



Award Winning Newsletter!

THE CONDUIT

First Digital Only Issue

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This is Our Fight! Let's Connect the Dots!



The AEA Retired Annual General Membership Meeting (AGMM) was held on Friday, May 8th at the IBEW 640 Union Hall on 7th St. in Phoenix. It was my final time to preside as President at the AGMM. I am very thankful to the board, delegates, guests and IBEW staff for making the event a success!

The new location was AEA Retired's first attempt to separate from the location that typically holds the AEA Delegate Assembly. It proved to be practical and accommodating even when the AC decided to go out. Apologies to all, but the warm temperatures were totally out of our control. After a well-deserved recognition for Norma Jimenez, the AGMM Committee Co-Chair and her team, the AEA Retired Executive Board was introduced, along with participating guests and the delegates elected to represent you. Then the body heard from invited speakers and the business meeting began.

The Messengers: Helping us connect the dots was AEA President Marisol Garcia who delivered a powerful speech, "This is Our Fight." Now, more than ever, the energy and focus must be on how each one of us can make a difference and succeed on ballot initiatives in November. Following President Garcia, and throughout the day, we heard from those who connect the dots on the importance of this election year. Isela Blanc, AEA lobbyist, Daniella Smith, pension protection lobbyist, Pasquale Martinelli, AEA Political Director, all presented legislative updates. Anna Cicero, President, and Steve Ramos, presented updates on ASRS and the key PAC and Fundraising team brought it all together. We are not working in isolation; we are collaborating with those who fight for the same goals.

The Celebrations: Congratulations to Dr. Janie Hydrick for her loyalty, contributions and love for AEA Retired. She is the 2026 recipient of the **Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award**. Janie smiled beautifully as she walked to the podium in the presence of peers, family and friends. She shared a moving speech, creating imagery and reference to the song, "Wind Beneath My Wings." When you know Janie and you recall the lyrics...you connect the dots.

[Continues on page 5](#)



Calendar

June 17
Board Retreat, Tucson, AZ

August 8-9
Skills to Win-Organizing

September 8
AEA Retired Board Meeting

September 26
First President's Council Meeting

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY ANNA CICERO



Dear Members and AEA Retired Board,

I will end my term as President with the words given to me in a beautiful handmade card at the Annual General Membership meeting in May. I loved the gift card but I loved your words more.



"Thank you so much for all that you have done for AEA Retired the past five years. You have been such a hard working president. We have watched you grow and become an outstanding leader. We appreciate your leadership and making sure AEA Retired is represented at every AEA event. We wish you the best as you move forward to the next chapter in your life."

AEA Retired Board

Card created by Nancy Putman

Your texts and emails in the last week have made me feel the warmth, appreciation and respect. I so thank you for that; sometimes saying good-bye is not easy. Due to some unexpected use of our time, my farewell "speech" at the annual meeting was cut short because I saw the clock showed less time than required for the agenda to be completed.

I worked with some of you more closely than others, but I hope I made you proud. To all our members, I thank you for the many emails we shared each time you received the monthly membership mail chimp blasts. We will continue to stay close. If you know my passion for AEA Retired and how we represent the membership, you know me well!

AEA Retired remains strong and committed to the priorities, goals, and strategic action plans that have been established by an excellent loyal team, the AEA Retired Board. A good leader takes that and "kicks it UP a notch" with solidarity and positivity!

So, one more time, I retired from my position (president) but NOT from my profession (union member, educator, and advocate). Therein lies the answer to my next chapter. I am proud of our accomplishments and all positive relationships we have made. As Past-President on the board, I will honor my duties, and I will continue to contribute to moving all successes forward.

Educators dedicate years to serving students, supporting families, and strengthening our communities to earn the retirement benefits they were promised.

HCR2040 puts all that at risk.

This measure threatens not just teachers' pensions, but also civil service protections, re-employment rights, and earned benefits—protections Arizona educators have worked years to earn.

This is our best opportunity to prevent HCR2040 from progressing further. Send a letter now and tell lawmakers:

**Save Arizona educators' pensions and
Vote NO on HCR2040.**



AEA RETIRED'S NEW VOICE

BY VICE PRESIDENT LUCI MESSING

Summertime and the living is easy.

We hope that summer will be a time for you to catch up with family, friends, and projects. We all need some down time to recharge and pamper ourselves. As the saying goes..."Just Do It!"

