North Chicago Member Accompanies US Representative Schneider to State of the Union Address

Congressman Brad Schneider (IL-10) selected Dr. David Brothman, Social Studies department chair and teacher at North Chicago Community High School, to be his guest at President Trump’s State of the Union address, on Tuesday, February 4, 2020.

Dr. Brothman is a resident of Wheeling. A long-time education leader in the Tenth District, he has worked in teaching and administrative roles within the North Chicago Community Unit School District 187 since 1999. He currently teaches AP Government, AP US History, Civics and Sociology/Psychology.

"Democracy is a verb, and our system of government only works if the next generation of Americans engages as active citizens and voters," said Schneider. “Local educators like Dr. Brothman play a vital role inspiring young people to understand our Constitutional system and their rights and responsibilities as Americans. I am very pleased he will join me as my guest to the State of the Union in recognition of the amazing work done by our public school teachers. This is a historic and contentious moment for our country, and I hope witnessing this event will be an experience Dr. Brothman is able to share with his students."

Schneider has worked with Dr. Brothman and the North Chicago Community Unit School District 187 to recruit students to participate in Schneider’s upcoming 2020 Model Congress.

Model Congress is an opportunity for Tenth District high school students to simulate the work of a Member of Congress. Students will hear expert testimony, debate amendments in committee and vote on legislation with Congressman Schneider presiding as Speaker.

This year’s event will be held on Sunday, March 15, 2020 from 9:00am - 3:00pm at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire.
Our Union Local was formed in 1937 by a group of visionary Waukegan teachers. The issues that inspired Unionization at the time were some that we may now take for granted and some that we need to continue an almost daily vigilance to protect. For example, it was not unusual that a teacher needed permission to become pregnant and it was a common practice to require female teachers to request consent in order to leave town over a break. Increasing pressures and sometimes tyrannical directives aiming at dictating how content was taught in the classroom gave rise to the need for protecting academic freedom. These are just a sampling of the examples providing the catalyst behind the forward movement toward self-determination in the workplace. Our own Union “founders” also fervently believed that the most effective method for evaluating what was best practice for all was through collective, democratic action.

The original handwritten and signed pledge includes this affirmation: “We will go any distance in support (of) the majority opinion of the group.” The very foundation of our Union both rests and relies heavily upon this application of democracy in our workplace. Democratic action for educators provided a practical vehicle for the diversified groups with shared concerns while, significantly adding substance behind demands. This process legitimized our collective voice offering administrations no option but to acknowledge and consider the strength in numbers behind our proposals and actions. For years, alongside the AFT moniker was the statement: Education for Democracy, Democracy for Education.

However, no one ever said that democratic action was easy or efficient. One of my favorite references is “democracy is cumbersome.” At times it may feel much easier to move forward by decree. I have observed council leaders make unilateral decisions in response to management actions that were not acceptable to the membership. I have witnessed bargaining teams seemingly exert more effort to convince members of the validity of their proposals than the effort they put into convincing management of the righteousness of their position. To bypass this often ponderous course is seductive and while ostensibly justifiable this circumvention launches the group down a slippery slope.

In fact, it often has been tempting for a Union leader to move forward by individual imperative, rather than by collective action. Many times such action seems justified as the Union official may perceive a more intimate understanding of a problem and believe that they already know what is best for the group. But on occasion, this type of unilateral action comes back to bite those who sidestep the democratic requirement to insist that the members’ collective wishes are embraced.

When I became the Council President of the Zion-Benton Federation of Teachers in the early 1990’s, our Union was divided among separate groups that equally felt that they represented the will of the membership. Our Union had formed just several years earlier so compounding the issues dividing us was this new, novel approach to democratic participation. I won a contested election against an opponent who often represented the views of the “old guard” or the unaffiliated “association” that bargained on behalf of us before we affiliated with the LCFT/IFT/AFT.

The positions of either side of our divided Union at the time often seemed reasonable: different paths to the same end. Yet the personality conflicts between the groups seemed insurmountable at the time and threatened our chances of reaching a satisfying contract for all members. I made a decision that upset many of my supporters at the time and reached out to the leader of the minority side and asked him to join our bargaining team (many from the early days at the Zion-Benton Council will surely remember the individuals involved!). I remember many folks asking me, “How could you appoint him to the team?” We often had vigorous (to put it nicely) debates within

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PRESIDENT, Continued from page 2

our team. Somehow, we made it through negotiations and I actually learned a great deal from this member who could have easily become my nemesis. More importantly, he could have arguably posed a credible threat toward improving our contract for all members. We remained close throughout my career.

Upon reflection, I am sincerely more convinced that I made the right decision at the time. Yes, democracy is cumbersome, but it offers the tools of strength and resilience necessary to weather the demands placed on us by those in opposition to our cause. I am not deluded into believing that our differences are always reconcilable. But I have become increasingly convinced that those differences are often personality driven and not necessarily substantive.

