

THE LISTENING POST

Is political action a responsibility of school people?

WITH AN ELECTION on the nation's agenda for November and momentous war and postwar legislation now before Congress, educators have a chance to do frontline fighting for democracy.

Unfortunately there are some school people who say they are too busy to be bothered with legislation and candidates, that they are *afraid* to take an active part in politics. When that attitude prevails, we are saying to the world that we no longer wish to share in the opportunities and responsibilities of men and women in a democracy.

But if, as members of the education profession and as citizens of a free nation, we decide to do all in our power to obtain wise legislation and to elect the best possible candidates to public office, we will

find a number of roads of action open to us. We can, for example, work to get all local citizens registered when that is a local requirement for voting. We can endeavor to get every voter to the polls. We can find out and inform others of the qualifications of candidates for office, learning the stand which these candidates have taken or will pledge to take on such issues as federal aid to education, re-conversion, extension of social security benefits, and measures for winning the war and making the peace secure.

As teachers, we can put these matters before our classes. Working with other citizens, we can organize meetings to discuss both issues and candidates.¹

As private citizens, we have the right to see, telephone, or write our local and state representatives and our Congressmen, letting them know our views. We have the right to join and to contribute to political parties, and to campaign for the candidates whom we feel deserve to hold office. Through these and other activities, we can aid in stimulating a keener and more widespread interest in public affairs. We can develop more enlightened thought and action among all the American people. Thus, teachers can help make democracy work at its very best at a time when it is needed most.

¹For details on what school people can do, see *A Discussion Outline on the Role of Teachers in Legislation and Politics*, prepared by the Legislative Committee of this Department. Single copies are available free.

Because we believe that every citizen should vote and be aware of the issues in America and the world today, the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development has set up a Legislative Committee to bring you news of significant action being considered by Congress and elsewhere on the legislative and political scene. Chairman of the committee is James E. Mendenhall, Office of Price Administration. Working with him in Washington, D. C., as a Core Committee are James H. Fox, George Washington University; Walter Hager, Wilson Teachers College; Mary A. Henderson, District Public Schools; Ruth L. Kemp, Miner Teachers College, and Frances Mayfarth, editor of Childhood Education. Field members of the committee are Edgar M. Draper, University of Washington, Seattle; Marion Jordan, superintendent of schools, Cicero, Ill., and Henry J. Otto, University of Texas, Austin.

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