



Retiree Advocate



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Orval Garrison, President

CTA/NEA-Retired

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Good news sometimes seems few and far between. It is with satisfaction that I share the good news that **SB 868 and AB 1667 were signed into law** by Governor Newsom on September 29. SB 868 will improve CalSTRS Supplemental Benefit payments to our most senior retirees, those who retired before 1999 and who never received pension enhancements available to those who retired later. The pension improvements will take effect in 2023-2024. AB 1667 will finally do something about the outrage of requiring innocent retirees to “repay” CalSTRS for reporting errors made by employing school districts. If the district made the mistake, the district makes CalSTRS whole.

These two bills are the result of efforts initiated some time back by CTA/NEA-Retired in concert with the CTA Retirement Committee and CTA Legislative Advocates. In particular, Seth Bramble of CTA Governmental Relations deserves credit for shepherding these bills through the legislative process. CTA/NEA-Retired was closely involved in the process, triggering

our RAN (Retired Action Network) to contact legislators, asking members themselves to make contact, and providing witness testimony to the legislative committees.

As is the way with politics, there will be other organizations—management, school boards, others—that will lay claim to these victories. When tag-along groups get included as “co-sponsors” to a bill, those groups are seldom reluctant to claim credit for the success. Let it be known: **CTA/NEA-Retired was the originator of these bills and worked them forward to passage in collaboration with CTA.**

Also, I helped cover the CTA/NEA-Retired table at the Region I Leadership Conference (Sept. 9-11, 2022), south of San Francisco. Two things struck me as I talked with various Active members who came to our table: These folks, still working, did not know that they could join CTA/NEA-Retired NOW as “Pre-retired members,” and most know so very little about CTA and NEA Member Benefits. Our own retired members could learn more about Member Benefits as well. One of my goals now is to have our Liaisons at Service Center Council meetings ramp up information about both.

There is also good news about our two scholarship programs. The Scholarship Committee selected this year’s recipients of our **Russo Scholarship** for those students pursuing careers in Audiology & Speech Pathology. Additionally, our brand new **Pedretti Scholarship** program recognizes students working toward credentials in elementary and secondary education. The Russo Fund needs to be replenished. **Any amount helps.** Please make checks out to **CTA Foundation for Teaching & Learning (Memo line: Russo Scholarship**

Fund) and mail to **Debra Sheehan, 3045 Capitola Rd., Apt. 17, Santa Cruz, CA 95062.** The Pedretti Scholarship is in good shape for the time being.

CTA/NEA-Retired is continuing its outreach to prospective members. **We are sponsoring four Retirement Issues webinars.** The one for September 8, 2022 has already occurred. Identified CTA members with 15 years or more of service and/or within retirement range are alerted to these webinars. CTA Staff Rose Luna and Mitch Olson are the excellent presenters. The three remaining webinars are set for **December 8 (2022)** and then **February 9 and April 6 (2023).**

The **upcoming midterm elections** are important. I have said it before: **Elections Matter.** By the time this ADVOCATE is distributed, some may have already voted. If you have not done so, **please do not fail to vote.** CTA/NEA-Retired has alerted its members more than once to contact U.S Senators and House of Representative members about the importance of **H.R. 82 and H.R. 5723.** I have contacted Congresspeople, their offices, their aides. It is simply being politically realistic to say that little is going to happen regarding Social Security, penalties repeal or other, until after the midterm elections.

I am wishing you all success and contentment for coming holiday season!





Vice President Kamala Harris and NEA President Becky Pringle both addressed the 2022 Representative Assembly and stressed the need to protect students and educators from gun violence.



The 2022 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETS IN CHICAGO – EXCITED TO BE BACK IN PERSON

By Don Stouffer, Board Member District 1

The first in-person Representative Assembly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was held in Chicago July 3-6. The format was hybrid, facilitating participation by those who were unable to travel to Chicago. In-person attendance was limited to make it easier to maintain social distancing, and face masks and regular testing were required. For example, in-person attendees were required to use a screening app to monitor their health and to gain entry into RA venues.

Additionally, having a smartphone was essential for full participation. NEA used a new phone-based app for electronic voting and requests to speak, expanding on the features that were introduced at the 2021 virtual RA. The new technology worked, most of the time, but there were frequent hiccups. On the plus side, electronic voting eliminated calls for “roll call” or “division” as actual votes were tabulated electronically. Those attending remotely could join in just as easily as those attending in-person. Overall the hybrid system was a work in progress, but showed great potential.

