov/contactus/pages/default.aspx> for contact information.
- Call 217-782-0244.

→ How can I learn about issues before the General Assembly or Congress?

- **Stay informed by**
 - Reading the e-mails sent to you by IEA-Retired and your chapter president, the *IEA-Retired Insider* and *NEA Retired Insider*
 - Attending chapter meetings
- Make sure you have accurate information. Go to the IEA website and under the “Legislative” tab, click on Fact Sheets www.ieane.org/legislative/iea-fact-sheets/ and/or Capitol Bill Watch www.ieane.org/legislative/capitol-watch/ to gather information and talking points.
- Read Legislative Updates and watch videos. Sign up for the “*IEA-Retired Insider*.”
- If it’s a federal issue, go to the NEA website issues and action to gather information and talking points: www.nea.org/home/IssuesAndAction.html.
- Sign up for NEA Today Express, Lily’s Blackboard, NEA Votes, etc.
- Follow IEA, NEA, and NEA-Retired on social media.
- Contact your region’s Grassroots Political Activist (GPA) and let them know you want to be involved in local activities. Your GPA can help you locate current information on your issues. Your UniServ Director (UD) can provide you with the GPA’s contact information.

→ How do I build effective advocacy?

Build relationships: Get to know your elected officials and help them know and understand your issues and concerns. You are a more effective advocate when your legislator knows who you are. You can:

- Sign up for their online newsletters and follow them on social media.
- Invite them to a local retired chapter meeting.
- Make an appointment to meet with them at their local office.

- Volunteer for their campaign.
- Walk in a parade for them.
- Attend fundraisers.
- Check with officials' offices to see if they sponsor any local events where you can talk about your concerns.

Assure credibility: Build trust and respect

Be sure to

- Give accurate information and talk only about what you know.
- If an official has questions, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." You can offer to try to find the answers and get back to them.

→ What should I do **before I contact my legislator?**

Think about what it is that you want and the best way to explain it.

Be brief.

Be focused.

Be clear.

Even if you're telling a personal story, it's important to be careful about what you say and how you say it. Be sure to make your point, and that it is heard and understood.

- Gather your thoughts on paper. This will help you stay on target and get your message across.
- Think about how you might respond to questions posed by the official.
- Learn your official's background (for example, committee assignments, district, his/her voting record). If you need help, call **IEA 1-800-252-8076** and ask to speak with someone in Government Relations.

→ I'm ready to contact my legislator. What's next?

Legislators are very interested in hearing from their constituents. Part of their job is to respond to you. Often when you phone an elected official, an assistant will take your call, but your message will get to the official. If you want to talk to the legislator personally, just say so. Some tips:

1. Introduce Yourself:

- State your name and where you live.
- Give your phone number and/or email address so that they can contact you.
- Tell them that you are a registered voter, and a constituent of their district.
- Let them know that you are a member of IEA-NEA. That helps them to understand that you are member of an organization that represents a large number of people.

2. Identify the Issue:

- Explain the situation about which you are calling and provide the bill number if appropriate and Share pertinent information on the topic
- Tell your personal experience clearly and concisely.
- Describe the impact that the issue may have (*give specific examples if possible*).

3. Say exactly what you want the legislator to do:

- Sponsor a bill.
- Support a bill.
- Oppose a bill.
- Amend a bill.
- Encourage other legislators to sponsor/support/oppose/amend a bill

4. Listen carefully:

- Listen and take notes documenting what an official or assistant says.
- Feel free to ask questions if you don't understand something.

5. Keep the conversation focused on the subject:

- Use your notes to check off the points you want to make.
- Steer the legislator back to the subject you want to discuss, if necessary.

6. Follow up on your call or meeting:

- Establish a good rapport with your legislator by speaking in a respectful, non-confrontational manner. This will help to build your relationship with the legislator.
- Let your legislator know you would like to be a resource to them on issues pertaining to public education and retired educators.
- Send a thank you note to the official, reminding them of the content of the conversation.
- Stay in touch with them by providing them with additional information, follow-up calls or emails, and possibly additional meetings.

→ Let them know you are paying attention

Whenever you talk with elected officials, tell them you will be paying attention to see what happens and how they vote on issues. Write short, friendly notes or call to let them know when you approve or disapprove of their actions to **Hold them accountable**. Be sure to thank them for their support when it's appropriate. To help build your relationship with your legislator don't approach them only when you are asking for something. You may not always agree with the legislator's views, but by keeping your discussion open and friendly you can agree to disagree and build a relationship with the legislator.