The Annual Meeting was held on Friday, May 8th at the IBEW Hall on 7th St. Congratulations to our newly elected Board members, Allison Jackson and Tammy Smith. Welcome! They will join returning Board members Cynthia Challberg-Hale, Steve Linder, and Nancy Putman.

Delegates to the Annual Meeting faced a unique situation since there was not a candidate for president. As vice-president, I would normally ascend to the presidency. Originally, I had stated that I would not be able to fulfill that responsibility as I am currently assisting with my 92-year-old mother's health care and also caring for my 93-year-old father, who has Alzheimer's. This was a difficult decision, however, after many conversations with family, friends and Board members, I decided to step into the role as the AEA Retired Board President on June 1st. I am honored to serve in this capacity and am looking forward to working with members and coalition partners.

There will be a smooth transition between the officer team of Anna and me, as well as between Steve Linder and Marilyn Calhoun for treasurer. The 2026 officers will be Luci Messing, President; Maria Leyva, Secretary; and Marilyn Calhoun, Treasurer. The Board will appoint a vice-president at the meeting in September. Please email me at <mailto:lucibmessing@cox.net> or call (520) 591-7615 to let me know if you are interested in serving in this role.

The Delegate Assembly began on May 8th at the Renaissance and continued through Saturday, May 9th. Lizzie Menefee was elected as the second AEA Retired Director for Region 16 and will join me on the AEA Board. The Board is thrilled to finally have appropriate representation for our 2000+ retired members. A special thanks to Ken Freed for making this happen.

Kareem Neal was elected as the second NEA Director. Kareem is a member of the Phoenix Union CTA and a past Arizona Teacher of the Year. Congratulations to him and we look forward to his representation on the NEA Board.

In addition to the elections for regional directors, delegates conducted the business of the Association. Amendments to the AEA Constitution and Bylaws were passed, along with new business items that were introduced, debated and voted on. Janie Hydrick and Allison Jackson submitted language for AEA Resolutions and both items were passed. AEA Retired always participates in the process while attending the AEA Delegate Assembly. We take representation seriously.

One of the highlights from Friday night was Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego's speech declaring May 8th "Union Day." Thank you, Mayor Gallego for recognizing the importance of unions.

Another big highlight Saturday happened when Governor Katie Hobbs addressed the delegates. She made an impassioned speech regarding the state of Arizona and provided steps to move forward on behalf of all Arizona citizens. **We must re-elect Governor Hobbs.** We also need to flip at least one chamber of the legislature if we are to reform the voucher system, which is currently full of fraud and abuse. Vouchers are siphoning off one billion dollars that should be going to public schools, from the general fund. The Protect Education Act needs your signature and any help to get on the ballot. Let's get this done for our educators, students, and schools.

The AEA Retired Board will hold their 2026 Retreat on June 17th at the Southern Region Office in Tucson. Last year's retreat was a big success, and we are looking forward to a similar positive experience.

The three elected retired delegates, Anna Cicero, Janice Dwosh, and Luci Messing, will be traveling to Denver at the end of June to attend the NEA Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Representative Assembly.

This is a wonderful opportunity to network and receive the latest updates affecting public education, retirement and the union. I am proud to represent AEA Retired in this national setting.



ASRS UPDATE

BY STEVE RAMOS

**IF YOU HAVE NOT ACCESSED YOUR ASRS ACCOUNT LATELY, BE AWARE
THINGS HAVE CHANGED WHICH MAY REQUIRE YOUR ATTENTION.**



In fiscal year 2025-26, the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) hit a new high, as the market value of the fund reached \$60.1 billion. The ASRS One-year Rate of Return, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, was 9.89%. Since that date and May of this year, the S&P 500 has generated returns of roughly 16.3%. That could be an early indicator of what ASRS might expect for the Rate of Return in FY 2025-26.

Currently the ASRS pension is 80.2% funded. Total ASRS Membership is now at 674,481. ASRS contribution rates for fiscal year 2026-27, beginning July 1, 2026, will be 11.98%. That is a decrease from the current rate of 12.00%. ASRS is aware that contribution rates hovering above 10% are considerably higher than most older retirees remember paying. High rates and being less than 100% funded, is mostly a result of two major downturns in the Market back in 2000 and 2008. Because educators need their paychecks to be as predictable as possible from year to year, ASRS seeks to hold contribution rates as steady as possible, while keeping the ASRS on a path to lower, single-digit

contribution rates.