This year, the RA featured addresses by Vice President Kamala Harris and Illinois Governor J. B. Pritzker, with a virtual appearance by Dolly Parton.

Gun violence was a major theme.

A major theme of this RA was the issue of gun violence. The horrific shooting in Uvalde, Texas was still fresh. And, if attendees needed reminding, the mass shooting in Highland Park, a nearby Chicago suburb, at a 4th of July parade, occurred while the RA was in session. During the search for the shooting suspect, the NEA asked that attendees not leave the convention center and convention security was beefed up.

Gun violence was highlighted in the speeches by NEA President Becky Pringle and Vice President Harris.

President Pringle stated: **“On May 14th in Buffalo, we saw the horrible carnage that can grow when seeds of dishonesty and disinformation and hate are sown.”** Further stating, **“We will begin putting every single candidate for political office on notice. Today! If you refuse to keep our schools and our babies safe, while calling on us to take up arms...know this, one in 10 households in this country has an NEA member...and we will make sure you know who we are.”**

Vice President Harris, after visiting with officials and families in Highland Park, addressed gun violence at the RA: **“I don't need to tell the NEA that we need to end this horror, we need to stop this violence, and we must protect our communities from the terror of gun violence. You know I've said it before, enough is enough! Teachers should not have to practice barricading a classroom. Teachers should not have to know how to treat a gunshot wound. And, teachers should not be told that lives would have been saved if only you had a gun.”**

I believe the most important action taken at this RA was the adoption of New Business Item A. This NBI was introduced by NEA Executive Committee member and San Bernardino teacher, Robert Rodriguez, whose own community experienced a mass shooting in 2015. NBI A creates a “National Call to Action” with funding of \$500,000 and will:

- Involve representatives of national, state, local leaders, and staff,
- Expand upon current advocacy with joint organizing actions and activities,
- Acknowledge the disproportionate effect of gun violence on communities of color,
- Provide members with resources and information through targeted professional development and support,

- Hold elected officials and candidates accountable through questionnaires, ads, and op-eds,
- Support efforts by other stakeholders, including parents, business, and faith leaders,
- Provide staff assistance and written materials to state and local affiliates.

Dolly Parton is given the Friend of Education Award

One of the most inspiring moments of the RA was the awarding of the Friend of Education Award, which this year went to Dolly Parton. Dolly, who joined the RA virtually, was honored for the work of the Dollywood Foundation, specifically that of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. This program donates a book every month to children from birth to the age of five, and is currently distributing over two million books per month. In total, the Imagination Library has donated over 180 million books to children. Of her work, Dolly said, “Together, let's continue to inspire kids to dream more, care more, learn more, and therefore, be more.”

The NEA continues its effort for social and educational justice. Many of the revisions to Policy Statements and Resolutions, as well as New Business Items, addressed the issues of inclusion of previously excluded groups, especially African American, Native American and Hawaiian students, in addition to LGBTQ+ students. A number of NBIs focused on the issues facing neurodivergent students and students with unmet emotional needs. Importantly, President Pringle, in her remarks said, “We will continue to take seriously our responsibilities as educators to teach our students this nation’s true and complete history.”

Overall, this RA was productive. It was not quite the RA of the pre-pandemic years, but it was an evolving RA, one perhaps better suited to our changing times.



In June, more than twenty members of CTA/NEA-Retired attended the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL.



At the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, CTA/NEA-Retired was presented with two certificates recognizing outstanding numerical and percentage growth in membership for the past year. Pictured are President Orval Garrison, Vice President Dana Dillon and Secretary-Treasurer Debra Sheehan.

THE 39th NEA-RETIRED ANNUAL MEETING IS HELD IN CHICAGO

By Bonnie Shatun, District 3 Director

“The Time Is Now to Protect Democracy” was the theme that echoed throughout the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting as 316 elected delegates represented the 324,000 members of NEA-Retired. The meeting was held in Chicago June 29-30 and was the first in-person NEA-Retired Annual meeting in two years. Delegates were also given the option of participating virtually. Those who attended in person followed strict COVID protocols.

In her opening address, NEA-Retired President Sarah Borgman referred to current events such as Supreme Court decisions that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, expanded school vouchers, enabled school prayer and weakened gun laws, as well as the Uvalde, Texas school shooting, and attacks on democracy and school curriculum. She said that it’s about time for our state and local associations to take on racial and social justice as top priorities, and “it’s about time to stop the insane murdering of our students and teachers.” She urged members to get active in the November election to protect our democracy.

