

CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY TEAM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Elizabeth Nahl, Jeff Matsumoto, Thomas Kephart, Jessica Louis, Natalie Shevlin, Paul Zastrow, Elizabeth Thiel, Robert Glasgow, Pam Woicik, Anna Gustafson, Adolfo Garza-Cano, Chris Early, Brinda Narayan-Wold

Chair: Caryn Connolly

CHARGES

1. Conduct meetings of all members of the Congressional Advocacy Team (CAT) at least twice a year.
2. CAT members will collaborate with Oregon's NEA Board Directors in communicating NEA policies and positions to their appointed Congress member to influence congressional action for the improvement of education.
3. Coordinate with the NEA Directors to provide a report to the OEA Board on meetings between CAT members and Congressional members/staff.
4. Coordinate actions with the Cabinet for the Center for Public Affairs and the PAC Board to have a greater impact on congressional lobbying efforts; consider ways to promote member engagement through CAT to further the strategic priorities of OEA.
5. Provide a copy of all meeting minutes to the President's Office, along with an annual written report submitted by February 5 for the OEA RA handbook and a year-end report to the OEA Board submitted by June 30th.
6. Use the OEA Equity Filter to help guide decision-making.

Committee Activities Related to Charges:

The Congressional Advocacy Team was able to maintain a quarterly meeting schedule this year. We met in person in October and via Zoom in December and February. We have one more Zoom meeting scheduled for May. We initially scheduled our meetings to coincide with the NEA Board Directors returning from their board meetings and lobbying efforts. A focus for this year and moving forward is to build a better relationship between the CAT members and NEA Board Directors in order to be more intentional with our communication with local Congressional staffers.

At our October meeting we held training around the role and responsibilities of being a CAT member, discussed a more coordinated relationship with OEA LAC and PAC members, and received an update from a member of the NEA Government Relations staff. At our December and February meetings we heard from our NEA Directors about their lobbying efforts and how we could connect with staff in Oregon. In February we also discussed our role at the OEA PAC Convention. In May we will hear from our NEA Directors and discuss needs for 2026-27.

During this last year we have struggled to find and retain members. We have multiple vacancies and continue to try and recruit new members. We have not had a member for Congressional District 2

this year and would like to find two members to fill these vacancies. We are also struggling with the committee interest form process.

Moving forward the team will be looking to strengthen our training, including onboarding new members. We will be creating tools that will better help us lobby our members of Congress and their staff here in Oregon.

At the time this report was written we have openings for CD2 (2), CD3 (2), CD5, CD6, and Senators Merkley and Wyden. Please reach out if you are interested in lobbying on the federal level.