

DEA PAC Frequently Asked Questions

What is a PAC?

PAC stands for Political Action Committee, which are private groups organized to elect political candidates. They receive and raise money from their constituents or members, and make donations to political campaigns. As a result of the Watergate scandal in the early 1970s, Congress created the PACs in an attempt to try to more openly keep track of campaign donors, contributions, and expenditures. Utah PACs are loosely regulated by the Lt. Governor's office where they must file regular statements of their donations and expenditures as required by law.

Are my dues dollars used for Political Action?

No. The only money that the PAC gives to candidates is from money voluntarily donated by members (and some non-DEA members) to the DEA PAC.

Why does the DEA endorse candidates?

The DEA PAC does not endorse candidates. We recommend candidates. It may seem like splitting hairs to use the word 'recommend' instead of 'endorse,' but we recognize that our members will make up their own minds and vote their conscience in the voting booth. Our recommendations are exactly that: who we would recommend you vote for based upon our evaluation of their record and positions on matters of importance to people who work in public schools. We encourage all of our members to do the following:

- Read the responses to our questionnaires that each candidate submitted. You will note that some candidates did not return our questionnaire.
- Read any comments that the DEA PAC made about the interview with the candidate (some candidates did not come in for an interview)
- Check out the candidate's web site.
- Email or call the candidate and ask them questions.
- Attend public forums in which you can ask the candidates questions and hear their responses.
- Weigh the issues that are important to you and make up your own mind.

How does the PAC decide whom to support?

Candidates are sent a questionnaire, and then scheduled for an interview with the DEA PAC. Each candidate is asked the same questions, and PAC members rate the candidates on a form. In addition to their responses to the questions, PAC members rate the candidates on their track

record, their ability to influence public education decisions, and their affinity with teachers and the DEA. The forms are tallied and summed up in a score on a scale of 1 – 10.

I've looked at the DEA recommendations. What does 'UEA Continuing Endorsement' mean?

If a legislator has been a consistent supporter of our positions, we have the option to tell the UEA that they have our continuing endorsement, and we may or may not invite them in for an interview with the PAC. This year the DEA PAC gave continuing endorsements to Paul Ray, Doug Aagard, Julie Fisher, and Sheryl Allen.

How can I get more involved with DEA political action?

Email Susan Firmage, DEA President, at susan@dea.org