

MEA-RETIRED Tribune

February 2014

ALEC (Karla Swift)

What is the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)? ALEC has been on the forefront of the attempted right-wing corporate takeovers of our statehouses across the country, pushing legislation such as so-called Right to Work. **Corporations fund almost all of ALEC's operations and pay for a seat on ALEC task forces, all in exchange for legislators pushing their profit-driven agenda nationwide.**

You can also **Stand Up to ALEC** by sharing these resources with your friends and family:

- Stand Up to ALEC Website: www.standuptoalec.org
- Petition to get Google out of ALEC: <http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/google-time-to-dump-alec>
- ALEC Exposed: http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/ALEC_Exposed

Raising awareness is the first step in reclaiming our democracy from corporate special interests.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Public Employee Health Care Changes Signed by Governor** SBs 541-545, bills that moderate the negative impact of the law limiting what public employers can pay for employee health benefits, were signed by the governor earlier this month. This package of bills included an increase in the “hard cap” for individual-plus-spouses coverage—as well as for an individual plus one non-spouse dependent—from \$11,000 per year to \$12,250 per year, starting in 2014. In all, this package of bills provided some much needed flexibility when locals are bargaining employee health benefits. Thank you to the hundreds of AFT Michigan members who sent emails to legislators urging support for these bills.
- Rochester elementary science teacher Brian Peterson and Emily Theriault-Kimmey, an elementary math teacher in Ann Arbor, are recipients of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.
- According to a U.S. News & World Report, which ranked the best online program of 2014, Central Michigan University (CMU) ranked first online bachelor's programs and tied for its education master's program. Its online graduate business program ranked 17th. Last year Central was number 39 in the online bachelor's rankings.
- **Balanced Budget Amendment Resolution Considered In Michigan House Committee**
The Michigan Legislature could pass a resolution to request an amendment to the US Constitution requiring the federal government to maintain a balanced budget. Conservative organizations have been successful in passing such resolutions in 20 states so far – if they reach a total of 34 states, a Constitutional Convention would be called, and then 38 states would need to ratify the amendment.
- Steve Cook, MEA President, will be one of the keynote speakers at the March 12, 2014 MiARA meeting.

LOVE IS OUR TRUE DESTINY. WE DO NOT FIND THE MEANING OF LIFE BY OURSELVES ALONE - WE FIND IT WITH ANOTHER. - Thomas Merton

SCHOLARSHIP READERS NEEDED

MEA Scholarship application reading dates are from Monday March 17 through March 27, 2014. MEA-Retired members are the key to the success of the scholarship program. If you are able to read applications, contact Carol Price at 517/337-5539. or 800/292-1934

Scholarship reading is from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. but any amount of time you could contribute would be greatly appreciated. Reading will take place at MEA headquarters, 1216 Kendale Blvd., East Lansing

Scam Using Medical Alert Devices was Aimed at Seniors

According to MSN Money (a service of MSN, originally The Microsoft Network), federal and state regulators have shut down a multimillion-dollar scam that they said duped seniors into turning over their credit card information in exchange for supposedly free medical-alert devices. The business blasted seniors across the U.S. and Canada with robocalls and said that they were eligible for “a free alert system purchased by a friend or relative.” Once the person agreed to receive the device, “they were transferred to an operator who took their billing information and immediately began charging them for the service.” Government officials said last week that they received more than 66,000 complaints about the scam, which deliberately targeted the elderly. Medical Alert systems are designed to help seniors get quick help in the event of an emergency. The devices most often consist of a necklace or wristband with an emergency button that contacts a company dispatcher. The scam was not connected with any real manufacturers of medical alert devices. The makers of Life Alert had sued the business for using its’ “Help, I’ve fallen and I can’t get up,” phrase on the robocalls. Prosecutors said the business appeared organized in a way that would evade law enforcement.

“Many Americans have been talking recently about having their information stolen at the checkout lines of retail stores,” said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “But we should all remember that giving out too much information to people who call you can be equally dangerous.”

Another Anti Education Governor (NEA)

Last week, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder delivered his State of the State address where he lauded his achievements while in office, even though his administration was responsible for millions in public education cuts while signing off on a whopping \$1.8 billion tax cut that benefited the state’s wealthiest individuals and corporate interests. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence also gave his State of the State pushing for more public school cuts while expanding the unaccountable voucher program, which critics charge is lining the pockets of his donors.

Last week it was Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker’s turn.

Walker gave his State of the State address to mixed reviews, the most negative coming from educators and middle-class families who feel disenfranchised.

Dates to Remember:

February 3-14, 2014 – MEA-Retired members cast ballots

March 13 – MiARA General Meeting

March 17-28, 2014 – Screening and reading MEA Scholarship applications.

March 27 – MPSERS Meeting

March 31, 2014 – Deadline to book a room at the Hampton for the Annual Meeting 517-324-2072

April 14, 2014 – MEA-Retired Annual Meeting

May 10 – MEA PAC Annual Meeting

July 29-31, 2014 – Summer Leadership for all chapter presidents.

LAWS ENACTED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS -This session of Congress, which convened in January 2013, has passed 78 pieces of legislation which have been signed into law. In addition to bills which deal with the budget and the debt ceiling, most are mundane without much impact on the average citizen. An example of this is changing the name of the Dryden Flight Research Center to the Neil A. Armstrong Flight Research Center and renaming the Western Aeronautical Test Range the Hugh L. Dryden Aeronautical Test Range. One very important piece of legislation which was passed after a good deal of controversy was the Violence Against Women Act.

A listing of all these new laws can be found at

<http://beta.congress.gov/search?q=%7B%22congress%22%3A%22113%22%2C%22source%22%3A%22legislation%22%2C%22bill-status%22%3A%22Became+Law%22%7D&page=1>

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE

Voting INSTRUCTIONS

FEBRUARY 03 – 14, 2014

Beginning February 3, 2014, MEA-Retired members will begin casting their ballots for MEA-Retired delegates to the MEA Representative Assembly, the NEA Representative Assembly, and the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting.

ON-LINE VOTING WILL CONTINUE UNTIL 4 PM EST ON FEBRUARY 14, 2014

Here's how—You can use your own computer, your neighbor's, your grandchildren's or one at your local library.

1. Go to the MEA website at www.mymea.org/onlinevoting/

2. Follow the Login instructions:

First Name (often your legal first name)

Last Name

Last four digits of your social security number

3. Click the "Login" button.

4. If your record is found and the polls are open, your ballot will be displayed.

5. Select the people that you would like to vote for. Clicking the "Additional Info" link next to a ballot item will allow you to read biographical information on the candidate if it has been submitted.

6. Once you have made your selections, click the "Confirm Ballot" button.

7. A preview of your ballot selections will be shown. To modify any of your selections, click the "Modify Ballot" button.

8. To cast your ballot, click the "Cast Ballot" button. Once your ballot is cast, you will see a confirmation page.

9. Click the "Sign Out" link to log out of the system.

If you have any problems using the MEA Online Voting application, please contact the

MEA IT Department at 517-337-5440 from 8 AM – 4 PM, Monday through Friday. If you call after hours, please leave a voicemail, and they will return your message as soon as possible.

In honor of President's Day

If men were angels, no government would be necessary. *JAMES

MADISON