

For those of you who don't know us, OEA's Political Action Committee (OEA-PAC) is the political arm of the Oregon Education Association. We receive no money from your dues—our PAC members choose to contribute extra money from each paycheck to help us back political candidates in state-wide and local races. We support candidates who promise to strengthen public education through adequate and stable funding, respecting school employee's collective bargaining rights and retirement, maximizing student learning through professional development, and ensuring student health and safety in the learning environment.

When politicians fail to keep these promises, we remove our support. This happened in this year's OEA\*PAC Convention. When we backed Tina Kotek in 2022, she promised to be a champion for public education. Instead, public education has declined under her leadership. The mid-year layoffs that just occurred in Springfield, Salem Keizer, and other locals are not normal and definitely are not what is best for our students. Both Tina Kotek and Christine Drahan came to our convention to seek our endorsement. We chose no recommendation to send a clear message that our backing—in name and financial—is not cheaply bought. We will not choose the lesser of two evils, nor will we reward politicians for poor performance. We did vote to support Representatives Bonamici, Dexter, Hoyle, and Salinas as well as BOLI Commissioner Christina Stephenson and US Senator Jeff Merkley. Now that they have our financial backing, we will work to mobilize members to support their campaigns.

This fall, we welcomed six new board members with an official onboarding. We trained our board members on how to conduct PAC drives, how to interview candidates for local office, and what our official timeline is for conducting business. We also started building a more formal relationship with the other state-wide committees by having joint sessions with the LAC board and inviting Chris Early from the OEA Board to attend our meetings and report back. By having a united vision, we strive to make greater gains for public education. What we had been doing separately wasn't good enough. Under President Ferrera, we are striving to do better and make the change we need to strengthen our public schools and limit the damage that the chaotic changes that are coming down from the federal level could cause.