

STAND UNITED

Last weekend I, along with members of the Executive Committee, attended NYSUT's Representative Assembly (RA) in Rochester. The body was addressed by speakers including Hillary Clinton and Tom DiNapoli and many resolutions were debated and ratified including the one co-sponsored by the STA entitled: **Continuing advocacy against inappropriate testing**. See the article on page three of this newsletter for more details on the RA. I also attended the President's Conference where many items were discussed such as the importance of voting, APPR and an update on the Freidrichs' case.

NYSUT has a goal this year to have every local have at least 95% of their membership vote in this year's elections. This fall most of you signed A **Pledge To Vote** card which was delivered to your State Senator and Assemblyperson. NYSUT is asking all members to go to pledge.nysut.org and take the pledge to vote. It is much easier for NYSUT to advocate for teachers and students when they have the power of our votes behind them. Voting is one way we can all defend our union rights, profession and protect our students. Please commit to stand up for yourself, your colleagues and union members everywhere by voting.

The district is currently operating under a waiver for **APPR** which allows them to use the 3012-c section of the law. Districts must be compliant with 3012-d enacted in the budget last year (by September 1, 2016) or risk losing any increases to state aid. The Board of Regents voted to implement a four-year moratorium on the consequences of using the 3-8 ELA and Math Common Core State Assessments, in any form, in teacher evaluations. NYSUT advised that while State-provided growth scores will continue to be provided to teachers and principals for advisory purposes, they will not have any impact on employment decisions or TIPS during the moratorium period. The APPR committee is still in the process of negotiating a 3012-d compliant plan.

You probably watched a video about the **Friedrichs vs. CTA** case. As you saw in the video, Friedrichs, with the support of the Koch brothers and others, would like to have the benefits of union membership without having to contribute financially to the union. These groups want to overturn *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, weaken unions, and diminish our power to collectively bargain, all under the guise of giving workers the "Right to Work" free of a union. To be clear, their interest is not better wages or working conditions for public service workers. It's all about increasing their own profits and destroying unions. If you haven't seen the video yet, you can find it on the STA Facebook page.

You should be aware that the Supreme Court decision in this case was 4-4 which means that it reverts back to the lower court decision which upheld *Abood*. In a 1977 unanimous decision, the Court found that non-members may be assessed dues for "collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment purposes." While the 4-4 decision is good news for unions it does not mean that the fight is over. There are many other anti-union cases in the lower courts. Please see the article on page two of this newsletter for more information.

The slow erosion of union strength in our country is something we should all be concerned about now and moving forward. I sincerely hope STA members value our union and will always support it.

In unity,

Q & A on *Friedrichs v California Teachers Association*

The Supreme Court's recent 4-4 decision in *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers' Association* means that there will be no immediate changes in existing law. NYSUT and other public sector unions can continue to collect "fair share" agency fees for those who opt not to join the union yet are covered by the collective bargaining agreement.

As the following Q&A explains, while an immediate threat has been dispelled with the recent Supreme Court decision, many more anti-union cases remain in the legal pipeline, instigated by deep-pocketed extremists who seek to dismantle union rights.

Q. What does the Supreme Court's 4-4 vote in *Friedrichs* mean?

A. It means the lower court's decision is affirmed, and that the Court's 1977 decision in *Abood* stands. Unions may continue to collect fair share fees from the non-members the union represents.

Q. Does this decision permanently resolve whether fair share fees are constitutional?

A. No. The *Friedrichs* plaintiffs have already announced their intention to seek a rehearing before the Supreme Court once it is back to full strength. This could happen as early as the Court's next term, which begins in October 2016.

Q. What if the Court does not grant a rehearing?

A. Even if the Court decides against a rehearing in *Friedrichs*, there are a number of other pending cases that raise this issue. Once the Court is at full strength, it is very likely the issue will be resolved by a majority decision in the next two to three years.

Q. Are there other legal attacks on unions that we need to watch?

A. Unfortunately, there are quite a few. Well-funded anti-union groups, like the one behind *Friedrichs*, have brought many cases seeking to undermine the voice and strength of unions and working Americans. These challenges are being pursued all over the United States. They include challenges to:

- The right of unions to speak for all members of a bargaining unit (exclusivity). Without exclusivity, the employer can divide the workforce and undermine the union by selectively providing better wages and benefits to employees who oppose the union. Once the union fails, wages and benefits can be cut for all.
- Basic employment rights, including the right to job security, due process, and the protection of seniority.
- The right to bargain basic terms and conditions of employment.

Q. Are we facing these challenges in New York?

A. Yes. A decision by the Supreme Court on fair share fees would apply to New York. The National "Right to Work" Legal Defense Foundation has filed a *Friedrichs*-type challenge against PEF, an AFT local that represents New York's professional state workers. And, Campbell Brown's horribly misnamed "Partnership for Educational Justice" is pursuing litigation in New York seeking to outlaw the protections of teacher tenure/due process, seniority, and collective bargaining. Other groups are seeking to direct more tax dollars away from public schools into charter schools. These attacks are not just being waged in court, but in every state legislature, including ours.

Q. What can locals and members do about these legal fights?

A. Unions have always faced tough challenges and have surmounted them by organizing and engaging members. Unions exist to give ordinary working people a voice and a fighting chance against those who would keep wages and benefits low and deny job security. Union strength comes from active, engaged members. Despite the recent favorable ruling, we need to continue to engage every member in these fights. Our commitment to organizing continues unabated.