The three NEA officers also addressed the conference. NEA President Becky Pringle thanked delegates for the work they did in the

2020 election to put a friend of education in the White House. She continued, “And, we fought to make sure the Biden administration passed the American Rescue Plan, which funded much-needed resources to the districts and schools who needed it most.” She also said that more than 60,000 NEA members emailed Congress and called their Representatives to urge support of the gun safety legislation that President Biden signed into law on June 25, 2022.

NEA Vice President Princess Moss said, “It’s going to take all of us to save democracy in America.” She asked delegates to do three things to make a difference for our students, our schools, and the future of our nation: 1. Think about running for office, 2. Become an election observer or serve on a local election board to protect the vote, and 3. Contribute to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education to help elect candidates who support public schools.

Mary Kusler, Director of the NEA Center for Advocacy, shared that stopping the unfair penalties on educators’ pensions has been a top priority of NEA for years. She credits the activism of NEA and NEA-Retired members for the U.S. House of Representatives seriously

considering the bill that would repeal the GPO/WEP provisions. In addition to putting constant pressure on Congressional Representatives throughout the year, on the May 24 Day of Action alone, NEA-Retired members sent more than 6,200 emails, made more than 486 calls, and held 50 virtual meetings with Congress members or their staffs. “It’s all because of you,” she said. In closing, she said, “We cannot stand on the sidelines, the November elections are truly at the core about the life and death of democracy.” At this conference, Retired Delegates contributed more than \$35,000 to the NEA Fund, and NEA-Retired members have contributed more than \$1 million dollars to the political action committee over the last five years.

Delegates at the meeting also discussed items on the agenda of the upcoming NEA Representative Assembly and awarded five scholarships to aspiring educators. CTA/NEA-Retired received two awards for membership growth. Elections were held and our own Ed Foglia was elected to the NEA Board of Directors. And, at exactly noon on June 30, the meeting paused as Ketanji Brown Jackson was sworn in to be the first African American woman on the U.S. Supreme Court.

2022 CTA/NEA-RETIRED SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED IN MEMORY OF SHARILYNN GARDELLA RUSSO

By Marc Sternberger, Past President

The CTA/NEA-Retired Scholarship Committee selected, Jessica Riojas and Joshua Ayala to be this year's recipients of the Sharilynn Gardella Russo Memorial Scholarships.



Jessica Riojas has already earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from CSU-Fresno and has been accepted into the Education of Leadership Doctoral Program at CSU-Stanislaus this fall. She stated, "...I have witnessed the vast need for speech therapists in my community... My educational aspirations consist of becoming a professor of speech pathology in Stanislaus County."

Among her experiences, Jessica has been working for the Ceres Unified School District, first as a Speech and Language Intern, then as a fully credentialed Speech and Language Pathologist. She has provided services for children with various complex communication disorders, including early intervention services for preschool children with special needs. Jessica said, "Throughout my experiences and education, working with children with Autism has been my passion." While working in the district, she has become

active in her CTA local chapter as the SLP Rep to Ceres Unified TA. Her community activities include volunteering with She Became, a program to promote success for young women, and tutoring for Project Yes, a non-profit employment service for economically disadvantaged youth.

Her supervisor for the last two years, during the COVID-19 PANDEMIC, wrote, "Ms. Riojas was able to adapt quickly to teaching students on a virtual platform and was able to prepare lessons that were engaging." She went on to say, "She has been a team player in our speech group... and has often been the first to offer her help to colleagues...She is a born leader and has expressed her interest in helping new SLPs develop their art."

Joshua Ayala earned a B.A. in Speech Pathology from the Communication Disorders and Sciences Department at the California State University – Fullerton in May 2020. He is now in his second year of study for a master's degree in that program.

Joshua, who is bilingual in English and Spanish, has spent much of the last few years on a research project to help raise awareness of SLP services and resources and provide educational outreach to Spanish speakers in his community. He has had many paid and volunteer work experiences that will be helpful in his career development, most recently as a Speech Language Assistant working with children and their parents at Bright Star Speech and Language Services. Previously, he worked as a Behavior Technician with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), where he "carried out lesson plans with goals of facilitating gains towards generalization

regarding use of social language and functional communication."



His volunteer experiences included various leadership positions with Students for Smiles Community Service Club (Smile Train), a non-profit which raises funds to provide corrective surgery for children with cleft lips and palates.