It's been a few years since retirees were treated to a Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI). The last PBI was in November of 2021. That PBI was \$11.49 per year of service at retirement. For a retiree with 20 years of service, that worked out to an additional \$19.15 a month to their monthly benefit. Since 2022, the ASRS has accumulated approximately \$115 million in excess funds, that have been placed in the PBI "piggybank." But, that fund has not yet reached the statutory minimums for another PBI payout. It will likely be a few more years before retirees see another PBI, depending, of course, on future returns.

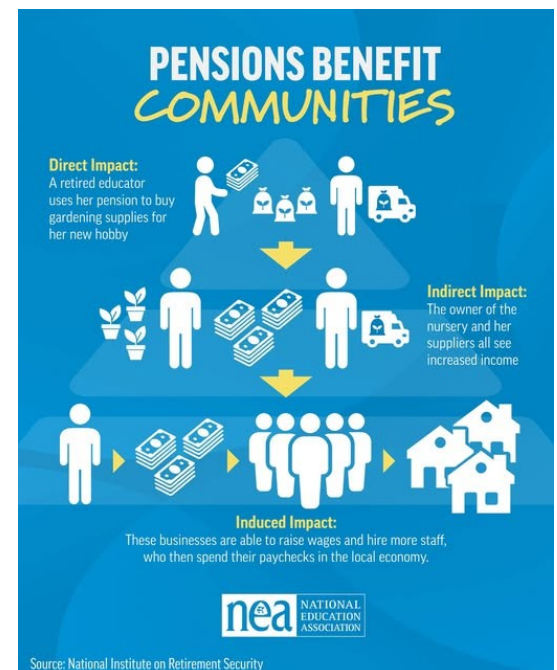
If you have been happily enjoying retirement and have not had a reason to log into your **MyASRS** secure account, you may not be aware of some important changes that have been made to that site. In order to access your account, you will now need **ID.ME**, a secure digital identity network ASRS is now using, enabling you to verify your identity and securely access government services. ID.ME is designed to be set up using a mobile phone. It involves creating a password, uploading a photo, along with your phone number, Social Security number and date of birth. It can be done with a desktop computer, but it's not as easy. ASRS can help you create your ID.ME account at <https://www.azasrs.gov/content/idme-resources>. If you already have ID.ME account you do not need to start another one.

For immediate access to your personal MyASRS account or to take actions involving your account, call ASRS: Phoenix: 602-240-2000. Tucson: 520-239-3100 or Toll-Free: 800-621-3778. Contact ASRS by mail at: PO Box 33910 Phoenix, AZ 85067-3910. ASRS is always happy to help out.

Attention: myASRS access now requires an ID.me login

Visit our ID.me Resource Page for:

- ID.me Help Resources
- How to create an ID.me account
- Helpful FAQs
- Learn about ID.me



Tech Talk

By Maria Leyva,
AEA Retired Secretary



BLUE LIGHT BEFORE BEDTIME

Blue light is emitted from a TV, computer, laptop, iPad, tablet, or phone. It is, also, naturally produced by the sun. Staring at electronic screens often causes eye fatigue, dryness, and headaches. Experts note this is typically caused by blinking less frequently and focusing on bright, close-up objects rather than damage from the blue light itself. Blue light from devices before bedtime can be detrimental to the body's sleep routine and the natural production of Melatonin, the sleep hormone, which makes it more difficult to fall asleep.

What can be done to mitigate the effects of blue light before bedtime? Turn off or do not look at electronic devices 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime. Most cell phones have an amber or nighttime setting which reduces or turns off the blue light. For example, the Android cell phone has a Bedtime setting or Night Light setting that turns off the Blue Light at sunset and turns back on at sunrise. iPhones have a similar setting called Night Shift. You can also wear protective glasses known as blue blockers. If you are a frequent cell phone scroller, it is recommended that your eyeglasses have the blue light blocking option. Think of this like having transition eyeglasses that turn dark when you are in the sun.

I hope this information is helpful and, as always, remember to restart and/or turn off your phone every day. Take care.

How to enable the blue light filter on an Android phone:

<https://youtu.be/6HnwAQPSRig?si=txwvO3MKrHvOpqEr>

How to enable the blulight filter on an iphone:

<https://youtu.be/Lx3tJSTK8TU?si=YRUefLQKyVKnvAID>

Sources: Google AI, Healthline.com, Britannica.com

LIZZIE MENELEE ELECTED AS NEW AEA RETIRED DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,
I'm truly grateful and humbled for your trust in allowing me to take on the role of AEA-Retired Director Region 16. Your confidence means a great deal, and I'm committed to living up to the responsibility this role brings. I look forward to working alongside each of you to achieve our shared goals and to continue building the supportive, collaborative environment that makes our team so special.

