



ARE YOU READY? YOUR UNION'S CALL TO ACTION!

The Best Defense is a Great Offense

“What the fair share burning platform laid bare was an ugly truth: unions are out of touch with the overwhelming majority of their members. Union membership is seen as an obligation, a term of employment, and not a conscious act of joining and belonging to an organization. In spite of years of effort to shift the operating model, most unions still spend the majority of their time talking to 5% of their members who get in trouble or serve as shop stewards. Union staff see their role as doing things “for” members, and members are passive in the process.”

Parker, Allison (2016, March 17). Time to Double Down: What the demise of *Friedrichs* means for labor [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://murphvinstituteblog.org/2016/03/17/time-to-double-down-what-the-demise-of-friedrichs-means-for-labor/>

With a favorable *Friedrichs* outcome in hand, many NEA state affiliates are downplaying or completely abandoning their recent efforts to engage members for a post-fair share fee environment. The ‘gift of time’ our employers were given is being squandered because many Managers and State Governance are unable to grapple with the larger issue: if the State and Local Affiliates had engaged members and reflected their beliefs, the loss of Fair Share Fees would have little impact on the organization. But hope is not lost! NSO brothers and sisters across the country can use this as an opportunity to **go on offense** and pursue an agenda that will move their NEA affiliates in the right direction. It is essential that staff not be shut out of the conversations being had. **We** are the conduit between the local members and the state organization. How can you & your affiliate make this a reality?

Many NSO locals have a Labor-Management Committee (or something similar) in their Contracts. While this forum can be a venue to begin conversations, it often lacks the focus to address larger organizational concerns and most ignore a key player in making organizational change: **GOVERNANCE**. Several NSO affiliates have addressed these problems by creating a separate, standing committee whose sole purpose is to **create organizational change**. An example of such a committee is below:

Strategic Practices Committee

There shall be a standing committee of six (6) members each of Union, Management and Governance, to review current practices, both internal and external, and to recommend strategic approaches to meet the mission, vision, and values of _____ EA from an organizing perspective. The committee will be formed within 30 days of ratification of the tentative agreement by both parties. Recommendations of the committee will be ongoing. Other stakeholders identified by the committee may be added by consensus.

We have a great opportunity to help our State and Local NEA affiliates (RTW *or* FSF) create real, positive change within their organization. A willingness by NSO affiliates to actively engage in conversation and positive action focused on **member engagement** and **organizational effectiveness** may be the best offense against the political and judicial foes we currently face.

