

MSCF Minute



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Getting Right to the Point

by Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President

Typical Minute articles cover a variety of topics depending on what's "hot" at the time. This year, we already know what the big topic is going to be for the next couple of months. Between now and November 6, you are going to hear a lot, both in the Minute and in other venues, about one topic: the upcoming election. And, we're not going to beat around the bush or take a weak-kneed approach. We're going to get right to the point.

It seems we label each election year as "the most important one ever." While such a refrain has a potential "cry wolf" component, it is a refrain based in undeniable truth. The outcome of this election will have a greater impact on our lives, both professional and personal, than any we've seen in recent history. To that end, we're going to start talking about election outcomes early this year. We simply don't have the luxury of pretending that election outcomes don't matter.

Some might see the connection between election outcomes and our fate as an unfortunate fact. I'm not going to argue with those folks. Some might suggest there isn't really a connection between election outcomes

and our fate. I'm going to argue all day long with those folks.

As politics become more and more polarized, contrasts and consequences become more and more clear. An election outcome leads to a Supreme Court appointee, which leads to the Janus decision. This is not a complex leap; it's simply the transitive property of equality (if $A=B$ and $B=C$, then $A=C$). Such is the nature of today's political environment. If you choose A, then you will most certainly get C.

Again, I'm not going to argue for a second with those who find great frustration in this construct. However, rather than get all hung up in the nature of it or, worse yet, use the nature of it as an excuse to do nothing other than complain, I'm going to suggest we recognize the current reality and get to work with that reality in mind. After all, we've only got from now until November 6 to get it right.

So, what is "right?" For MSCF purposes, the answer is really simple, as simple as saying, "We support those who support us." MSCF hasn't in the past told our members how to view issues other than those that affect us

directly as a union of educators, and we're not going to start delving into those other issues now. We are, however, going to be more blatant than we've ever been about exactly who is on our side and who isn't.

In 2016, the Minnesota House of Representatives took a vote on a bill containing right-to-work provisions. The vote fell along party lines, with two exceptions. While the bill was never going to become law with Governor Dayton in office, the vote provided a vivid picture of intent and of who stands where.

Many of those legislators who voted for that bill in 2016 are running for re-election this year. A vote for those who voted for the 2016 bill is a vote for right-to-work and an end to contracts as we know them. It's not my contention that establishes that fact; it's their actions.

This polarized political environment, with its clear and high-stakes consequences, can create a very real dilemma for some of our members. As we proceed, we'll do so with that fact in mind. We'll stay away from issues that aren't directly related to education, but we'll be more clear than ever about

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those candidates whose actions have indicated support for us and those who haven't.



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UPCOMING MEETINGS

September 6
Faculty Forum

September 14
Meet and Confer

September 20
Credential Fields

September 21
Executive Meeting
Racial Equity
Emerging Leaders