With great respect,

Lizzie Z. Menefee
Region 16 Director



[Continued from page 1](#)

The Election: Congratulations and welcome to our two newly elected Representatives At-Large: Allison Jackson and Tammy Smith, and new Treasurer Marilyn Calhoun, who will be joining returning Board members Cynthia Challberg-Hale, Steve Linder, and Nancy Putman for the six open positions on the Board. Thank you for accepting the responsibility of leadership.

At the end of AGMM, the position for president remained open, with no candidate and no nominations from the floor. A few days later, Luci Messing, current Vice President followed the guidelines in the AEA Retired Bylaws and stepped up to be president. At a later time, the board will appoint a Vice President as directed by the newly adopted 2026 Constitution and Bylaws. Thanks to all 60 delegates who voted to fill positions on the board and adopt AEA Retired documents. Thanks to the documents and election committees for a job well done.

The Evaluation: Other than the broken AC and the noise cooling fans made during the 2026 Annual General Membership, the meeting went well. The AGMM Evaluation was returned by over 2/3 of the participating guests and delegates. There were many comments of gratitude. Some of the highlights included:

- loved the food
- kept to the timeline with flexibility
- great gifts
- well organized delegate folder
- location saved us money
- parking was convenient
- a perfect fit for the lower price
- thanks to union "siblings"
- great speeches and updates from speakers
- many responses praised President Marisol Garcia for her message
- most important, thank you IBEW 640 Union Hall for letting us have the AGMM in your hall.

When asked what would you change,

- many delegates responded, "Nothing, the agenda had everything needed!"
- keep the networking and socializing time to talk to others during lunch

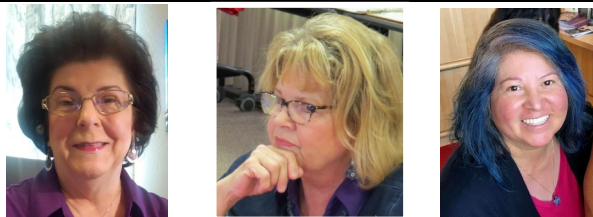
The committee met, a plan has been set to address the suggestions. We will see some of you at the AEA Retired Annual Board Retreat on June 17 in Tucson, Arizona, and, hopefully, the rest of you next year. We will evaluate our goals and action plans for the 2026-2027 year and organize it for success.

This is Our Fight...Let's Connect the Dots!



We Need You!

by Nancy Putman, Michele Smith and Maria Leyva



Nancy Putman (L), Michele Smith (C), and Maria Leyva (R)

AEA Retired recruited 87 new members this year. This is the most new members ever to have signed up in one year. We currently have 2,041 AEA Retired members, making us the largest AEA Local. Special thanks to AEA Retired members Suzan Austin, Danny Barlow, Anna Cicero, Janice Dwosh, Maria Leyva, Lizzie Menefee, Luci Messing, Marshall Militano, Nancy Putman and Michele Smith who signed up new members this year. A special shout out to Lizzie Menefee who signed up 12 new members. The AEA Retired Membership committee is continuing our membership drive to recruit newly retired members.

You, Too, Can Help Increase Membership!

Invite former co-workers to lunch or coffee and tell them about your activities as an advocate for children and educators. Let them know we need to add their voice to the collective call to advocate for public education and fight for the safety and well being of all children. Our children and grandchildren are counting on us.

AEA Retired keeps you informed on legislative, pension and educational issues. We monitor ASRS regarding changes to pensions and health insurance. We work to protect Social Security and Medicare in conjunction with AEA and NEA.

AEA Retired has eight Chapters around the state which members can join. These are listed on the last page.

We are offering new members a **special rate** for the first year. Fifty dollars will be reimbursed to the new member when they join and choose payroll deduction from ASRS. That is a monthly deduction of \$8.75 if you are not an NEA Life member. If you are an NEA Life member, your dues will be \$5.83 per month for the year. A check will be sent to the new member once the application has been processed.

The person recruiting a member will receive \$10 for each new member. Be certain to sign the application as recruiter. Visit the website to download a membership application;

www.azedretired.com

AEA Retired provides members with current information through e-mail, The Conduit, AEA Advocate and NEA Retired Today.

