

NEA-NEW HAMPSHIRE NEWS RELEASE

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The Granite State elects pro-education candidates

Big wins for New Hampshire educators

CONCORD—NEA-New Hampshire is celebrating big wins after last night's election results. The Association led an unprecedented and successful effort to mobilize teachers, education support professionals, retired educators, students, and higher education staff to elect friends of public education at the national, state, and local levels.

“We've had tremendous membership participation and because of this we were able to turn members and their families toward candidates who have a vision to move education forward,” said Rhonda Wesolowski, president of NEA-New Hampshire. “This is an enormous victory for teachers and education support professionals throughout our state.”

Last night's Obama win shows that educators are ready for a leader to reenergize and reprioritize public education. Under an Obama administration, NEA-New Hampshire is confident that educators will now have a voice at the table when it comes to federally funding public education, revamping No Child Left Behind, increasing parental involvement, reducing class sizes, and opposing private school vouchers.

Big wins closer to home for NEA-New Hampshire include the gubernatorial race, two Congressional races, a U.S. Senate seat and a tax cap ballot measure in Somersworth.

NEA-New Hampshire supported the gubernatorial race of two-term incumbent John Lynch. The association made its decision based on Lynch's stand on important education issues such as early childhood education, defining a constitutionally adequate education, raising the dropout age and funding alternative education. As governor, Lynch signed legislation to: study air quality in schools, continue pay step increases for educators when contract negotiations stall, restore due process rights for teachers and strengthen the New Hampshire Retirement System.

Carol Shea-Porter pulled through in the 1st Congressional District. This win represents another notch on NEA-New Hampshire's member-to-member campaign to elect pro-education candidates. The association supported Shea-Porter's election based on her commitment to reform

and fund No Child Left Behind, oppose private school vouchers and oppose the privatization of Social Security.

NEA-New Hampshire also supported the election of Paul Hodes in the 2nd Congressional District. Hodes has worked hard to reform No Child Left Behind and increase federal funding for special education. He sponsored Michelle's Law, named for Michelle Morse, a Plymouth State University student who lost her health insurance because she became too ill from cancer to attend classes. Ann Marie Morse, Michelle's mom and an NEA-New Hampshire member, proposed this legislation.

For the Granite State's senatorial election, NEA-New Hampshire backed Jeanne Shaheen. The former New Hampshire governor and former teacher increased kindergarten aid during her term and also pushed for legislation creating the Martin Luther King Day state holiday.

Hundreds of educators came out on Election Day to vote "No" on the tax cap ballot measure in Somersworth. NEA-New Hampshire educators saw this measure as a serious risk to public education. NEA-New Hampshire and the Somersworth Association of Educators worked hard to inform members that a tax cap would mean less local control, larger class sizes, and fewer teachers.

"We're very proud of the work we've done throughout New Hampshire," said Wesolowski. "Public education is not about party line, it's about the future of students and educators. Our standard to determine which candidate we recommend is based on the candidates' support for students, for public schools and for all education employees who work in those schools."

NEA New Hampshire capitalized on the strength of its members and their families in an aggressive member-to-member "get out the vote" campaign. Specifically, the Association distributed more than 140,000 pieces of mail, sent more than 90,000 e-mails to members across the state, and made 12,000 member-to-member phone calls to teachers, education support staff, retired educators, students, and higher education faculty. The state association used state-of-the-art methods that included micro-targeting, predictive dialer technology, a new NEA colleague-to-colleague communication network that tracked issues and candidate support. NEA-New Hampshire member support for recommended candidates was 73 percent.

The work of NEA-New Hampshire members was a part of a national effort led by the National Education Association to elect friends of public education. NEA is a huge voting bloc with 3.2 million members. When immediate family members are factored in, that audience grows to more than 5 million potential voters.

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NEA-New Hampshire is the state's largest professional employee organization and union, representing more than 16,000 elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, retired educators and students preparing to become teachers.