

## Senate Moves to Share Millage Dollars with Charter Schools Poses Threat to Public Schools

The Senate of the State of Michigan has passed SB-0574 and sent it on to the House of Representatives. According to MiARA treasurer, Charlie Robinson, “This bill will force any Intermediate School Districts to share enhanced millage receipts with charter schools and some cyber schools.” These are special millages that were requested by constituent school districts to enhance their programs.

The effect of this sharing will be felt currently in only six ISDs, including Kalamazoo, Kent, Midland, Monroe, Muskegon, and Wayne. But, as Robinson points out, the greater threat isn’t this particular shift in funding, rather Robinson warns, “The real threat is that for the first time the state is authorizing millage money passed for one purpose to be shifted to charter schools.”

“This is definitely a step toward school vouchers. If continued, and applied to other millages, this could allow even privately-managed, for-profit charter schools to share in millage money as a funding source,” said Robinson.

### In this Issue

1	<a href="#">Senate Moves to Share Millage Dollars with Charter Schools</a>
2	<a href="#">House Approves Draconian Budget</a>
3	<a href="#">The Janus Case</a>
4	<a href="#">2018 Social Security COLA</a>
5	<a href="#">Activist Spotlight: Colleen Ford</a>
6	<a href="#">Sign Petition to End Gerrymandering</a>
7	<a href="#">Don’t Sign Prevailing Wage Petition</a>

Currently charter schools get their funding through state aid per capita funding. Allowing them access to millage money will undermine community public school’s funding and continued existence.

Please contact your State Representatives and tell them why you are against this bill

## House Approves Draconian Budget Will Lead to Massive Cuts to Medicare and Medicaid

*The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, executive director of the national Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding the October 26, 2017 vote on the Fiscal Year 2018 budget resolution.*

The budget passed today is a disaster for older Americans and a bonanza for the wealthiest Americans and big corporations. The Republican budget will require nearly \$500 billion from Medicare and more than \$1 trillion in cuts from Medicaid over the next ten years – and still increase the deficit. “States will be forced to make deep cuts in the number of people who receive benefits or the amount of health care provided.

More than 70 million Americans rely on Medicaid, including almost 6 million seniors who depend on it for their nursing home and home care services.

By promising to sign this cruel legislation, President Trump – who as a candidate promised no cuts to Medicare and Medicaid – has shown his true colors. Older Americans will remember who fought for them, and who didn’t.

## **The Janus Case: U.S. Supreme Court May Force “Right to Work” Rules on All Public Sector Unions**

According to Joseph Slater, a labor historian and the Eugene N. Balk Professor of Law and Values at the University of Toledo College of Law, unionized workers in the public sector, including education employees and public safety workers, face a serious threat from the U.S. Supreme Court, as the Court has decided to hear the case of *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*.

“It is likely that the Court will use *Janus* to overturn precedent of at least forty years and hold, for the first time, that the Constitution prohibits public-sector unions from entering into ‘fair-share’ union security agreements, sometimes called agency shop agreements, and impose so-called ‘right to work’ rules in all government employment. This would mean unions would no longer be able to charge members of union bargaining units for the costs of representing such members,” Slater said.

The Supreme Court had been poised to make a decision on this issue in another relatively recent case, *Freidrichs v. California Teachers’ Association* (2016), but Justice Scalia died before that decision was issued. That left the court split 4-4, which left existing precedent intact.

That precedent, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* (1977), long ago established the rule that in states that did not have “right to work” statutes, unions and public employers could legally enter into agreements under which members of union bargaining units were required to pay at least that portion of their dues that went to activities related to collective bargaining (for example, grievance and arbitration procedures, and contract negotiations).

Under this rule, members of union bargaining units could object to, and not be required to pay

for, activities not related to collective bargaining, such as political expenditures. However, according to Slater, “Justice Alito has long worked to undermine and ultimately reverse this rule, and with the new addition of conservative Justice Gorsuch, anticipated to be a fifth vote in favor of overturning *Abood*, he may get his wish.”

If so, public-sector unions may face significant revenue shortfalls. “Right-to-work” rules create a significant incentive to be a “free rider” on union services, because unions have a legal duty to represent members of bargaining units in negotiations, grievances, and arbitrations, without regard to whether the employee pays the union any dues or not.

The *Janus* decision is likely to be issued in the first half of 2018. It will be very important to maintain a culture of solidarity in the face of this new challenge.

## **2018 Social Security COLA Will Not Offset Medicare Part B Premiums**

The October 13, 2017, national Alliance for Retired Americans *Friday Report*, warns that next year’s Social Security cost of living adjustment will be just two percent or about \$25 per month for the average beneficiary, causing seniors to continue to fall behind.

According to the nonpartisan Kaiser Foundation, however, this will not even be enough to offset the rise in Medicare Part B premium costs for 2018. Coverage for Medicare Part B is optional, but 91 percent of Medicare beneficiaries are signed up for it. The program covers physician’s care, outpatient care, certain medical equipment, laboratory tests, some health home services and other care for patients.

A Senior Citizens League study found that retirees have lost one-third of their buying power since 2000 because COLA increases have not been able to catch up with skyrocketing health care and housing costs.

