

ILLINOIS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
IRTAPAC Committee Zoom Meeting
March 24, 2022

The zoom meeting was called to order by Chair, Sharon Teefey at 9:32 a.m.

Members Present: Sharon Teefey, Chair; Marti Swanson, Reg. 2; Conrad Floeter, Reg. 3; Mary Rothschild, Reg. 3; Marlene Grossman, Reg. 3; Joseph Talluto, Reg. 6; Richard Small, Reg. 7; Debbie Smith, Reg. 10; Jeff Vallosio, Reg. 10; Gary Weiss, Reg. 13; Bruce McLaughlin, Reg. 15; Steve Launius, Reg. 16; and Lee Rodgers, Reg. 18.

Members Absent: Brigid Schibelka, Reg. 3; and Art Kasak, Reg 4.

Also, Present: Bill Funkhouser, IRTAPAC Board Chair; Jim Bachman, Executive Director; Andrew Bodewes, Contract Lobbyist; Courtney Hayes, Government Affairs/Grassroots Coordinator; and Susan Goetz, Administrative Assistant.

The minutes from September 9, 2021, were reviewed. Steve Launius made a motion to approve the minutes and Gary Weiss seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written.

The current makeup of committee members is due to the IRTAPAC Executive Committee's recommendation that more people be involved. Since the meetings are being conducted via zoom, it is now possible to include more individuals without travelling to Springfield. Sharon informed the Committee members that they are expected to attend meetings, read the materials sent to them, and be involved with their local units. Building relationships with legislators is key when asking for support of IRTA issues. She reminded the committee that IRTA advocates for retirees' pensions and benefits. In the endorsement process, IRTAPAC endorses based on if that candidate supports retired educators' benefits. IRTA/IRTAPAC is non-partisan. The committee was informed that there is a website that can tell you who your Illinois legislator is based on your address. Courtney Hayes will send this email link to the Committee.

The IRTAPAC Committees' goals were reviewed.

Goal 1: Recommend endorsements of legislative and gubernatorial candidates.

Goal 2: Raise money for the IRTAPAC by increasing participation in the \$1/month deduction program.

Goal 3: Assist in organizing campaign volunteers, particularly in units that will have Tier 1 races.

Goal 4: Support passage of federal legislation that would rescind the Windfall Elimination Provision/Government Pension Offset Provision of the Social Security Act. The IRTA Government Affairs team was asked to develop bulleted talking points on this issue.

Mary Rothschild made a motion to accept the 2022-2023 IRTAPAC Committee Goals and Strategies and submit them to the IRTAPAC Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Richard Small and passed.

The endorsement process, the time frame for sending candidate questionnaires, and the past Legislative Candidate Questionnaire was reviewed. The questionnaire will be sent via email and postal mail to all filed legislative and gubernatorial candidates up for election in the State of Illinois. Both staff and the Committee need to contact candidates to return completed questionnaires in a timely manner. Due to the primary election date of June 28th, the plan will be to send the questionnaires out by July 4th with a return due date of August 1st. The questionnaire is designed to see where Candidates stand on IRTA issues. The returned questionnaire and responses are particularly important when reviewing candidates without a voting record. The questionnaire can be returned via email, fax, or postal mail.

The Committee made wording changes to questions, 1, 2, and 3 from support to oppose. Question 4 will be rephrased due to the new formula certified by TRS.

Jeff Vallosio made a motion to accept the 2022 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire with revisions, and it be sent to the IRTAPAC Committee prior to review by the IRTAPAC Board of Directors. Joseph Talluto seconded the motion which passed.

The current balance of the IRTAPAC fund is \$201,609. This is up due to 2021 being a non-election year. There are currently 5,348 members participating in the \$1.00 per month IRTAPAC Deduction. This number is down compared to a year ago. Committee members are encouraged to promote participation in the \$1.00 per month deduction at the Local Units. The IRTA Office will provide Committee members a report showing the % of each Unit's State members that participate in the deduction. If Committee members wish to attend Candidate/Legislator fundraisers, please contact Jim or Courtney at the IRTA Office for PAC funds.

IRTA will be printing yard signs again this year and coordinating with Committee Members to distribute signs at their local meetings. The signs say, "Retired Teachers Vote." In Tier 1 races, signs with support of an IRTAPAC endorsed candidate will be printed as well.

The question arose on if IRTAPAC will be endorsing candidates in the upcoming Primary races? IRTAPAC currently does not endorse in the Primary, but monetary support might be given if a long-standing legislator with a proven voting record in favor of IRTA issues has a highly contested Primary race. The IRTAPAC Committee would be emailed for approval of that support.

The next IRTAPAC Committee meeting will be set for the week of August 15th to make their recommendations on endorsements.

A motion was made by Richard Small to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Jeff Vallosio. With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair, Sharon Teefey at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Goetz
Administrative Assistant