AEA Retired membership provides exclusive discounts and savings on many benefits and services. The first step is to set up an account on www.neamb.com/getstarted. Once you register, you can sign up for any or all of the great programs offered through NEA. The latest savings program is through **Rakuten**, where you can find the best discounts and get cash back on many name-brand products. Look for that at www.neamb.com/marketplace. The newest incentive program is the NEA Discount Tickets Program. Discounts of up to 40% can be earned on tickets to theme parks, local attractions, Broadway shows, concerts, sporting events and more. Go to www.neamb.com/dailydiscounts to find these discounts. Travel and vacation discounts can be found at NEA Travel. Book hotels, airfare, car rentals, cruises, guided tours and resorts. On the first visit, receive \$500 Travel Dollars to use like cash towards the cost of your trip. With all of these resources, you can get the most out of your member benefits in one easy place!

In Memory of Those Who Touched so Many

by Nancy Putman

These valued AEA Retired members passed away this year. Our condolences to their families, friends and colleagues. We are grateful for their membership in and support of AEA Retired.

Marie Beauchemin	Allan Teichman	William Steiner
Philip Woodley	Edward Chrisdty	Nancy Riffenhouse
Jerry Hobbs	Kathleen Wiebke	Sidney Eisenfield
Laura Rouyer	Lori Good	Bonnie Ford
Christine Eaton	Irene Gamez	Marjorie Glogosh
Betsey Pulver	Dorothy Somers	Martin Tellez
James Grosdbach	Anita Kamarinos	Richard Cruz
Sandra England	Katrina Lomax	Joe Jameson
William Davis	Jean Banovich	Avene Eyestone
Stephen Marks	Camila Watkins	Gerald Papineau
Calvin Boyle	Maryanne Mercure	Judith Reihard
Pamela Vintila	Carol Lyen	

WHY should YOU JOIN AEA Retired?

- We are over 2,000 strong as a local.
- We believe in public schools that are equitable for all children in Arizona.
- We are active citizens who participate in the political process.
- We are engaged in activities important to our communities.
- We show up when AEA calls us to action.



**YOU can continue
to make a difference!**

Join Today!
www.azedretired.com

Racial and Social Justice Committee

By Janice Dwosh



Making a Difference for our Arizona Educators

Elected delegates at the 2026 AEA Delegate Assembly saw and heard the dynamic Janie Hydrick at the microphone during consideration of Resolutions. Janie, along with RSJ committee leaders, reviewed the current AEA Resolutions wording that discussed accessibility and diversity in education and wrote an addition to AEA Resolutions Item Number 12.

Janie's resolution was not only inspired by the work done by NEA and AEA Retired Resolution Committees on Disability, Advocacy and Justice, but, also by the book review of *Demystifying Disability* by Emily Ladau presented to the East Valley Chapter meeting this year about disability justice.

Her resolution passed without amendment and is now a part of AEA's Resolutions.

The wording of the adopted follows.

AEA is focused on achieving authentic accessibility, ending ableism, and being inclusive of all students and educators with disabilities to fulfill AEA's vision of a great public school for every student. Individuals with disabilities should be at the forefront of advocacy and leadership, and their perspectives should be centered in all efforts to promote it. This means ensuring that individuals with disabilities have the power and agency to shape policies, practices, and decisions that impact their lives. AEA believes that by building awareness, strengthening advocacy, and taking collective action, educators can help secure the supports that every student and educator with a disability deserves; that educators with disabilities will be protected, supported, and valued in the workforce; and that by advancing disability rights and inclusive practices, we empower educators to challenge and transform systems of oppression that impact the disability community.

AEA recognizes the intersectionality of disabilities with race, class, gender, and other identities. AEA acknowledges the accessibility barriers that are physical, attitudinal, and implicit in education policies and practices; that the lack of accessibility results in fewer inclusions for students and staff; that there must be maximally inclusive environments for everyone; that we must support broader issues of disability rights; and that we must put those who are impacted by multiple marginalized disabilities at the forefront of these efforts. AEA believes that we must ensure that people with disabilities are present in conversations and decision making concerning their curriculum, students, pedagogy, and accommodations.

We can make a big difference for public education, students, and educators in Arizona!

