Greetings SVVEA Member,

**Elections Matter!**  Perhaps with relief, at least from the plethora of negative political ads, this election season is nearing a close. Various voting guides, including the last two editions of *The CEA Journal*, have presented a bit more balanced information. Now, voting time is upon us - Colorado counties began mailing ballots to voters yesterday, three weeks prior to November 4th Election Day. While we do not have a school board election - that’s coming next November - there are many ballot issues and candidates’ elections that will impact public education. As the saying goes, ELECTIONS MATTER. Your vote, and your influence upon others’ votes, do make a difference for our students and our profession.

In the “Legislative and Election Info” link on the CEA website at <http://www.coloradoea.org/members/legislative.aspx>, accessible only to CEA Members, you will find (based upon the address where you’re registered to vote) CEA’s recommended pro-public education candidates and positions on various ballot issues, and your closest ballot drop-off location. NOTE: If you haven’t previously visited this feature of CEA’s website, you’ll need to create an account with a user name and password.

**PERA: Your Retirement and this Election**  While few of us entered into public education in pursuit of material wealth, PERA’s defined benefit plans for retirement can be viewed as deferred compensation. Check out this link to Secure PERA/Colorado Coalition for Retirement Security at <http://www.securepera.org/2014/09/onthetrail/> for information about candidates’ views about your PERA retirement benefit as well as facts about legislative actions already taken to strengthen PERA. For our potential members, a reminder from you that no organization lobbies to preserve our PERA retirement benefits like CEA will help support member recruitment.

**Ballot Issues**

*Amendment 68: Horse Racetrack Casino Gambling*  I’ve had a number of inquiries about Amd 68, particularly as it relates to funding public education in Colorado. You may have as well. In the August *CEA Journal*, the CEA Board of Directors took a position of “No Position” and then proceeded to explain why they could not support it. To summarize, while CEA appreciates funding flowing into public education, there are far too many questions about the accuracy of the actual amount of projected total revenue (est. $114M by 68’s backers). Also, if it were to pass the public may get the notion that Colorado’s public schools’ needs are met, impacting future efforts to fully fund.  The projected revenue is a drop in the bucket statewide, and that’s ONLY IF all that's promised comes to pass. That's extremely doubtful in my opinion, and I’ll be voting “No.” While you’re encouraged to weigh the pros & cons of all ballot issues and candidates for yourself, note that Colorado’s Republican and Democratic parties and their major candidates oppose Amendment 68, and not a single well-recognized education organization in Colorado has come out in favor of it.

*Proposition 104: School Board Open Meetings*  CEA and school boards across Colorado, along with their CASB organization (Colorado Association of School Boards), oppose this ballot issue. Its vague language is open to such a broad interpretation that it’s far more likely to cause more problems than any transparency it might bring would help advance negotiations between local school boards and teachers’ associations. The polling trend on this issue indicates that there are plenty of undecided voters who could be persuaded to help defeat this proposal. You can find useful information on this ballot issue at <http://getthefactson104.com/>.

Election information on Amd 68 and Prop 104, as well as the Colorado governor and U.S. Senate races, can also be found on the CEA Members-only link in “Member Updates” at <http://www.coloradoea.org/members/updates.aspx>. Check out the archived August and October editions (pages 2-3 in each) of *The* *CEA Journal*.

**Volunteer Opportunity for a Friend of SVVEA & SVVSD**   Judy Solano taught at Erie Elementary for 30 years, and after serving in the Colorado House from 2006 to 2013 she is now running for the Senate District 24 (predominantly in northwest Adams County). Please contact her at judysolano4senate@gmial.com if you can assist in any manner for someone who has done much in many valuable ways for public education in St. Vrain and Colorado.

You are a very busy educator - thank you for taking the time to be a thoughtful pro-public education advocate and voter!

Trip

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This communication is intended for SVVEA Members and their families only.