Visiting the Legislative Office Building and State Capitol

Although we have found that **"at-home" lobbying has a greater impact**, lobbying in Springfield is an option. If you choose to go to Springfield, you may have an opportunity to enhance IEA's visibility by attending a committee hearing; thereby indicating a "record of appearance" at said hearing. Please realize that the percentage of bills introduced with no hearing as opposed to bills introduced with formal committee attention is extremely high. Many bills are consigned to oblivion.

While in Springfield, it is important to make an effort to attend **committee hearings**, where we can help promote IEA's visibility and

presence. Remember we are available during the day when actives are at work. If you can't attend a committee hearing, **submitting a witness slip provides your input.**

If you choose to lobby in Springfield, please be aware:

- Legislators are housed in the Stratton Office Building and in the Capitol itself.
- There is a visitor's parking lot.
- You need to bring identification with you for the security checkpoints.
- Check with the IEA Government relations department before going to Springfield (1-800-252-8076). Session days and committee hearings are frequently cancelled, many times at the last minute.

I have an opinion I want to share! How do I write a Letter to the Editor?

Many newspapers have links on their web pages to submit letters directly to the editor. Follow their guidelines for your online submission. Be sure to refer to the issue, state your position on it, and expand on the issue and the reasons for your position.

If you write a letter to a newspaper columnist, you may receive a reply.

IEA-Retired Members Can Increase Political Advocacy by

- Visiting the IEA-Retired website often for information specific to IEA-Retired (This information includes forms, contact info, and more www.ieanea.org/retired.)
- Visiting the IEA website – Legislative tab often to stay informed and for resource materials www.ieanea.org
- Printing out fact sheets from the above website, so they are better informed and can share correct information with others
- Attending local IEA-Retired chapter meetings and read the emails sent by the local retired chapter president

- Setting up Google Searches on legislative, education, and pension issues to be more globally informed, see what others are saying, and to help correct incorrect information with our members and the public. (If help is needed to set up Google searches, please ask IEA Retired Chair and staff contact.)
- Writing letters, emails, and make calls to legislators (Letters and calls are better than emails.)
- Visiting legislators' offices back home and pick two or three issues to discuss (See website for talking issues and talking points.)
- Participating in lobbying in Springfield and back home
- Liking and sharing IEA posts on Facebook and Twitter
- Using the IEA app for smart phones as another way to stay informed
- Being involved in campaigns of IEA recommended candidates
- Volunteering to serve as a deputy registrar and/or as an election judge
- Registering to **vote** and then voting for IEA recommended Public education-friendly candidates
- Contribute to Illinois Political Action Committee for Education (IPACE) and NEA Fund for Children and Public Education
- **Getting Involved in the Region as a member of IEA-Retired**
 - Attend Region meetings
 - Work with regions in assigned IEA office on political activities and actions.
 - Volunteer to serve on your Region GPA's GO Team and
 - Find retired volunteers for the region Go Team
 - Inclusion on the Go Team means you can join together with other actives and retirees from your geographical area. Formal training for Go Team members is provided by IEA. Costs are covered for this event. Contact your region. GPA for more information.
 - Find retired members to apply to become a GPA, as needed when there is a vacancy.
 - Participate in local IPACE recommendation meetings. (Make sure that the president/designee and all participants are current IPACE contributors.)

IEA-Retired Chapters Can

- Work with regions in assigned IEA office on political activities and actions
- Find retired volunteers for the region Go Team or as GPA's
- Participate in local Recommendation Meetings
- Prepare a directory of area state and federal legislators, as well as state elected officials, so all members have easy access to contact information of politicians they may need to contact
- Create a directory of individual members, which matches them with their legislators
- Have a chapter Legislative Chair who keeps members informed and who coordinates with region councils and UD's
- Set up a chapter website, Facebook page, and/or Twitter accounts to help get out our message and to communicate our message with our "friends."
- Work with assigned UD's and GPAs as a resource
- Keep members in the information loop by creating an email distribution system to pass on information from IEA and the IEA-Retired Chair in a timely manner,
- Rally chapter members to participate in calls to action using IEA/NEA provided talking points and directions
- Plan activities which include political diversity to reach all members and their political preferences
- Encourage reluctant members to begin their political action by finding one legislator they are comfortable supporting
- Promote IPACE contributions (The form is on the IEA-Retired website.)
- Invite legislators/ IEA lobbyists to an IEA Retired local chapter meeting to discuss current issues