If you would like to join us in the fight for equity and justice please email Janice Dwosh at jdwosh27@gmail.com for more info & check out <https://www.nea.org/individuals-with-disabilities>

Book Corner

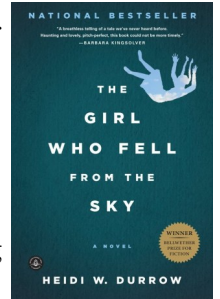
By Ann Myers



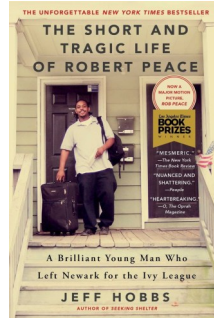
On the very day I bought a VHS of the movie, *The Sixth Sense*, I happened to read its surprise ending in a newspaper article. It ruined the movie for me. Since then, I've been careful not to give spoilers about books. So how do I tell you about *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* by Heidi Durrow when the surprise is literally in the title?

Rachel views her young life as the Before and After. We meet her in this story in the After, when she goes to live with her grandmother. Slowly, we learn about her Black military father and White Swedish mother, Mor. Following many poor choices and hopelessness, Mor cares for Rachel and her two younger siblings in a rat-infested and addict-riddled New York City high rise building.

Skipping ahead to the After, Rachel is a mixed-race child, raised European, at a middle school of mostly Black students. Blue-eyed Rachel has a hard time adjusting to American Black culture, living with her neglectful grandmother, and grieving the loss of her family. It's almost like she fell out of the sky into a new life.



It's also not a secret how *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* by Jeff Hobbs ends. Rob Peace is a real-life biography of a brilliant but poor man from Newark, New Jersey. His single mother worked multiple jobs to pay for a private school education, St. Benedict's Preparatory, a Catholic high school. Rob's father was in prison for a murder he may not have committed. Through the help of a wealthy benefactor Rob earned a full scholarship to Yale University where he graduated with honors in biophysics and biochemistry. He should have had a bright future.



A fascinating part of this book was that the author, Jeff Hobbs, was a part of the narrative. Hobbs was the roommate of Rob Peace and a close Yale friend. Both were intelligent, hardworking, potentially successful young men. Many of the stories involved both of them. Yet, one became a well-known author and the other, well, the other had a short and tragic end. Rob Peace could have been Jeff Hobbs except that Jeff had all the advantages of his upper-class White family, while Rob had grown up in a poor Black community with all of its struggles. Ultimately, it was impossible for Rob to live the life of a Yale graduate.

If you are interested in social/racial equity, or just thought-provoking books, and would like to discuss them, we have the group for you! Our book group meets online about every 6 to 8 weeks. For more information, contact Ann Myers 480-510-

*I read banned books. . .
All I got was smarter!*

REPORT OF THE DOCUMENTS COMMITTEE

By Deb Larned



The AEA Retired Documents Alignment Project began in June 2025 by the Documents Committee which completed amendments and revisions to the AEA Retired Constitution and Bylaws. A presentation was made to the AEA Retired Executive Board. Discussions were held at the February meeting followed by a vote to refer the changes to the delegates at Annual Meeting. The general membership was notified of board-referred amendments and revisions in *The Conduit* March issue where links were available for members to review the current documents and board-referred amendments prior to the AEA Retired Annual Meeting. Elected delegates voted to adopt the amendments to the AEA Retired Constitution and Bylaws at the Annual Meeting in May. The Constitution and Bylaws will be revised June 2026.

Documents Committee Tasks 2026-2027 include:

- continue work on Documents Alignment Project
- discuss edits/revisions for Policies & Procedures from June 2025 Board Retreat
- reconsider hold sections from February board meeting
- review items brought to the attention of the committee by members.

Thank you to the Documents Committee for their work and commitment to the Documents Alignment Project and congratulations on the adoption of amendments to the AEA Retired Constitution and Bylaws. Committee members: Anna Cicero, Ellie Feldner, Cynthia Challberg-Hale, Julie Horwin, Deb Larned (chair), Maria Leyva, Steve Linder, Luci Messing, Carmen Peters, Nancy Putman, Michele Smith, Linda Somo.

Those interested are encouraged to sign up and be part of this important committee. Contact Deb Larned, deblarned@yahoo.com for Documents Committee information.

REVISIONS ADOPTED FOR AEA RETIRED CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

In accordance with AEA Retired Constitution Article VII Amendments and Bylaws Article VIII Amendments, elected delegates voted on the board-referred amendments and revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws in a general election at the AEA Retired General Membership Annual Meeting on Friday, May 8. The vote exceeded the two-thirds (2/3) majority needed to adopt the board-referred amendments for the AEA Retired Constitution and Bylaws. With the vote to adopt, the revised AEA Retired Constitution and Bylaws will go into effect in June.



POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT ADVOCACY CORE TEAM

Protect Education, Accountability Now! Sign the Petition Today and VOTE Yes in November!

Go to www.ProtectEdAz.com to learn more about the **Ballot Initiative.**

Two months ago, AEA and Save Our Schools launched a big, bold campaign to rein in Arizona's billion dollar voucher program and bring much needed money back to public schools.



- Creates New Safety Measures to Protect Kids
- Brings Transparency to Spending of Public Funds
- Reduces Wasteful ESA Voucher Spending
- Helps Arizona Families that Actually Need It
- Helps Students with Disabilities
- Returns Millions Back to Public Schools
- Raises the Bar for Academic Quality & Student Success

Today, we have already collected more than half of the

Important note: Students with disabilities are exempt from the income cap and assessment provisions of this measure to ensure that those with complex and specialized needs continue to be served.

signatures needed to make the ballot. With just 47 days until the deadline, the wind is at our backs, but crossing the finish line will take all of us.

Here are some things you can do right now:

SIGN THE PETITION (If you haven't already). The campaign has signature-collection events throughout the state. Click the following link to find the nearest site to sign the petition.

www.mobilize.us/protectededucationaccountabilitynow/.

GATHER SIGNATURES. Request petitions from your local president, site leader, or organizational consultant, or email Pasquale.Martinelli@ArizonaEA.org for information on where to pick up petitions near you. Petitions are due June 25!

HCR 2040 Moves Forward

HCR 2040 is written as a ballot referral, which means that Governor Hobbs CANNOT veto it. If passed by the Senate and approved in the House with the new language, it will move directly to the Arizona Secretary of State and be placed on the ballot — at which point our union would have to defeat the bill at the polls.

[Continues on page 9](#)

Supreme Court Decision Upholding Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Law



Statement from Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans regarding the U.S. Supreme Court's rejection of appeals by drug corporations seeking to overturn the Medicare drug price negotiation program:

"Today the Supreme Court sided with common sense and upheld the landmark law allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices for some of the most expensive prescription drugs used by older Americans. The Court recognized that drug corporations should not get special treatment when they do business with the federal government.

"For nearly 20 years, Alliance members fought to give Medicare the power to negotiate better prices, and the law is already lowering costs for seniors at the pharmacy counter while saving taxpayers billions. But prescription drug prices continue to rise faster than inflation, putting increasing pressure on older Americans living on fixed incomes. Congress should build on this progress by expanding the number of prescription drugs Medicare can negotiate to bring down costs for even more seniors and families."

[Continued from page 8](#)

Take Action: [Tell Lawmakers NO on HCR 2040.](#)

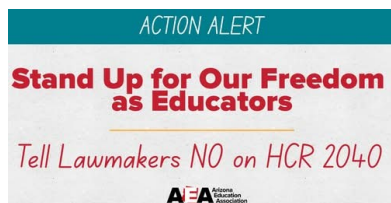
Mid-May, the Arizona Senate took a procedural step to advance HCR 2040 — a nasty, union-busting bill that would destroy hard-won union contracts and undermine the freedom to organize across the state. Here's what happened:

After a brief recess, the Senate reconvened, with what initially appeared to be a light agenda. Shortly before 10 am, however, the Senate Rules Committee posted an updated agenda that included HCR 2040. The Rules Committee then approved HCR 2040 as *Proper for Consideration*, allowing it to move forward.

Later that afternoon, the Senate posted another updated agenda placing HCR 2040 before the Committee of the Whole. After limited debate, this committee approved the measure with a *Do Pass* recommendation and the Senate Republican majority caucus did the same.

The version passed by the Senate was amended to include language from HB 2313, a vile anti-union bill. The new language would impose severe, career-ending consequences for educators who participate in what lawmakers call organized work stoppages, including strikes, sick-outs, walk-outs, and other similar collective actions. The bill is written so broadly it could even threaten pensions and other earned benefits for educators who communicate with each other about sick days and other legitimate absences.

When the Senate reconvenes, AEA and allies are prepared for the possibility HCR 2040 could be given a Third Reading and the final formal vote.



AEA RETIRED POLO SHIRT

3.8-ounce, 100% polyester double-knit mesh
3-button placket with pearlized buttons
Double-needle seams & hem
Open hem sleeves, Taped neck, Side vents

Men's: Flat knit collar
Women's: Johnny collar.
Both are available in
sizes XS to 3X, and in
Red or Purple. \$40 each



The logo can also be added to any shirt you have for \$20.

