

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Legislative Committee met four times this year - July, October, January and our March meeting was our first video conference meeting using Google+. The Legislative Committee was formed to advise and inform the Board about legislative issues. This committee is unique because it consists of members at large, board members and staff.

Day on the Hill (DOTH) was once again the focal point of the committee this year. Our goal was to improve and expand DOTH. MSEA's Day on the Hill (collaboratively with AFSCME 65) was once again a success. This year's event seemed to be the best organized yet. Having the meetings at the Crowne Plaza and having our guest speakers come to the hotel was very well received. While we did have fewer members register this year we had a strong group of member lobbyists who delivered our message loudly and proudly. The highlight of the day was having Governor Dayton speak to the group and to know that he is supportive of our issues. Senate Minority Leader Tom Bakk also addressed the group and addressed the list of "Bad to the Bone" bills being proposed. Our main issue at the DOTH this year was the "Right to Work" (RTW) amendment that was under discussion by our legislators.

Highlights of the 2011-2012 Legislative Committee:

- Guest Nan Madden from the Minnesota Budget Project presented information on three Constitutional Amendments that put Minnesota's future at risk.
 - 1) House File 1598/Senate File 1384 would require a three-fifths supermajority vote in each body of the Legislature in order to pass a tax increase.
 - 2) House File 1661/Senate File 1378 would limit general fund spending in the biennium to just 98 percent of forecasted revenues.
 - 3) House File 1612/Senate File 1364 would limit all spending in the biennium to the amount of all revenues collected in the previous biennium.

The three proposed amendments would prevent a majority of lawmakers from determining the overall size of the state's budget and managing available resources. Such action would prevent public investments in our infrastructure from keeping up with the growth in the economy, and they would restrict the state's ability to fund schools, safeguard the public health and maintain other critical services.

- Incorporated legislative issues into the Spring Regionals and worked to prepare our members with the information on issues needed to be comfortable as potential lobbyists.
- Legislative issues initially selected by the committee for the 2012 legislative session were:
 - a. School funding – support a down payment of what is owed.
 - b. Transportation – miles instead of per pupil funding.
 - c. Oppose minority rule budget amendments.
 - d. Protect collective bargaining – "Protect PELRA" catch phrase – possibly for buttons.
 - e. Voter ID – suppresses votes.

Shortly after the committee selected its issues, the RTW Amendment proposal became a serious threat. It quickly overshadowed all other issues.

- An information table will be included during DA registration with committee members available to discuss the prevailing issues. “Protect PELRA” buttons will be available (there are a lot of “Bad Bills” that affect PELRA) and postcards for members to send to their legislators. Email signup sheets will again be available for members to sign up for legislative updates.
- Christina, John and Sue will make a presentation at the DA addressing Legislative issues/updates. The presentation will be at the end of the 1st business session.
- John Rostad does a great job of keeping the Legislative web page up to date while being user friendly. We would like to encourage everyone to visit the page and promote its use. MSEA is now on Facebook – be sure to “friend” us! Knowledge is power.
- At its meeting on January 28, 2012, the MSEA Board adopted the committee’s legislative goals. The committee is pleased to report that both RTW and the minority rule (budget) amendments did not get the support needed in the legislature and will not be on the ballot in November. The committee will continue working with members to lobby our elected representatives on the remaining goals.

Respectfully Submitted,

MSEA Legislative Committee

Sue Ames, Chair, LaCrescent

Mary Schaufenbuel, Board, Windom

Patricia Gangl, St. Cloud

Linda Pederson, Moorhead

Christina L. Clark, MSEA Executive Director

John Rostad, MSEA Field Representative

Evan Mapes, MSEA President, Thief River Falls, (ex-officio)