One only has to observe what is going on in national politics to know that dislike between leaders remains a major obstacle to our democratic progress. We see how easily the discourse becomes clouded and derailed by friction driven by assumptions and preconceptions. Conflict between Union officials is real, observable, and a fact as well. Yet our ability to move beyond these more petty feelings is often the test of inspired leadership.

Another major stumbling block along our path to democracy, especially as it applies to our Union, is the ability and willingness of the majority to address the concerns of the minority. By the very nature of the fundamentals of democracy it is not possible to adequately assuage the concerns of everyone. It is at these times where it becomes most important that we provide a forum for the minority position to be heard, otherwise our majority opinion is only weakened by the ensuing infighting. Conversely, it is also incumbent on the minority to help carry out the wishes of the majority—to put into action what our founders wrote, “we will go any distance in support of the majority opinion.”

In closing, it would be wonderful if we could all agree but we know that is not our reality. As Union members we have chosen to participate knowing that democracy is both cumbersome and imperfect. As we continue our journey together and encounter the inevitable disagreements we must try to remember that while the minority view is regarded, the majority voice must rule if we are to maintain the integrity of the source of our collective strength. I believe that democracy in Unionism is unquestionably the best mechanism toward achieving our mutually shared goals even though it may occasionally “feel” otherwise!

In Unity,

---Mike McGue, LCFT President

Michael T. McGue, President,
Lake County Federation of Teachers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Funding</th>
<th>Affordable Higher Education</th>
<th>Early Childhood Education</th>
<th>Charters and Vouchers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biden</strong>&lt;br&gt;Triple Title I funding&lt;br&gt;Use Title I funding to ensure that districts offer educators competitive salaries&lt;br&gt;Create community schools and expand these services for 300,000 students and their families</td>
<td><strong>Provide debt-free community college for two years, or other high-quality training programs</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Double maximum value of Pell Grants</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Improve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program to offer $10,000 of student debt relief for every year of national or community service, up to five years</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide universal pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Provide funding to ensure early childhood education workforce is lifted out of poverty</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ban for-profit charters and increase accountability and transparency for current charters</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Oppose diverting public funds for private school voucher programs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bloomberg</strong>&lt;br&gt;Provide federal subsidy to help state and local governments increase teacher pay</td>
<td><strong>Cancel all or some student debt based on income levels</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Work with state and local governments to reduce the financial burden on students</strong></td>
<td><strong>While mayor, expanded pre-K programs for low-income children</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promote charter schools (according to his campaign, this will be part of his education plan, once announced)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Increase accountability of charter schools</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Buttigieg</strong>&lt;br&gt;Triple Title I funding&lt;br&gt;Eliminate wage gap for teachers in Title I schools&lt;br&gt;Increase federal support for community schools</td>
<td><strong>Provide automatic income-driven repayment plan, and allow debt cancellation through Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Teacher Loan Forgiveness programs</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Provide tuition-free public college for families earning up to $100,000 per year and subsidies for those making up to $150,000</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Increase funding and size of maximum Pell Grant award</strong></td>
<td><strong>Invest $700 billion in universal free or affordable full-day early learning through age 5</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Strengthen Head Start and after-school programs</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Raise wages for early childhood educators</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ban for-profit charters and increase accountability and transparency for current charters</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Oppose diverting public funds for private school voucher programs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Klobuchar</strong>&lt;br&gt;Create an equitable school infrastructure funding mechanism and convene a commission to review the states’ existing funding formulas&lt;br&gt;Fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act&lt;br&gt;Establish partnership for federal government to match state funds to increase teacher salaries</td>
<td><strong>Provide tuition-free community college and technical certifications</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Allow students to refinance loans at lower rates, and expand Public Service Loan Forgiveness program for in-demand occupations</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Double maximum value of Pell Grant award</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide universal pre-K programs that would be free for low-income families</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ban for-profit charters and increase accountability and transparency for current charters</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Oppose diverting public funds for private school voucher programs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Triple Title I funding</td>
<td>Eliminate tuition and fees at four-year public colleges, tribal colleges, community colleges, trade schools and apprenticeship programs</td>
<td>Establish universal child care and pre-K programs</td>
<td>Ban for-profit charters and increase accountability and transparency for current charters</td>
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<td>Ensure a minimum salary for teachers of $60,000 per year</td>
<td>Cancel all student debt and establish interest-rate cap for future loans</td>
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<td>End federal funding for new charters</td>
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<td>Provide $5 billion per year for community schools</td>
<td>Increase size of maximum Pell Grant award</td>
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<td>Oppose diverting public funds for private school voucher programs</td>
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<td><strong>SANDERS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Triple Title I funding</td>
<td>Provide free two-year public college and debt-free four-year college for low- and middle-income students</td>
<td>Provide free universal pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds</td>
<td>Ban for-profit charter schools and increase accountability and transparency for current charters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a 2-to-1 federal match for every new dollar states and districts spend on raising teacher pay</td>
<td>Allow students to refinance loans at lower rates</td>
<td>Provide funding to ensure early childhood teachers are compensated like their K-12 counterparts</td>
<td>Freeze federal funding for new nonprofit charter schools</td>
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<td>Invest in a network of 25,000 community schools by 2025</td>
<td>Expand Public Service Loan Forgiveness program</td>
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<td>Oppose diverting public funds for private school voucher programs</td>
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<td><strong>STEYER</strong></td>
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<td>Quadruple Title I funding and increase individuals with Disabilities Education Act funding by $20 billion per year</td>
<td>Provide free two- or four-year public college</td>
<td>Establish universal child care and early learning for 12 million children, which would be free for low-income families and affordable for others</td>
<td>Ban for-profit charters and increase accountability and transparency for current charters</td>
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<td>Raise teacher pay through increasing Title I funding and making it easier to join a union</td>
<td>Invest additional $100 billion in Pell Grants</td>
<td>Support and fairly compensate pre-K teachers</td>
<td>End federal funding for new charters</td>
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<td>Establish 25,000 community schools by 2030</td>
<td>Cancel up to $50,000 in student debt for borrowers with an annual household income of less than $100,000, with graduated debt relief for those making up to $250,000</td>
<td>Expand IDEA funding for 3- to 5-year-olds and early intervention services for toddlers and infants</td>
<td>Oppose diverting public funds for private school voucher programs</td>
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<td><strong>WARREN</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with states to fund their education systems, improve teacher salaries and reduce layers of administration</td>
<td>Provide tuition-free or nearly free community college for all</td>
<td>Work with the states to create a plan for universal pre-K education</td>
<td>Support charter schools with increased accountability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cap cost increases of any university that receives public funding to no more than the rate of annual median wage growth</td>
<td>Provide loan forgiveness for education majors who volunteer at places that offer pre-K education</td>
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AFT Convention Call: Houston, TX

