

# Scott WAGNER FOR STATE SENATE



I am asked repeatedly why nothing has gotten done in Harrisburg. Here is the number one reason: **The Public Sector Unions.** Of the public sector unions, the PSEA (Pennsylvania State Education Association - teacher's union) is the most powerful union in Harrisburg.

It is a tragedy that with a Republican Governor, Republican Senate and Republican House that paycheck protection, pension reform, liquor privatization and property tax reform did not get passed.

Below is an email from the PSEA President, Mike Crossey, claiming victory over the defeat of these much needed reforms that I have been fighting for in Harrisburg. **This is a slap in the face for every taxpayer.** By sending this email out on July 3rd, 2014, the PSEA has declared war on Pennsylvania Taxpayers.

I have a lot of respect for teachers and for the job they do educating our children. I have friends who are teachers and I genuinely believe they are good people, but they have no idea who they're being represented by and how their dues are being spent.

## Government Unions Use Dues For Politics.

Government unions spend dues money on mailers in support of candidates, lobbying, and TV and radio ads. The PSEA sent mailers to Pennsylvania voters endorsing Barack Obama in the last Presidential election. The PSEA has sent newsletters mocking Governor Corbett to fundraise for its PAC. **In fact, some PSEA union members may be outraged to know that some of their dues were sent to Wisconsin to support the recall of Gov. Scott Walker.**

The PSEA has over 185,000 members and will collect almost \$100 million in dues from its members in 2014 through the use of taxpayer resources. That is what we're up against in Harrisburg.

Thank you,

Scott  
Scott Wagner



**From:** Mike Crossey <noreply@psea.org>;  
**Subject:** State budget scorecard - YOU made the DIFFERENCE  
**Sent:** Thu, Jul 3, 2014 6:24:08 PM

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### State Budget Scorecard: YOU made the DIFFERENCE

Once again, Gov. Tom Corbett and his legislative allies attempted to ram through a range of attacks on our schools, our students, and our profession, along with the state budget. Thanks to the tireless advocacy and resolve of PSEA members like YOU, we were able to beat back the worst of them. There remains no doubt that we need to send Tom Corbett packing in the fall and elect Tom Wolf as our next governor to win much-needed victories for public education. As governor, Tom Wolf will reverse Gov. Corbett's nearly \$1 billion in school funding cuts, protect our jobs, and defend the pensions we've earned and paid for. You have done an outstanding job of speaking up for public education, and, believe me, legislators are listening. Thousands of your emails, your calls, and your letters made it clear that educators and support professionals oppose these attacks and that legislators have an obligation to protect our public schools and the students who learn there. Thank you for all you do each and every day. Here is a look at what your advocacy has accomplished:

- **Pensions:** Gov. Corbett made a strong push for passage of a pension proposal that fails to fix the problems that need fixing. Pension experts said the plan, sponsored by Rep. Mike Tobash, would NOT save the pension system much money or help balance the budget but would make drastic cuts to retirement benefits for younger teachers, bus drivers, nurses, and other public employees.

**The result:** REJECTED.

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Office, so that we can build a budget that relies less on short-term budget fixes and more on long-term, fair, and sustainable revenues.

What happens next remains to be seen. Gov. Corbett has so far refused to sign the budget, citing his disappointment that the Legislature has not adopted a flawed pension bill. During a July 2 press conference, he said that he was still considering all his options, including a veto of the budget.

- **Payroll deduction:** Right-wing groups spent an incredible amount of time and money over the past five months attacking our right to pay association dues through voluntary payroll deductions. In the waning days of the summer session, a group of legislators made a last-ditch effort to force a vote on this bill.

**The result:** REJECTED.

When it counted, you flooded the General Assembly with letters, phone calls, and emails calling out this campaign for what it really is: a politically driven attack aimed at bullying middle-class Pennsylvanians like us. You explained how it unfairly singled out teachers, nurses, and public safety workers by prohibiting their voluntary payroll deductions – but continued to allow deductions that go to insurance companies, big banks, and financial companies.

In the end, neither the House nor the Senate had the votes to get it done.

- **Teacher furloughs:** Legislators in the House tried to advance a bill that would give Pennsylvania school boards free reign to furlough you and your colleagues at will without regard to seniority.

**The result:** REJECTED.

Special interest groups, with the backing of deep-pocketed corporate donors, tried to use Pennsylvania's school funding crisis to take away our seniority protections. Their bill would have allowed school boards to furlough employees for economic reasons and tie furloughs to the new educator evaluation system that has not even been fully implemented yet.

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Even when Gov. Corbett threatened to take hostages – school funding for Philadelphia and the budget itself – in order to get this bad pension bill passed, lawmakers from both parties stood on principle and refused to give in. In the end, leaders in both the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Senate adjourned for the summer without voting on it. In the words of Republican Rep. Gene DiGirolamo, there were “too many unanswered questions about this proposal.”

This happened because of YOU.

You called and emailed your lawmakers to tell them that this pension plan fails to address the real problem – the cost of paying the debt that employers now owe after putting their pension payments on a credit card over a decade ago, while you continued to make your full contributions.

- **School funding and the state budget:** This year marked one of the most difficult state budget debates we have faced in years. A \$1.5 billion funding gap threatened to erase even the modest increases in school funding that lawmakers were proposing.

**The result:** ADOPTED – BUT AWAITING GOV. CORBETT'S SIGNATURE.

The House and Senate sent a budget to Gov. Corbett on June 30 that takes a small step in the right direction by increasing education funding, but much more needs to be done to reverse Gov. Corbett's nearly \$1 billion in cuts to public school classrooms.

Unfortunately, the largest chunk of new school funding in the budget, \$100 million, will be distributed with strings attached through the Governor's “Ready to Learn” block grant. However, we succeeded in loosening many of the strings Gov. Corbett wanted to attach to the use of these grant funds, making the program more flexible and effective for school districts.

This budget also skirts the most difficult decisions by raiding special funds, using a variety of accounting gimmicks, and inflating next year's revenue estimates. It is a testament to why we need Tom Wolf in the Governor's

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You fought back, telling your lawmakers to focus on finalizing a state budget rather than making it easier to fire good teachers. The bill languished in committee.

The Senate is scheduled to return for a brief voting session on Tuesday, July 8, and is expected to take up the following issues:

- **Special education:** Lawmakers have spent several months debating legislation that enacts a new special education funding formula, based on the recommendations of a bipartisan legislative commission that received input from parents, educators, and special education experts, including PSEA.

**The result:** APPROVED IN HOUSE; AWAITING SENATE ACTION AND GOV. CORBETT'S SIGNATURE.

The House passed the new formula, providing a fair and equitable distribution of special education funding that more closely reflects the actual costs of educating students with special needs. The budget also includes a \$20 million increase in special education funds – after six years of flat funding and rising costs for school districts.

- **Charter school pension double dip:** Since the charter school law passed in 1997, school districts have been required to include in their payments to charter and cyber school operators an amount equal to 100 percent of a charter's employee pension costs. On top of this, charter operators receive a reimbursement from the state for 50 percent of pension costs. This means that charter school operators get paid twice.

**The result:** APPROVED IN HOUSE; AWAITING SENATE ACTION AND GOV. CORBETT'S SIGNATURE.

The House put an end to the pension double dip for charter operators in a companion bill to the budget.

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