

Compromise?!

Given a compelling reason to do so, this union can work with anyone to make things happen. Over time, in various political forums, we have proven we are nimble enough to recognize when to hold and when to compromise on critical issues because of unavoidable or unmovable realities...but we have never surrendered core values willy-nilly...just because.

Among our core values, we believe (1) workers have a civil right to organize for collective bargaining, and (2) everyone, everywhere in our nation should have open, easy access to quality, cost effective health care.

This spring the MEA-MFT Representative Assembly adopted three new business items that reaffirmed our commitment to these core values.

NBI 4: MEA-MFT supports the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) now before the U.S. Congress and calls upon our congressional delegation to do the same with their voice and their vote.

Rationale: EFCA restores the opportunity workers originally enjoyed upon the adoption of the National Labor Relations Act...the opportunity to organize free from hostile employer anti-union threats and intimidation.

Montana is a union state. MEA-MFT is the largest union therein by far. It is our duty to speak out for all private sector employees who want to organize for collective bargaining purposes. Recognizing Montana's long and strong union history, our congressional delegation—Senators Max Baucus and Jon Tester and Representative Denny Rehberg—should be leaders of the pack in their support of EFCA.

NBI 2: MEA-MFT reaffirms our commitment to a single-payer health care plan for all U.S. residents and calls upon Montana U.S. Senator Max Baucus to put discussion of same “on the table.”

Rationale: Today, Congress, led by Montana Senator Max Baucus, is working on a comprehensive health care reform package. Senator Baucus has declared consideration of single

payer health care “off the table.” If MEA-MFT is to remain consistent in our commitment to quality, affordable health care for all, we must urge Senator Baucus to place discussion of single-payer “on the table.”

NBI 3: Absent single-payer health care reform, MEA-MFT opposes the taxation of employer-provided health care benefits and calls upon Montana U.S. Senator Max Baucus to sweep consideration of such taxation “off the table” until such time as he places single payer or Medicare for All “on the table.”

Rationale: Senator Max Baucus is a leader of the congressional pack working to reform health care delivery in our nation. If he is going to consider taxing those who already have health care benefits to help pay for those who don't, then he should at least consider taxing all to pay for all.

Composed of elected delegates from local affiliates across Montana, the MEA-MFT Representative Assembly is our highest governing body. The RA has the final word in policy formation. When it acts, every MEA-MFT member is empowered to expect MEA-MFT to do what the RA says we will do.

Along with AFT and NEA, we are working to see that congress protects, indeed promotes workers' right to organize and bargain collectively through and by the rule of law...and addresses our miserable, absurd health care delivery system as vigorously as it hacks through the weeds of our world economic crisis.

Unfortunately, despite the election of a president committed to the Employee Free Choice Act and comprehensive health care reform, EFCA is in trouble, single-payer is “off the table,” while the taxation of benefits is on.

In recent days congressional observers, our national affiliates, and Republican Party opponents—including Congressman Rehberg—have all indicated that EFCA and health care reform as we would have them are in serious doubt, that bills yet to be written will not embrace what we so fervently want.

So, if sometime down the road we are compelled to bite hard on some sort of congressional compromise, we will not surrender willy-nilly... just because. Not for a nanosecond. ■



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Learn more
about single-
payer health
care and the
Employee Free
Choice Act at
[www.mea-
mft.org](http://www.mea-mft.org).