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Legislation Platform in Brief: LEGISLATION POLICIES

Preamble

The Illinois PTA promotes and supports legislation designed to protect all children and youth, and to meet their educational and other welfare needs, in order that they may be better prepared to assume intelligently, the increasing responsibilities of citizenship.

The Illinois PTA has a continuing responsibility for all laws which it has supported, and a continuing duty to express opposition to laws contrary to its policies. It opposes the curtailment of existing educational opportunities or public health services, and any further limitations on the total tax rates levied against property, unless other adequate sources of revenue are provided.

The Illinois PTA shall support Legislation Program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Legislation action of the Illinois PTA is determined at all times by previously adopted legislation positions and policies.

The Illinois PTA promotes and supports:

1. STATE CONSTITUTION

Constitutional revisions that will promote directly the welfare of children.

2. TAXATION

- Revision of the Revenue Article.
- Adequate, equitable, and sustainable sources of revenue for schools.
- Necessary legislation for improvements of assessment and taxation processes.
- New sources of state revenue, including of consideration of a state tax on services.
- Necessary increases or modifications in present taxes, such as the income tax, with the exception of an increase in state sales tax on basic items such as food and medicine.
- Designation and appropriation of all state taxes in a manner that best serves the needs of the citizens of the state.
- Removal of unjust tax rate limitations on unit districts.
- Removal of present limitations on bonding power of school districts, to allow such districts to decide by local referendum the bonding power necessary to meet their individual needs.

3. FUNDING OF EDUCATION

- Adequate legislative and/or financial support for operation, maintenance, and construction of tax supported schools, and oppose the direct or indirect use of public funds for non-public schools.
- Increase in the state distributive funds for public schools until the amount contributed by the state to supplement local support shall fully guarantee an adequate and realistic foundation program.
- Support of full funding of all mandated educational and special programs.
- Support of distribution of state funds to local school districts affected by impaction as a result of state, county or city agencies.
- State support for safe public school building construction.
- Removal of existing inequities in distribution of state aid to local school districts.
- Adequate appropriations for education of all children and youth.
- Provision for reimbursement for the continuance and expansion of an accredited summer school program.
- State aid for the school breakfast and lunch programs, with separation of the breakfast and lunch funds from the educational fund.

4. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Support of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in its present form, and opposition to amendments to it, which seek to establish governmental authority in religious observance in schools supported by public funds.
- Support the implementation of the United States Supreme Court decision on desegregation of the public schools and support of adequate funds for school districts to provide for additional cost for school desegregation.
- Support legislation which promotes National pride and patriotism and preserves our National Heritage.
- Equal job and educational opportunities for all people.
- Adequate housing on a non-discriminatory basis to raise the standards of home life.
- Opposition to the legalization and decriminalization of all types of illegal and dangerous drugs.
- Strengthening and enforcing existing legislation to control sales, distribution, possession of firearms, and the sale of handgun ammunition.
- Support of legislation designed to increase dissemination of information and services for voluntary family planning, which would include the dissemination of information pertaining to venereal disease and prevention of teenage pregnancies.
- Extension and support of library services, without censorship of library materials under protection of the United States Constitution First Amendment.

5. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for the efficient administration of public schools.
- b. Adequate legislation, including implementing rules and regulations, to insure maximum local control within each school district.
- c. School district reorganization with increased support for public transportation.
- d. Non-partisan state board of education.
- e. Opposition to state censorship of textbooks, teaching materials and library materials, since these problems lie within the jurisdiction and responsibility of locally appointed or elected school boards.
- f. Improved standards for certification and continuous review of principals and teachers, with supportive services to help them keep abreast of today's problems and techniques, in order to insure the highest standards of teaching in every school district.
- g. To maintain a high professional scale of salaries for teachers.
- h. Enactment of legislation by the General Assembly which provides specific procedures for school boards conducting collective bargaining negotiations, excluding binding arbitration, and resolving impasses, with all school personnel covered by collective bargaining agreements.

6. EDUCATIONAL QUALITY PROGRAMS

- a. Support of legislation which would improve the quality of education.
- b. Retention and extension of the kindergarten, junior colleges, state colleges and universities as integral parts of the public school program.
- c. Support of early childhood education.
- d. Support the development of school library and media programs.
- e. Support monitoring the use of instructional materials which require students to view and/or read commercial advertisements.
- f. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for career and vocational education.

7. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for the protection, health and welfare of children and youth.
- b. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for improvement of the protection, health and welfare of children in substitute care.
- c. Support of adoption laws and procedures designed to protect the welfare of children.
- d. Improvement and enforcement of child labor laws and opposition to lowering the age limit in the present Child Labor Law.
- e. Strengthening of existing laws and enforcement procedures designed to deter the sales and distribution of narcotics, hallucinatory agents, alcohol and dangerous drugs to children and youth.
- f. Support state legislation which provides proper laws in regard to sexual crimes against children.
- g. Support of laws and adequate programs to prevent child abuse and abduction, and to protect the welfare of abused, missing and exploited children.
- h. Support of programs and services to prevent and treat psychological and emotional exploitation of children and youth.

8. SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for health, welfare, recreation and cultural arts services for children and youth.
- b. Support of school-community cultural arts activities.
- c. Adequate consideration of the physical abilities of all children and youth in the use of, and availability to, public places.

9. ENVIRONMENT

- a. Improved legislation that will set and enforce standards and appropriate funds that are adequate to control air, water and noise pollution, and other environmental deterioration within the state.
- b. Protection, retention and extension of National and State parks and conservation areas.

10. HEALTH

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support to improve the health of children and youth.
- b. Enforcement of immunization laws for all Illinois school children.
- c. Extension of clinical facilities and services (medical, public health, psychological and guidance) staffed with qualified personnel.
- d. Support of an increase in the dissemination of information and services pertaining to HIV/AIDS.
- e. Support of laws establishing adequate treatment and research facilities for narcotics addiction, and the use of hallucinatory agents, alcohol and dangerous drugs among children and youth.

11. JUVENILE JUSTICE

- a. Adequate programs both on the state and local levels for the prevention of juvenile delinquency.
- b. Adequate programs and services for early intervention for juvenile offenders.
- c. Adequate treatment and separation of dependent and delinquent children at both state and local levels in institutions and in juvenile court.
- d. Original and exclusive jurisdiction over children under age 18 to be in the juvenile court.
- e. Support of laws and regulations in our justice system that address the differing needs of youth as they continue to mature from age 18 through and including age 24.

12. SAFETY

- a. Improvement and enforcement of safety laws, and of highway and traffic laws, to protect children and youth.
- b. Support of comprehensive fire safety and burn injury programs.
- c. Support of laws, services and adequate programs designed to protect the safety and welfare of children in the school buildings and on school grounds.
- d. Support of laws and procedures designed to protect the safety and welfare of children and youth in public amusement places.