LCFT is looking for members who would like to attend the AFT Convention July 27-30, 2020 in Houston, Texas. Delegates are responsible for shaping the direction of the AFT and its endeavors, and for electing officers to carry out those directives. If you are interested, please fill in the form below and return it to the LCFT office NO LATER than March 31. Delegates will be elected at our May 2020 LCFT Executive Board Meeting.

YES! I WANT TO BE A DELEGATE AT THE 2020 AFT CONVENTION!

Name:__________________________________________

Address:________________________________________

City:________________________________ State:______ Zip Code:______________

Cell Phone:____________________________________

Non-school Email Address:________________________

Council (School District):________________________

BE SURE TO RETURN THIS FORM TO THE LCFT OFFICE BY MARCH 31, 2020.

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February 2020
REGISTRATION FORM
LCFT LOCAL 504 – 2020 WINTER/ SPRING
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

(Please Print Clearly)
Name: ____________________________ Home Phone: ____________________

Home Address: ______________________________________________________

City: ____________________________ State: _____ Zip: _________________

Personal E-mail: __________________________ (School District): _________
(NOT DISTRICT EMAIL)

IEIN Number: ___________________

Select courses you will attend:

☐ WINTER/ SPRING DAILY ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED

☐ ELA WITH COMMON CORE:
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 15 PDUs 1 hours
  March 5 through March 19, 2020

☐ MANAGING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR:
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 30 PDUs 2 hours
  March 31 through April 30, 2020

☐ FOUNDATIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING I:
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 30 PDUs 2 hours
  May 5 through June 4, 2020

Number of courses selected: x Cost per course: $50 = $ ___________

CHECKS AND REGISTRATION FORM MUST BE IN THE UNION HALL TWO WEEKS PRIOR
TO THE START OF THE CLASS. PLEASE DON'T JEOPARDIZE THE CLASS BY
REGISTERING LATE. ALL CLASSES ARE HELD IN THE UNION HALL.

Enclose check or money order (no cash) made payable to: AFT Local 504

Return form with non-refundable payment to: Lake County Federation of Teachers, Local 504
248 Ambrogio Drive
Gurnee, IL 60031

February 2020
Zion-Benton Combines Holiday Cheer with Community Outreach

by Kelly Regnier,
Z-BFT Council President

At Zion-Benton, we have become well known for our regular interactions with our community. For the past several years, we have hosted Holiday Giving Contests, challenging our staff to “out-give” each other, with all of the proceeds going to Abiding Love, a local food pantry. The Z-BFT always starts the giving by asking the membership to approve a $500 donation from our council funds.

This year, instead of pitting staff members against each other, our social committee, led by Ana Peterson, decided it would be more fun to host an event and encourage our members to share some holiday cheer and donate to Abiding Love at the same time. District administrators were also invited to share a cup of cocoa or coffee and donate as well.

This is part of a yearlong effort by the Z-BFT to host multiple small afterschool events in order to foster collegiality among Z-BFT members. With such a diverse population amongst the Z-BFT membership, it is important to us that council members are able to connect regularly with each other. In the fall, we also hosted a Luau-themed ice cream party to celebrate our new contract. This is in addition to our annual welcome back gathering held each year. There are plans in the works for a springtime gathering as well.

While we enjoyed board games, hot cocoa, and our friends’ company, the most important part of the party was the fact that the council donated almost $2000 to our local food pantry in order to provide for students in our community.