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Political Action Plan Adopted By OSEA's Board of Directors

A plan for political action by OSEA has been adopted by its Board of Directors. It is based upon the following four general objectives:

(1) "That a standing Political Action Committee be formed under the chairmanship of the vice-president."

(2) "That the vice-president appoint the members of the committee, one from each district, with the advice and consent of each district director and subject to approval by the board. The members so chosen shall serve as chairmen supervising local political action subcommittees in their districts."

(3) "That the responsibilities of the committee shall include policy supervision and such other activities as may be directed by the board, in the political education and candidate assessment and support activities of the Association."

(4) "That the political education program of the Association be intensified on a statewide basis, and candidate assessment and support activities be initiated in legislative districts where they could be expected to make the greatest impact; the districts to be determined by the committee on the basis of employee location, voter registration and election results studies made with the assistance of the staff."

Besides those four general objectives, the board adopted 13 specific actions "as basic in a stepped-up political education and political action program" for OSEA. They include:

- That Candidate Assessment Committees be appointed by the Political Action Committee in appropriate districts, for the purpose of reviewing the records of candidates, interviewing candidates, attempting to secure commitment for support of Association programs and making recommendations to the Political Action Committee regarding whether or not a candidate should be supported.

- That a vehicle be created to accept financial contributions or raise funds for worthy candidates, and support from this source and other

assistance be provided to candidates when found by the committee and the board to be in the best interests of the Association.

- That while financial or other assistance to worthy candidates is recommended, public endorsement or public opposition to a candidate is considered generally to be contrary to the best interests of the Association.

- That the legislative program in which OSEA should take an aggressive interest be broadened to include, but not necessarily be limited to consumer subjects, workmen's compensation, unemployment compensation and taxation.

- That, where feasible, joint participation with other public employee groups in the political education and candidate assessment and support programs be authorized; in addition, it is recommended that the Association give consideration to the possibility of broadening its political base by extending membership to all Oregon public employees.

Board members noted that implementation of the plan for political action will have to be undertaken with care to assure that OSEA's tax exempt status, mailing privileges and other non-profit corporation advantages are not placed in jeopardy. In addition, full implementation of the plan will require changes in the Association's constitution and by-laws.

The Ad Hoc Political Action Committee, which drafted the plan adopted by the board, has been directed by OSEA President Chalmers Jones to further study the plan and make recommendations for its implementation. Committee members are: Ralph Jackson, Chemeketa Chapter 64, chairman; Richard Young, Klamath Falls Chapter 12; Myrtle Jarvis, Evergreen Chapter 28; Glen Snyder, Mercury Chapter 39; George Dow, Capitol Capitol Chapter 19; Adele Egan, Salem Chapter 1; Lester Strickler, Corvallis Chapter 29; and George Gearhart, Success Chapter 30.

For further details, please turn to page 10.

Employee Fired For Refusing To Wear Hard Hat; Action Upheld

The Public Employee Relations Board has refused to reinstate a Highway Division maintenance man who was fired because he refused to wear a hard hat while working.

The Highway Division has a policy that requires maintenance personnel to wear a hard hat at all times except when they are riding in motor vehicles. The agency put the policy into effect following a study of head-injury accidents.

Emergency Board Members Named

House Speaker Robert F. Smith (R-Burns) and Senate President John D. Burns (D-Portland) appointed members to the powerful Emergency Board for the next biennium on the final day of the 1971 legislative session.

The board, which acts for the Legislature between its biennial sessions, is composed of six Republicans and three Democrats.

By law, both Smith and Burns are automatic members of the board, as are the co-chairmen of the Joint Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Stafford Hansell (R-Hermiston) and Sen. Lynn W. Newbry (R-Ashland).

Smith appointed Reps. Philip Lang (D-Portland), William Gwinn (R-Albany) and Allen Pynn (R-Lake Oswego) from the House. Burns named Sens. E.D. Potts (D-Grants Pass) and George Eivers (R-Milwaukie) from the Senate.

All of the board members served on the Joint Ways and Means Committee this session with the exception of Smith and Burns.

The Legislature appropriated some \$4.1 million in general funds to the Emergency Board for state employee pay raises on July 1, 1972—the start of the second year of the next biennium. It also earmarked a like amount of dedicated funds for pay hikes. The Emergency Board must approve release of the money before the salary increases are granted.

The employee, George Sheppard, refused to comply with the policy except when he worked in particularly hazardous situations. He said the hard hat caused him to have headaches. After being fired for insubordination, he appealed to the PERB. OSEA assisted him in the presentation of his defense.

At a hearing before the board, Sheppard was asked if he would wear a hard hat if he were reinstated. He said he would not.

The PERB found that the Highway Division's hard hat policy was lawful and reasonable and that the refusal to wear a hard hat constituted grounds for dismissal.

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