

## **MEA SCREENING AND RECOMMENDATION PROCESS**

Every election year some members complain to MEA-Retired that “MEA is telling me how to vote.” That is not true. A local committee of your fellow MEA members interviews all candidates who seek MEA endorsement. The committee is generally comprised of seven to nine members including, ESP, Higher Education, EA and retired members. MEA staff do not have voting rights on the committee. All coordinating councils who have school districts or colleges which are wholly or partially contained in the legislative district have an equal right to participate in the screening. After interviewing candidates, the committee makes a decision, sometimes choosing not to recommend at all. If the committee makes a recommendation, it is communicated to the entire MEA membership residing in the legislative district, both retired and active members.

Some members believe that the recommendations are made on the basis of social issues such as “Right to Life” or “Gun Control”. Not true. The candidate questionnaires ask only about support for public education and support for labor and pension issues (such as prohibited topics of bargaining and Right to Work). MEA’s S & R booklet contains a series of “Sample” questions but committee members ask their own questions, often also asking about relevant local issues. The screening process is slightly different for the statewide offices such as Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, the education boards and the Michigan Supreme Court. In those cases the screening committee contains: the MEA-PAC chairperson and vice-chairperson; four (4) MEA-PAC Council delegates; one MEA Minority Concerns Committee member; and two (2) MEA Board of Directors members. Also, the presiding officer of the MEA ESP Caucus, MAHE, and MEA-Retired; the Educator Caucus chairperson of the two (2) major political parties; and an MEA staff person all serve as ex officio members, without a vote. This committee interviews all of the candidates for statewide office who are willing to be interviewed and decides if a recommendation is to be made, using only the criteria of public education support and employee rights. The recommendations are transmitted to the entire MEA membership, both active and retired.

MEA is making every effort to complete the S&R process in a timely fashion this election year. Recommended candidates need our full and early support. Participation on the local screening and recommendation committees for state representatives, senate, school boards and other local offices is open to all members, active and retired. If you are willing to serve on a committee, contact your area Uniserv Office. Call 800-292-1934 to find one near you.