

Time to vote. Time for Change

Is this the seminal election of our times? THE election that sets the stage for a generation of elections to come?

Could be.

For sure, we have electoral choices to make way beyond the norm...choices that could make or break quality public programs and services...choices that could grow or diminish, if not frontally assault, our social compact.

So we must choose wisely.

MEA-MFT COPE (Committee on Political Education) has identified what we believe to be the wisest choices.

Unique opportunity

We have endorsed a large number of legislative candidates. Nineteen of our endorsed candidates are members. They will vote right on our issues. If all our endorsed members win, they will front a trend, and the next Montana State Legislature will feature for the first time since 1991 an unambiguous Democratic majority in both the House and Senate.

We have endorsed Governor Brian Schweitzer for reelection. Notwithstanding fierce partisan critics, folks he has disappointed, and folks with limited perspective, no governor in my tenure has done more for public education and public employees. NOT ONE.

If we elect both a Democratic legislative majority and reelect Governor Schweitzer, it will be the first time since 1975 that Democrats have held the legislature and the governor's office at the same time. Thirty-three years! I have never experienced this political phenomenon. I would like to see how this shoe might fit. Wouldn't you?

MEA-MFT member leaders

We have endorsed MEA-MFT member Denise Juneau for superintendent of public instruction. Wonderfully educated, broadly experienced in the classroom and Office of Public Instruction, smart, articulate, and funny, Juneau will serve all God's children. She will steer public education into the future, safely guiding us forward through uncharted seas where monsters

lurk, poised to pounce and destroy the one institution that best defines our society's commitment to all our parts.

We have endorsed MEA-MFT member Linda McCulloch for secretary of state. McCulloch has proven herself in three terms in the Montana State Legislature and two terms as our superintendent of public instruction. Blessed with enormous energy and enthusiasm, she will restore competence and integrity to our chief state elections office.

Safety for our children, our constitution

We have endorsed MEA-MFT-retained counsel Steve Bullock for attorney general. Bullock believes passionately in the safety of all our citizens, especially our children: Safe from predators, drugs, and violence. Safe on the playground. Safe in the classroom. Safe on the Internet. Montana cannot elect a more committed manager of our state's legal affairs than Steve Bullock.

We have endorsed Mike McGrath for chief justice. I shudder to imagine the shape of things in Montana were it not for our state supreme court. In the past decade alone the court has repeatedly saved us from fiscally eviscerating ballot issues, such as CI-75 and CI-97, and mean-spirited attempts to gut our collective bargaining act emanating out of disparate school communities like Ekalaka and Bonner. McGrath will strengthen the court's duty to correctly interpret and enforce our constitution and laws.

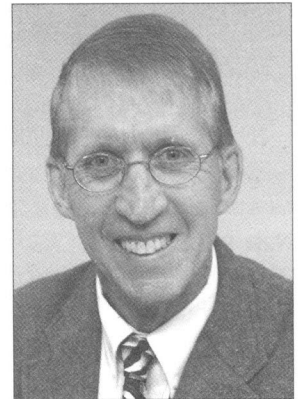
And then there is Barack Obama

NEA and AFT have both endorsed Obama. Rightly so.

I don't know if any democracy is adequately prepared for someone as charismatic as Obama, some event as exhilarating as Obamamania. But we must give Obama a go. We have no choice really. With or without candidate Obama, we cannot suffer four more years of political deceit, cynicism, misdirection, and malaise.

It is, in fact, time for change. Dramatic change.

So, go vote. And as you do, please consider the candidates MEA-MFT COPE has endorsed. ■



BY ERIC FEAYER
MEA-MFT PRESIDENT

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