## MiARA Activist Spotlight

### Colleen Ford

Although MiARA member Colleen Ford officially retired after teaching more than 40 years in the Flint Community schools, she continues to be an activist and educator in her community.

Post-retirement, Colleen established a business that provides instruction in art, math, reading, writing, spelling, English, and preparation for the SAT and ACT tests. Colleen jokes that, “Unlike my teaching in Flint, now all my work locations are air-conditioned.

In Flint, Colleen taught elementary grades, including two years of art, for the first half of her career and Title I reading and/or math for the last half. She spent her last years in the district as a teacher coach, where she enjoyed teaching one year of reading at Mott Adult High School and another teaching a graduate-level math methods class for Central Michigan University. Colleen earned two sabbaticals from her district and obtained both an Ed.S. in Reading Instruction and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration.

Throughout her career in public education and as a retiree, Colleen has been active in her local union, the United Teachers of Flint, an affiliate of the MEA/NEA. At the local level, Colleen served as an Association Representative for the union and member of the Professional Negotiations Board, as well as serving on several other committees. As an MEA/NEA delegate for more than 20 years, Colleen was also active at the state and national levels in various capacities.

As National Chairperson of the NEA American Indian/Alaskan Native Caucus, Colleen served on the NEA Board of Directors, which she called, “an awesome experience.”

Currently, Colleen is an MEA-retired delegate the NEA Representative Assembly and the PAC fundraising chairperson for the Genesee Lifelong Learning Education Association.

Colleen is quick to point out the importance of being involved in and supportive of the union for educators. “I believe every teacher should be involved in their local association. If not a leader or activist, at least stay informed and support those who are willing to do the association work.”

Colleen enjoys time with her husband Michael and their son, who lives nearby with his wife and two children. When she isn't spending time with family or making an occasional casino visit, Colleen is likely found pursuing the new chapter in her life as a watercolor and acrylic artist.

Colleen is a two-time art acquisition award winner in the annual art competition sponsored jointly by MEA and the Michigan Art Education Association. Her most recent award-winning work, the watercolor *Sandy's Bouquet*, was on display at MEA Headquarters in East Lansing.

As an artist who spent much of her career teaching the “basics,” Colleen sees the arts as a key part of a child's education. According to Colleen, “Art can reach children in a way nothing else can. While it may not be able to heal all wounds, it can help children to hear the load they carry. Art can enhance or support other subjects. The basic school subjects will help students to make a living, but the arts will make life worth living.”



*Colleen Ford poses with her prize-winning art.*

## Sign Petition to End Gerrymandering in Michigan

Voters should choose their politicians, not the other way around.

Every ten years, after the census is taken, congressional district boundaries are subject to change. In Michigan, the legislature and governor draw the map for redistricting. The party in power can draw the boundaries to ensure that they have a legislative majority. As a result, most districts are not competitive. There is no real citizen input into the process.

As voters, we want our elections to be transparent and fair. The Michigan state constitution mandates the current process. There are two ways to change the constitution and give citizens greater input into the process. Legislators can introduce legislation to amend the constitution or citizens can collect 400,000 signatures to place the issue on a statewide ballot.

The group Voters Not Politicians is a ballot question committee working to insure fairness in redistricting in Michigan.

After enough signatures are collected, the Voters Not Politicians proposals will be placed in the November 2018 statewide ballot.

If the proposal receives a majority of votes, it will be adopted and the constitution will be changed to allow for greater public participation in redistricting and ultimately fairer and more competitive legislative districts.

To learn more about Voters Not Politicians and find out how you can help with the success of the petition drive, go to their website [www.votersnotpoliticians](http://www.votersnotpoliticians) or contact your union to see what they are doing to promote a fix on this important issue.

## Don't Sign Petition to Repeal Prevailing Wages

Reports have surfaced that the group leading the effort to repeal Michigan's prevailing wage law is misrepresenting the intent of their petition when asking people for their signature.

There is only one prevailing wage law petition out there. Its intent is to benefit big contractors, including many out-of-state construction companies. This will be at the expense of local economies and Michigan workers and their families.

"The petition that people are being asked to sign is a direct attack on workers," warned Dick Long, MliARA President. "It is a callous attempt to undermine the negotiated pay and health care benefits of hard-working Michiganders."

Michigan's prevailing wage law requires contractors to pay workers union wages when working on state projects.

We must stand with the working men and women of our state, and we are strongly opposed to any and all attempts to strip workers of the protections in place under Michigan's prevailing wage law.

\*\*\*\*\*

### MiARA Executive Board

- Dick Long, President, (UAW)
- Henry Lykes, Executive Vice-President, (AFSCME)
- Richard McInerney, 1st Vice-President, (USW)
- Charlie Robinson, Treasurer, (AFT-MICHIGAN)
- Judy Foster, Secretary, (MEA)

### Board Members from State Sustaining Organizations

- Warren Danford, (UAW)
- Arthur Kroll, (USW)
- Jack Schneider, (MEA)
- Bob Sisler (AFL-CIO)

Newsletter Editor: Jack Schneider  
Copy Editor: Krista Schneider

\*\*\*\*\*

opeiu494