

*A Basic Right...
A Great
Public School
for Every
Child.*

LEA President: Arlene
Rea
arlene.rea@nsea.org
Editor: Dan Studer
UniServ Director
dan.studer@nsea.org

A Publication by the
Lincoln Education
Association
4920 Normal Blvd
Lincoln NE 68506
489-7500

www.lincolneducationassociation.org

Here We Go Again!

Outside Interests Are Trying to Use the Initiative Process in Nebraska to Affect Change

At least this time it isn't an initiative having to do directly with the public schools, taxes, or spending lids and limits. But it is an effort that could impact the lives of students.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* on Sunday April 20th reported on a new initiative in Nebraska entitled the "Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative" and the controversy that is swirling around the petition drive.

The *Journal Star* reports "Nebraska's branch of the American Civil Rights Initiative, a group that wants to end race-and-gender-based affirmative action in public admissions and hiring practices" are active in Nebraska." They "now have less than three months to gather the petition signatures they need" and have "been successful in California, Washington, and Michigan."



"Marc Schniederjans, treasurer of the Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative," says Nebraskans... largely are reacting favorably when approached by petitioners. Some petitioners are volunteers. Others get paid about \$2.50 a signature. They typically begin by asking passers-by whether they want to end discrimination. The Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative, petitioners tell passers-by, will help ensure gender and racial equality. They then ask for a signature."

Schniederjans "does acknowledge the Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative is largely funded by non-Nebraskans. According to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, of the nearly \$57,000 the initiative has raised so far, \$50,000 came from Paul Singer, a New York businessman who was a major donor to the presidential campaigns of George W. Bush and Rudy Giuliani. Schniederjans has kicked in another \$100, according to reports filed with the commission. Many Nebraskans have made smaller donations, Schniederjans says."

”Critics say the process is misleading to voters who may actually think they’re signing in support of affirmative action. Voters are further led astray, critics say, by the initiative’s name, which seems to align itself with the civil rights movement, and by the fact the initiative’s ballot language asks voters to end racial and gender preferences without explicitly mentioning affirmative action. Shirley Wilcher, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based American Association for Affirmative Action, believes fewer voters would sign if they knew they were signing to end affirmative action. ‘This thing is outsourced. This really is an out-of-state effort,’ says Nic Swiercek, a UNL senior and vice president of Students United for Nebraska, which is fighting the Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative. ‘This is not Nebraskans.’”

Looking toward the future, the *Journal Star* article states, “Affirmative action supporters want to make clear they’re focused on more than creating opportunities for racial minorities. Gender equality is critical, too, they say, whether it’s recruiting more women to engineering programs or more men to nursing. And in the future, it’s men — not women — who may need extra help. *Time* magazine reported this month that women continue to outpace men in entering and finishing college, leaving some American universities scrambling for a gender balance. Clark University in Massachusetts, for example, offers a ‘men helping men’ support program, and Kenyon College in Ohio has lower admissions standards for men.


“UNL’s gender split is even, but that’s likely to change in coming years, says admissions dean Alan Cerveny. Admissions staff members have met to consider what they can do to recruit men, he says. ‘Ironically... if this (affirmative action ban) goes through, that would be illegal.’


“Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative allies continue to believe all race-and-gender-based programs are discriminatory. Others believe affirmative action means equality, not preferential treatment.”

According to the *Journal Star*, if put on the ballot and passed, the initiative will not end all forms of affirmative action in the state. “The University of Nebraska, for example, could give scholarships based on income and could recruit students from specific parts of the state.” It is also “unlikely a student already promised a scholarship would lose it. Future students would be most affected... Those whose jobs focus on multicultural education may see their duties shift, but their jobs would not be eliminated.” Other than UN-L, “all public institutions—fire departments, police departments, the Nebraska College System and more—would have to follow the same law: No hiring decisions based on race or gender.”

***Regardless of your position on affirmative action, LEA recommends that members always know exactly what they are signing when approached by petition drive workers.
The Association has no position on the Initiative outlined above.***

Urban Myths

 Did you know that “baby carrots” are actually regular carrots that have been “deformed” by soaking them in chlorine?

 Did you know that there is a web site that you can go to that lists all of the felons living in your neighborhood?



Sorry, these are both urban myths. “Baby carrots” are actually that—specially bred, smaller and sweeter carrots or are carrots that have been cut and shaped into smaller portions (these are labeled as “baby-cut carrots.”) As for the web site listing neighborly felons, it is a hoax.

Here is another “urban myth” of which you should be aware:

For security reasons, teachers can be denied keys to their school outside of regular school hours and/or rooms that contain copier equipment. **False.** LPS Board Policy Regulation 3980.5 states, “Upon request, teachers shall be issued keys to an exterior door, the interior hallway doors and gates, and the faculty lounge of their base school at the beginning of the contract period. Keys will be returned on the last working day of contracted duty.” The LPS Personnel Handbook in Section GG under “Teacher Facilities and Safety” after quoting the previous Board Regulation adds, “In addition, procedures to gain access to workrooms shall be developed” (editorial emphasis).

Don't Miss...

the opportunity to honor and spend some incomparable moments with your colleagues who are retiring this year at a special event! The annual LEA Retirement Banquet is scheduled for May 22nd beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Lincoln Firefighter's Hall, 241 Victory Lane.