AEA Retired name tags are available for \$18

Contact Marshall Militano
(602) 882-3260
mmilitano1@gmail.com

Send your email address to

julie.horwin@gmail.com

Win \$100



If we already have your e-mail address, you are entered in the \$100 drawing

Good luck!

Congratulations to Carol Trudgen, winner of the 2026 drawing!



The Conduit



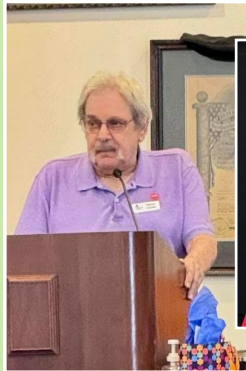
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The Conduit Editors



2026
Annual Meeting
IBEW Hall
Phoenix, Arizona



Winner of the 2026 Quilt Valerie Swenson and quilt maker member Audrey Cunneely. This fundraiser brought in approximately \$2400.



AEA Retired Chapter News

Chapters bring AEA Retired together. Most chapters will meet in person, some chapters may choose to add a Zoom meeting now and then. Each chapter governs itself in order to meet the needs of its members. Meetings usually include information programs and time for socializing with friends and colleagues. This is a great way to keep in touch with the latest issues in our communities. Anyone interested in forming a new chapter should contact Chapter Coordinator **Susan Sommer**, (623) 628-1935, ssommer114@aol.com.

All AEA Retired members are eligible to join a chapter where they worked or currently live.

When Chapters meet via Zoom, connection is a simple process. All you need to do is click the link you receive from your Chapter Chair via e-mail. We welcome your attendance and participation.

Glendale/West Valley Chapter: This year our meetings are being held at IHOP at 8359 W. Bell Rd., Peoria 85382 from 10 am until noon. We enjoy food and good conversation. Meeting dates are on the third Thursday each month, September through April. For more information call, text or email

Marshall Militano at 602-882-3260 or mmilitano1@gmail.com.

Greater Tucson Area Chapter: We are meeting the third Tuesday of the month, August through May. Meetings begin at 10 am at the Southern AEA office, 6873 N. Oracle Rd., Tucson, AZ, 85704. Please e-mail Chapter Chair

Peter Coston at pcoston1@cox.net for Zoom meeting links.

Kyrene Chapter: The Hub Grill and Bar, 14205 South 50th Street, Phoenix, keeps active and retired educators connected and having fun. Food and drinks keep our camaraderie fueled. Meetings are on the fourth Friday of the month August through April. Wherever you worked or work as an educator, we welcome you. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at hydrick@aol.com.

Mesa/East Valley Chapter: We meet for luncheon at Mi Amigos Restaurant, 1264 South Gilbert Road, Mesa. Join us on the first Tuesday, September through April at 11:30 am. Wherever you worked or work as an educator, we welcome you. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at hydrick@aol.com

Phoenix Chapter: We meet on the fourth Monday for lunch at the Beatitudes Campus, 1610 W. Glendale Ave., Phoenix. Contact **Suzan Austin** at suzanaustin@cox.net or **Gary Mehok** at lojo40@cox.net for more information.

Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter: All meetings will be held on the third Monday of each month from 11:00 to 1, September through April (excluding December) at Eggstasy Restaurant, 10155 E. Via Linda, Scottsdale. If you're not on our mailing list, please contact **Nancy Riley** at 480-600-8559 or rilevfam@cox.net.

Southeast Arizona Chapter: The Southeast Arizona AEA Retired Chapter is located in Cochise County and is comprised of districts in Sierra Vista, Tombstone, Huachuca City, Naco, Palominas, Elgin, and Ft. Huachuca, and retirees from other states who have moved to Cochise County. Meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of the month, September through May, at Manda Le Bar and Grille, 3455 Canyon De Flores Blvd., Sierra Vista. Please contact Sally if you would like to be added to the email contact list, our only method of communication. Contact Chapter Chair **Sally Rosén** at 520-249-0233, azcatsally@aol.com for details.

Interstate/Flagstaff/Northern Arizona/Reservation Chapter (INFARC). Meetings will be held on the third Thursday of the month at 2 pm (MST). Meetings will be held on Zoom. Please contact **Daniel Barlow** at dsjbarlow@yahoo.com. A link will be sent to you to connect to the meetings.