NYSUT Representative Assembly 2016

• **President of AFL-CIO:**

- NYSUT is the largest affiliate of AFL-CIO. This year alone, 60,000 new union members joined the AFL-CIO.
- Unions are under attack every day, but we are starting to turn the tide. Now is the time to turn up the heat.
- Leaders warned that trouble was coming, but it's hard to see when times are still good. Now we are seeing a positive change, but it will be a while before that reality catches up to the perception. Therefore, we need to keep the politicians focused on our collective goal of protecting unions, on the growing economy, etc. Let's work together to block public perception until reality becomes apparent. The attack took years to orchestrate—union members have to work tirelessly to stop it.

President of NYSUT:

- Even though, educators make up a 600,000 member army. It's not enough to join and pay dues.
- How will you answer the call to **Be The Union?**
- NYSUT is committed to the goal of growing the union by standing together in solidarity.
- This year's convention theme: Educate, Organize, Mobilize.

NYS Comptroller:

- 80% of retirees can continue to stay in NY due to pensions; this adds to New York's economy.
- Tom Di Napoli promised to work tirelessly to protect our right to have a pension fund (NYSTRS).
- Tom promised to audit charter schools.

President of AFT:

- AFT works every day to protect civil rights, public education, working families, middle class. (Activists mentioned the discrimination in Mississippi and North Carolina)
- Friedrich case may not be over – they are looking for a new way to file the case after the presidential election/supreme court nomination.
- We need a president that supports public education.
- We must continue to strengthen our voice in the political arena.

VOTE/COPE:

- NYSUT raised over \$9 million this year. One million came from Nassau County.
- Syosset leads Nassau and is second in the state; #1 Edgemont, #2 Syosset, #3 East Williston...
- Syosset won the Albert Shanker award for our VOTE/COPE contributions.

Community/Service:

- Catherine DaSilva, from Robbins Lane, won a Community Service award.

Hillary Clinton:

- Committed to public education.
- Has conferred with AFT and NEA thoroughly on all issues plaguing public education.
- Was extremely well-versed and demonstrated a deep understanding of these issues.
- Promised to continue consulting AFT and NEA for any decision to be made regarding public education.
- She asked that we continue reaching out to our legislators. She commended us for finally getting politicians to look at education (testing and common core expectations) through the eyes of children. Keep it up!

Successes this year: reprieve from Friedrich's case for now; moratorium for APPR/test scores; GEA elimination; largest amount of aid money for education in the state budget in many, many years.

LEONARD MOTISI SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Syosset Teachers' Association sponsors an annual scholarship in honor of our former President, Leonard Motisi, who died in 1995. Because Mr. Motisi was not only a wonderful teacher and union leader, but also a gifted musician, we are seeking a recipient who is interested in education, and/or music and who is blessed with demonstrable leadership skills.

This scholarship shall be for \$500 a year and shall be continued for each of up to four years that the recipient is a full-time matriculated student at an accredited institution.

Applications were emailed out. They are available at the STA Office (ext. 5784). Completed applications should be sent to the STA Office in the H.B. Thompson Middle School and received no later May 6, 2016.

Your Employee Assistance Work/Life Program (EAP) provides support for a variety of personal and professional concerns including emotional well-being, family and relationship issues, job-related difficulties, substance abuse and others. Trained professional counselors are available 24/7. Your EAP can help. Call 800-833-8707 for a free and confidential consultation.

Rep Council Notes...

Meeting 3/10/15 & 4/14/16

Approval of Goals
Treasurer's Report
Political Action
Wellness
TRACT
REC
President's report

South Grove

Bridget Perlmutter*
Cathy Bozza*
Jody Braun*

Village

Allyson Giles
Eileen Hoffman*
Michelle Potvin*
Dana Genna

H.B. Thompson Middle School

Tania Johnson*
Ann Cullen*
Darlene Darress
Debra Gazzola
Regina Pisacani

South Woods Middle School

Michael Acquaro
Mike Gross*

Rep. Council Attendees:

Baylis

Donna Conlon*
Melissa Ramos

Berry Hill

Robin DiMaggio
Jodi Beckoff

Sandra Hoffman
Courtney Orphanos*

Robbins Lane

Linda Blanchfield*
Joyce Ettinger*
Angela Alfred*

Walt Whitman

Candace Nupp*
Michele Strauss*
Lori Bookspan*
Jen Gustafson

Willits

Lisa Funk
Lorraine Avazis
Susan Gallagher

Syosset High School

Rosemary Jones
Lauren Lustig-Weill
Joanne Neary
Debbie Smith*
Felicia Weiss*

REC

Matty Wolfson
Fritz Weinrich

TRACT

Fran Bernstein*

OT/PT

Bonnie Pantell

* Denotes attendance for both meetings



Vote YES on May 17th
Support your local school budget

REMINDERS:

STA Rep Council
May 12
Year End Rep Party June 9

General Membership Mtg
May 10

Budget Vote
May 17

Stay connected via our facebook page at www.facebook.com/syossetta

2015-2016

**SYOSSET TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Kim Pritchard, President Carol Castaldi
Kat Kelly, Vice-President Megan Halleran
Michael Callahan, Treasurer Mark Hanik
Allison Noonan
Debra Puccio
David Steinberg
Shelly Larit, Executive Director

STAnd United

March/April 2016
Volume 26, Number 4

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