The IEA-Retired Legislative Action Committee is

- Made up of approximately 10 members from across the state
- Available to assist retired chapters and their members to be more informed and to enhance their political activism

Who are some of the most **aggressive** adversaries of public education, unions, and **retiree pensions/insurance?**

It is important to learn the identities of the adversaries of public education and to be informed about other groups as they emerge. **Our adversaries use many names**, which sound innocuous; **while trying to attack our pensions, end collective bargaining, and destroy unions and public education**. Awareness of the authors of articles of online or in print materials and of the sponsors of radio and television ads aids in the ability to make informed decisions about candidates and the issues. (For more information about these groups, please visit the IEA-Retired website.)

Groups in Illinois:

Illinois Policy Institute
Illinois News Network (INN) and Illinois Radio Network
Liberty Justice Center
Liberty Principles Political Action Committee
Illinois Opportunity Project
Newsinator
Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago
Local Government Information Services
Economic Freedom Alliance PAC (IL Coalitions for Jobs, Growth and Prosperity PAC) and The Illinois Manufacturing Association.
Think Freely Media

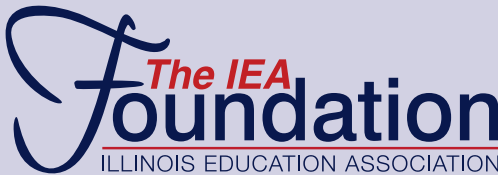
Groups found Nationwide:

The Policy Network
ALEC (The American Legislative Exchange Council)
The Koch Brothers Network- Americans for Prosperity, Freedom Partners, Freedom Partners Action Fund, Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce, and Concerned Veterans for America.

The Libre Initiative
Sinclair Broadcasting Group
Fox News
The Cato Institute
Donors Trust and its affiliated group, Donors Capital Fund
The Bradley Foundation
The Franklin Center
Heartland Institute
The Heritage Foundation
Stand For Children
StudentsFirst

Need more information?

Jim.duffy@ieanea.org 815/622-5546
Kim.riley@ieanea.org 309/662-5359



The IEA Foundation is a charitable arm of the Illinois Education Association. Tax deductible contributions to the foundation support educators and programs that support the IEA mission. Among the uses:

- Fund specific activities that improve education for students throughout Illinois, such as encouraging investment in education in economically distressed areas of the state;
- Convene or fund conferences and seminars intended to develop solutions to educational problems in Illinois;
- Provide financial resources to other organizations that address educational challenges in our state.

<https://ieanea.org/resources/donate-to-the-iea-foundation/>



IEA-Retired Useful Website

Illinois Education Association

<http://www.ieanea.org>

IEA-Retired webpage:

<https://ieanea.org/members/retired>

IEA-Retired Insider: To make certain you are receiving this newsletter, Contact Kim Riley: kim.riley@ieanea.org or call 309/662-5359

TRS webpage

<http://www.trsil.org/>

TRS email: members@trsil.org

TRS Member Services toll free phone number: (877) 927-5877 or (877) 9-ASK TRS

Illinois General Assembly

<http://www.ilga.gov>

Illinois State Board of Elections

<http://www.elections.il.gov>

Your Voter Guide:

<http://www.iea.yourvoterguide.com/#/search>

IPACE webpage

<http://www.ieanea.org/legislative/ipace>

Illinois State Board of Education website:

<https://www.isbe.net/>

National Education Association

<http://www.nea.org/>

NEA-Retired:

<http://www.nea.org/home/1598.htm>

NEA Today for Retired Members

<http://www.nea.org/home/59106.htm>

NEA Votes

<http://educationvotes.nea.org>



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Glossary

(For a complete list of terms, please visit the IEA-Retired website.)