As for the future Joshua says, "The population I wish to work with is patients with swallowing, neurogenic disorders, and other cognitive impairments." "Early intervention is another area of interest", as he stated that "I have found great joy working with children."

In a glowing reference, one professor wrote, "... I believe that Joshua Ayala has the capacity to excel in his graduate studies and in a career as a researcher, advocate, and Speech-Language Pathologist. I give him my highest recommendation."

The 2022 Scholarship Committee included: Ed Foglia, Shelley Krantz, Orval Garrison, Mary Rose Ortega, and KC Walsh.

**Donations are always gratefully accepted anytime of the year!
Please make checks out to the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning with the following notation: Russo Memorial Scholarship Fund in the memo line of your check.**

**Checks should be mailed to:
Debra Sheehan 3045 Capitola Rd. Apt. 17, Santa Cruz CA 95062**





IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING CALSTRS

CARA CONTINUES WORKING TO INFORM SENIORS ABOUT VITAL ISSUES

By Jo Carson, CARA Representative

All members of CTA/NEA-Retired are also members of the California Alliance for Retired Americans. As your CARA representative, I'm happy to report that CARA never stops working on issues and education for seniors. In celebration of our nineteen years of service, we held five virtual Regional Conventions in September. We hope you received word of these events from our CARA Alerts and were able to participate. In June we held candidates' forums throughout the state in preparation for the California Primary. Remember, we don't endorse candidates but provide information.

We studied, and endorsed or opposed legislation both in the state and the federal government. Our most recent stance was in support of Women's Right to choose. Now we are working diligently on our 2022 Seniors Vote project. We are pleased to say that all of our CARA Alerts, notifications, and programs are presented in both English and Spanish.

CARA held a special Legislation Committee meeting soon after the ROE repeal and voted to vigorously support all five of the Reproductive Rights bills put forth by the Women's Caucus.

The CARA Legislative Team joins CTA in recommending a YES position on the following ballot propositions. Proposition 1 supports a woman's fundamental right to abortion and reproductive rights by embedding these rights in our state constitution. Proposition 28 provides additional funding for the arts and music in public education. Proposition 31 will protect children, teens and people of all ages from BIG TOBACCO, by ending flavored tobacco products including E-cigarettes and minty menthol cigarettes.

As always, CARA's fundamental goals are to protect Social Security and Medicare. CARA has taken a STRONG position of Support on HR 5723: Social Security 2100. We are urging Speaker Pelosi to put it up for a vote. Social Security 2100 will expand benefits and it includes the repeal of WEP/ GPO which negatively impact the retirement of teachers and other government employees. On the Medicare front, we are very concerned about the "privatization" of Medicare, which allows Wall Street corporations to buy up healthcare providers, with the goal of enhancing their profits at patient expense.

At this writing we are in the middle of our Seniors Vote project. CARA members have hand-written 25,000 postcards to seniors in California. These cards are being followed up by phone calls to seniors explaining issues that concern us. While we do not endorse candidates we do educate seniors on the candidates' voting records.

Education is important to all of us, and CARA is committed to providing clear and honest information to seniors. Go to the CARA website www.californiaalliance.org for information and to sign up for Alerts. Also, friend us on Face Book, to learn more about issues that affect us all.

At the CalSTRS Board meeting, it was announced that, due to inflation, there is an almost 50% increase in the number of CalSTRS members who qualify for additional funds from the Supplemental Benefits Maintenance Account. The quarterly payments that provide for 85% guaranteed purchasing power will now be sent to approximately 112,000 members.

Most members retiring in 2005 and before, will now be receiving additional benefit payments beginning very soon! If you have questions about this, feel free to reach out to one of the CTA/NEA-Retired liaisons to CalSTRS: Orval Garrison, Dana Dillon, Ed Foglia, or Don Stauffer.

CTA/NEA-RETIRED MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR CTA DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS

If you or someone you know has been impacted by the recent fires in California, please take advantage of the CTA Disaster Relief Fund. As a CTA/NEA-Retired member, you are eligible for the same support as active members.

The Standard Grant is up to \$1,500 for significant economic hardship due to damage to the member's primary residence, displacement or disruption in required utilities. If damages exceed \$50,000, you may be eligible for up to another \$1,500. If you were displaced due to a disaster for more than 7 days, you may be eligible for up to \$500.

Go to www.CTAMemberBenefits.org/drif for Relief Fund information and application forms.

