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What is COPE? How does it work?

COPE stands for the Committee on Political Education.

WHY COPE?

Public education relies on public money to exist. Public money, usually in the form of taxes, is controlled by elected and appointed politicians. To influence decisions and the spending of public money for public education, public education faculty and professional staff participate in politics through their unions.

Legislative battles now going on in Trenton and Washington will determine key aspects of our work environment. Many of the improvements in our environment are not negotiated at the bargaining table, but instead, require legislation. In 2007 we must convince legislators to support legislation that would give us a voice on boards of trustees, provide equitable pay for adjunct and part-time faculty and obtain more accountability from our institutions. See our political action page for more on these and other bills.

We must be able to lobby effectively if we are to succeed in getting the laws we need enacted. Having a friend in the Governor's chair is helpful when it comes to negotiating our terms and conditions of employment. It's impossible to succeed in lobbying without political action. The brilliance of rightness of our arguments rarely persuades politicians. They want to know what we can do for them (or perhaps for their opponents). Those are the hard facts of political life. COPE funds give us political clout.

HOW ARE COPE FUNDS COLLECTED?

COPE funds are collected through payroll deduction. While the Union contributes to fundraisers for specific candidates, payroll deduction is the only way to establish an adequate **COPE** fund. State law and our contract establish our right to a check-off for **COPE**.

WHO CAN SPEND COPE FUNDS?

Delegates from the Council's governing body make the decisions about COPE spending. The Council's **Political Action Committee**, which is composed of delegates from each local, recommends political endorsements and contributions to the Council's governing body.

HOW DO MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE TO COPE?

Members must fill out a COPE deduction card to authorize the amount to be deducted from paychecks per pay period. The minimum deduction is \$.50 per pay period. To sign-up for COPE, visit or call your [local](#) Union office or the [Council](#) office at 908-964-8476.