POLITICAL ADVOCACY TERMS

- Politics: activities that relate to influencing the actions and policies of a government: getting and keeping power in the government
Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary
- Advocacy: the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal: the act or process of advocating *Merriam Webster's Dictionary*
- Down Ballot: refers to less publicized but nevertheless important positions on the ballot. These positions are significantly affected by voter turnout. There are State representative or State senate races at stake. County races are at stake, as well. One might hear, "I'm not going to vote for Governor this year. I'm sick of the whole election." Please don't let this attitude affect OTHER political contests.
- General Assembly: legislative body made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate having the authority to make laws for the State of Illinois
- Conservative: believing in the value of established and traditional practices in politics and society: relating to or supporting political conservatism *Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary*
- Liberal: believing that government should be active in supporting social and political change: relating to or supporting political liberalism *Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary*
- Moderate: having or expressing political beliefs that are neither very liberal nor very conservative: avoiding behavior that goes beyond what is normal, healthy, or acceptable *Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary*
- Progressive: using or interested in new or modern ideas especially in politics and education *Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary*
- Centrist: a person whose political opinions are not extreme: a person whose beliefs fall between those of liberals and conservatives *Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary*

- Right wing of a political party: the part of a political group that consists of people who support conservative or traditional ideas and policies: the part of a political group that belongs to or supports the Right *Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary*
- Left wing of a political party: the part of a political group that consists of people who support liberal or socialist ideas and policies: the part of a political group that belongs to or supports the Left *Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary*
- IPACE: Illinois Political Action Committee for Education: the political arm of the IEA. It exists to elect individuals to the Illinois General Assembly, statewide offices, and local school boards who will make a difference for quality public education and retirement benefits.
- ILGA: Illinois General Assembly
- POVA: Paperless online voting application
- OVA: Online Voter Registration application
- FOIA-Freedom of Information Act
- NLRB-National Labor Relations Board
- HB- House bill
- SB- Senate bill
- October or Halloween Surprise: refers to a momentous alleged event/scandal which surfaces right before the November election which WILL potentially impact the election outcome.
- Ballot Fatigue: refers to the very real tendency of voters to not vote in races that are down ballot or more obscure. It is perfectly legal to take into the polling place your notes or material that will assist you in completing the ballot.
- Marigold Bill or Merely Bill: a non-controversial and inoffensive bill, which will receive votes that are near unanimous, for example: "This bill presents a narrow question and will merely associate square dancing with Illinois so vote Yes on this bill, and let's make square dancing the official dance of Illinois."
- Filibuster-a political procedure to delay a decision on a proposal

RETIREE TERMS

- TRS: Teacher Retirement System
- IMRF: Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund
- SURS: State University Retirement System
- COLA-Cost of Living Adjustment
- Defined Benefit (DB) Plans: specify a certain benefit for the member at retirement based on several factors. Most DB plans are based on length of service and final average salary multiplied by a certain percentage. In the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) and the State Universities Retirement System (SURS), the percentage is 2.2 percent for each year of creditable service. *IEANEA.org (Fact Sheets)*
- Defined Contribution (DC) Plans: are like a 401k. In a defined contribution plan, the amount of money contributed by the employer and employee is specified while the retirement benefit earned by the member is based on the investment performance of those contributions at retirement. In DC plans members are given mutual funds or tax deferred annuities as options to invest their money. A 403b is also an example of a DC plan. *IEANEA.org (Fact Sheets)*
- Government Pension Offset (GPO): Federal law reducing spousal Social Security benefits in situations where the spouse did not pay Social Security taxes on their employment earnings
- Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP): Federal rules intended to keep retirees from "double dipping" and receiving retirement benefits from multiple public sources by reducing Social Security benefits if workers have also earned a public pension and did not pay Social Security taxes on those earnings
- TRIP: Teacher Retirement Insurance Plan (health insurance plan)
- TRAIL: Total Retiree Advantage Illinois (health insurance plan)
- CIP: College Insurance Plan (health insurance plan)

Notes

[illegible]



**NEA MEMBERS...DON'T WAIT IN LINE,
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OWN HOME USING **NEA CLICK & SAVE**,
YOUR MEMBER-ONLY ONLINE MALL!**

- ▶ Register or log in to NEAMB.com/clickandsave.
- ▶ Browse websites of your favorite retailers, including apparel, electronics, movie tickets and much more.
- ▶ Enjoy exclusive member deals on your favorite items and brands.
- ▶ Earn **WOWPoints** to use toward future purchases.
- ▶ Come back and shop often as new retailers are frequently added.
- ▶ Share these benefits with five family members or friends.

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NEA Click & Save. Start shopping today!



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INSURANCE



DISCOUNTS



TRAVEL



PROFESSIONAL

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