During times of natural disaster, it is also true that insurance policy issues arise. If members have an insurance claim problem with Cal Casualty or other CTA approved vendor, remember that the CTA Advisory Panel on Endorsed Services is available to seek a resolution to a claims problem. One may request a Complaint Review Request Form. Information to access the Advisory Panel is available at www.ctaMemberBenefits.org, Email: member_benefits@cta.org, or Phone: (650)552-5200).



The CTA/NEA-Retired Board held our two and a half day Planning Meeting in early August and covered many topics. Items of particular interest are: enhanced goals by adding explicit language regarding minority involvement; created additional standing committees to focus on communications, political action, retired issues, and more; promoting opportunities for more members to be involved in these committees; and membership recruitment possibilities. Pictured (from top left) are Mary Rose Ortega, Gerald Gandolfo, Don Stauffer, Bonnie Shatun, Ken Johnson, (seated) Lynette Henley, Dana Dillon, Orval Garrison and Debra Sheehan. Anne Johnson-Curtis, Anna Poggi, and Virginia Torres were excused.



On September 7, Chico Retired held its first annual fall luncheon since 2019. Guest speaker Dana Dillon, CTA/NEA-Retired Vice President and past Chair of the CalSTRS Board, shared that CalSTRS has done a great job of weathering the recent economic ups and downs and is doing much better than the broader markets. She emphasized that CTA/NEA-Retired is encouraging CalSTRS to commit to achieving a net zero emissions portfolio by 2050 or sooner. Attendees heard a report about the critical Chico USD School Board election and how they could help elect candidates who support public education. Twenty-one members signed up to help and took home a total of 190 postcards to send to members living in Chico.



NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN 2023 ELLEN LOGUE WHO (WE HONOR OURS) AWARD

Annually, CTA/NEA-Retired honors one member who has continued to be active in retirement by exhibiting leadership in the Association, in public education, and in the community. The recipient will be recognized at our Annual CTA/NEA-Retired Issues Conference to be held on March 16-17, 2023.

Past winners of the award are:

- 2022 - John Graham
- 2021 - Ed Foglia
- 2020 - Marc Sternberger
- 2019 - Jim Burfeind
- 2018 - Bob McDonough
- 2017 - Frank Tarantino
- 2016 - Arlene Pavey
- 2015 - Bonnie Shatun
- 2014 - Val Muchowski
- 2013 - Orval Garrison
- 2012 - Tim Jenkins

Nomination forms can be found online at www.cta.org/retired. If you would prefer to receive the form in the mail, please call CTA/NEA-Retired at 650/552-5439 or email CTA-Retired@cta.org. Deadline for submission is Friday, January 27, 2023.

VOTE PUBLIC EDUCATION

ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 8, 2022

EDUCATORS' CHOICE

Initiatives

YES on

Prop 1: Reproductive Freedom

Provides women equal access to healthcare services and prohibits the state from denying an individual's right to reproductive freedom.

YES on

Prop 28: Art & Music in Schools

Provides additional funding for arts and music education in PK-12 public schools without raising taxes. Nearly \$1 billion from the general fund annually. Money is used to support arts programs and hire new arts staff. More money is targeted to low-income schools.

YES on

Prop 31: Stop Big Tobacco Referendum

Supports referendum to protect current law which bans the sale of favored tobacco products and marketing to teens.

No on

Prop 27: Online & Mobile Sports Betting

Legalizes online and mobile sports betting in California. Online gambling corporations would take 90% of the profits out of state. Not a single penny is directed to our students or our state's public schools. Could expose millions of kids to online gambling.

No on

Prop 30: Clean Cars & Air Act

Increases income taxes to pay for zero emission vehicle subsidies and infrastructure improvements. It is funded by the Lyft Corporation to get taxpayers to pay for improvements. The tax increase side-steps current law that requires half of any new revenues to go to public education. It also doesn't raise any additional money for health care and other essential services.

Candidates



Governor
GAVIN NEWSOM



Lieutenant Governor
ELENI KOUNALAKIS



Secretary of State
SHIRLEY WEBER



Attorney General
ROB BONTA



State Treasurer
FIONA MA



Insurance Commissioner
RICARDO LARA



Superintendent of Public
Instruction
TONY THURMOND



State Controller
MALIA COHEN



U.S. Senate
ALEX PADILLA

2022 VOTER GUIDE

Find your personal voter guide at:
[CTA.YOURVOTER.GUIDE](https://cta.yourvoter.guide)



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CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

cta.org/campaign