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Dear Colleague:

Tuesday November 4th, is Election Day, the opportunity for voters to express their support or opposition for candidates' positions, platforms and/or records.

The BTF Council of Delegates has endorsed candidates in certain races where our endorsement was requested by the candidate. The Political Action Committee and Executive Committee reviewed the candidates' written / interview responses on important teacher/education issues and recommended endorsements to the Council as is our established procedure.

In the gubernatorial race, our endorsement is for **Howie Hawkins, the Green Party** candidate. Although clearly the underdogs, Mr. Hawkins and his running mate, **Brian Jones**, a former New York City teacher, oppose the Common Core Standards, teacher evaluations tied to standardized tests and the weakening or elimination of tenure and Triborough provisions of the Taylor Law. Our endorsement makes a statement by standing up for our principles and sends a message to the other candidates that their positions do not reflect ours. As you can see from the New York State Allies for Public Education's news release emailed to you and on the BTF website, www.btfny.org (News & Alerts), the other candidates oppose most of our positions.

Some have indicated that they will probably not vote for any candidate in the Governor's race. Please remember that if you choose to not vote that will increase the percentage of the vote for Governor Cuomo; whereas, if you vote for **Howie Hawkins** and **Brian Jones** on **the Green Party** line, the Governor's percentage will be decreased.

For **U.S. House of Representative, 26th District**, we have supported incumbent **Brian Higgins**. He has been an outstanding member of Congress who works tirelessly on behalf of the Buffalo Public Schools and the City of Buffalo.

New York State Senate endorsees are: 60th District **Marc Panepinto**, 61st District **Elaine Altman**, and 63rd District **Tim Kennedy**.

60th State Senate - Marc Panepinto is the endorsed Democratic candidate. He is a practicing labor attorney and an adjunct professor at Cornell. His wife is a former Buffalo Board of Education member who was very supportive of BTF and who is currently a Supreme Court Judge. Two of their daughters attend Buffalo Public Schools. The third graduated from City Honors last June. He supports the retention of seniority as the basis for lay-offs and the continuation of Triborough guarantees. He states that charter schools are an attempt to privatize and should be required to have a student population like that of the District from which they draw. He supports full funding for public schools and the reform of Common Core by delaying high stakes testing and giving teachers more input. While there has been controversy relating to a recent mailing, you should remember that he had nothing to do with it and objected to it as we did.

This race will determine whether the New York State Senate Majority will be supportive of our issues e.g. APPR reform, Common Core, Charter schools, etc. It is critical that you vote for Marc Panepinto so that we can end the oppressive insanity that now prevails.

61st State Senate - Elaine Altman is a Ken-Ton teacher, the Director of the Kenmore Staff Development Center and Vice President of the Ken-Ton Teachers Association. She is thoroughly familiar and supportive of our issues - including Common Core, high stakes testing and public school financing. There is no one better to speak for our issues as a member of the State Legislature than one of us.

(O V E R)

63rd State Senate – Tim Kennedy is the incumbent in this race. He has publicly supported our initiatives and has spoken at our rallies this fall supporting our contract negotiations and against the Board resolution seeking the re-opening of charter school applications for Buffalo by S.E.D.

New York State Assembly endorsements were awarded in: 143rd Assembly District **Mark Mazurek**, 149th Assembly District **Sean Ryan**.

143rd Assembly – Mark Mazurek, is the endorsed Democratic candidate. The seat is open due to the resignation of the previous Assemblyman. Mr. Mazurek is a businessman making his first run for office. He is a staunch supporter of public education and believes that it is important to invest in education and teachers to make the public schools better. He stated that mandated standardized testing and assessments are taking time away from teaching. Charter schools are not the answer because they do not have a student population which is reflective of the District in which they are located as they cherry pick their students.

149th Assembly – Sean Ryan, has been an outstanding Assemblyman. He is supportive of our issues, reaches out for BTF input and is accessible. He opposes vouchers and tuition tax credits. He has attended and spoken at our rallies. He is a true friend of Buffalo teachers.

For Judicial races, the ratings by the Erie County Bar Association the Women's Bar Association and the Minority Bar Association ratings are reviewed for those candidates who seek BTF endorsement.

Chief Judge City Court – Honorable Thomas P. Amodeo, is unopposed for re-election and received the highest ratings from all three Bar Associations.

New York State Supreme Court – Honorable Donna M. Siwek, a current Supreme Court Justice and **Honorable E. Jeanette Ogden**, a current Buffalo City Court Judge were cross-endorsed by the Republican and Democratic parties. Both received ratings of well-qualified, outstanding and superior by the three Bar Associations.

Elections are our opportunity to influence the future, ours, our families and those of the children we teach. Please take this opportunity and vote on **Tuesday, November 4th**.

We sincerely hope you will vote for the BTF endorsed candidates and encourage your friends, family and neighbors to do so also.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,


Philip Rumore,
President


Edith D. LeWin, Chairperson
Political Action Committee

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