

President PHILIP RUMORE



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NEA/AFT

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Dear Colleague:

As we approach primary day on **Tuesday, September 9th**, there are several crucial races in which the BTF has made endorsements. Although there may be other races, we only consider those individuals who have requested our endorsement. Endorsements are made by a vote of the Council of **Delegates** upon recommendation of the Executive Committee or by the Executive Committee upon referral from the Council. Extensive questionnaires were received and in most cases, interviews were conducted prior to PAC recommendations.

U.S. Congress

In the Democratic Primary for the **26th Congressional District**, the BTF endorsement goes to **Jon Powers**. He has been a substitute teacher in several districts. This experience and his efforts on behalf of the children of Iraq where he served in the military have provided him with a unique understanding of social and educational issues. He is very familiar with the need for changes to No Child Left Behind. He is the endorsed Democratic candidate

New York State Senate

In the **New York State Senate**, the incumbent in the **59th District**, **Senator Dale Volker**, is being challenged in the Republican primary. **Senator Volker** has supported and sponsored many of our legislative initiatives. He has been a strong advocate in securing funding for the Buffalo Public Schools. In the **60th District**, **Senator Antoine Thompson** has opposition in the Democratic primary. The BTF has worked extensively with **Senator Thompson** as a City of Buffalo Councilman, and in his State Senate role. He is a strong supporter of teachers and the Buffalo Public Schools. When **Senator Thompson** says he will do something to assist you, he does it. In the **61st District**, our Democratic primary endorsement has been awarded to **Joe Mesl** who also has the Working Families Party line. **Joe Mesl** is in a three-way race and is the only candidate who is a newcomer seeking political office. He has many current and retired Buffalo teachers in his extended family and has gained knowledge of our issues from his many discussions with them over the years. We believe that he is the best choice in this election.

New York State Assembly

For **New York State Assembly**, there are primary endorsements in two districts. In the **142nd District**, **John Kaczorowski**, the former head of the Buffalo and Erie County AFL-CIO Council has received our endorsement. John has fully supported us throughout our extensive labor struggles. His knowledge of the issues of working people is excellent. He favors the Buffalo Control Board becoming advisory and is opposed to the diversion of the public school district funding to pay for charter schools.

A particularly contentious primary in the 144th Assembly District pits Barbra Kavanaugh against the long-term incumbent. Barbra Kavanaugh is a former member of the Buffalo Common Council and has served as a New York State Assistant Attorney General. She supports a separate funding stream for charter schools while the incumbent favors an expansion of charter schools despite the devastating effects on the Buffalo School District's budget. He supports merit pay for teachers and believes that public employees must be willing to accept benefits which are comparable to those in private industry. (Notably, he did not indicate comparable pay.) He also suggests the establishment of a new tier for retirement (Tier 5). New tiers have always meant lesser benefits and/or increased employee contributions. He wants to stop the payment of annual step increments when a contract has expired. Another issue he believes in is that school districts should be able to use students' scores to determine whether a teacher receives tenure.

Barbra Kavanaugh shares our positions on the above issues and also believes in an expansion of the Family Medical Leave Act to make it affordable for the average New Yorker. She supports a moratorium on charter schools until the funding issue has been resolved. She lists education as one of her top legislative priorities, second only to economic development.

Erie County District Attorney


For Erie County District Attorney, there are three candidates in the Democratic primary. Our choice is Frank A. Sedita, III, the current Deputy District Attorney. He has been a career prosecutor and has secured convictions in several recent high profile cases. He also has helped secure the release of wrongfully convicted individuals by supporting a review of the evidence. As District Attorney, he expects to continue in the courtroom whenever possible. He has also taken a strong stand against "plea bargaining deals" in cases involving assaults on teachers or other students.

Erie County Family Court

Lisa Bloch-Rodwin is a current Judge in Erie County Family Court. She was appointed by Governor Paterson following a distinguished career as Chief of Domestic Violence Bureau of the Erie County District Attorney's office. She is ranked well qualified by the Erie County Bar Association and outstanding by the Women's Bar Association.

Every election is important and every vote counts. In order for our endorsed candidates to be successful, we need every member to participate in the election. Please be sure to vote and encourage your family and friends to support our endorsed candidates. We need to have them succeed and they are counting on us.

Sincerely,



Philip Rumore,
President



Edith D. LeWin, Chairperson
Political Action Committee