

the OSEA news

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From the.... Executive Secretary

Towards Full Citizenship

In the solid response state employees are giving to OSEA's new political education program and its candidate support arm (Citizen Action by State Employees—CASE), one very noticeable factor has been the appearance of new names and faces in Association activities.

Many employees, particularly in the younger group, have looked for more activist and individualistic means for improvement and change than those which present themselves in the more established procedures. Political action may much better suit their imagination and temperament.

The one wet blanket still remaining is the federal Hatch Act and its restrictions upon state and local government employees paid wholly or in part from federal funds. Possibly the greater number of employees interested in political participation are in the human resources agencies. Those programs are largely federally funded.

Senator Gale McGee (D-Wyoming), chairman of the U.S. Post Office and Civil Service Committee, has introduced legislation (S. 3374) which would relieve Hatch Act restrictions on federal, state and local government employees. The bill would permit such employees to play an active part in any campaign for any office, although not permitting a person to be a candidate while still employed in the federal civil service or certain state agencies.

In introducing S. 3374, Senator McGee stated that "the rights of full citizenship would be restored to nearly three million American citizens so that they on their own good judgement can decide what role, if any, they wish to play in the American political process."

The Assembly of Governmental Employees (AGE), the half-million member federation of state employee associations of which OSEA is a member, will be lobbying for the McGee bill through its Washington, D.C. legislative office. We can all help by writing or speaking to our senators and congressmen in support of this vital legislation.

PERS Progress

The Oregon Public Employees' Retirement Conference, the group of public employee organizations and individuals which has had so much success at improving the Public Employees' Retirement System since it was organized under OSEA leadership in 1966, has given early notice of an open conference meeting at the new OSEA building in Salem on Saturday, June 10.

The Conference Steering Committee, of which this writer is co-chairman, has been studying proposals for further PERS improvements to be submitted to next January's session of the legislature. OSEA's Retirement Committee, headed by Jerry Liebertz, and others will give their views on these proposals at the June meeting.

Possibilities of improvements are enhanced by the PERS announcement of significantly higher earnings on investments in 1971. The fixed annuity rate of 6.27 per cent was much better than the 5.09 per cent return reported for 1970. The variable annuity rate was 9.47, a full two per cent over the 7.47 per cent reported for 1970.