



Access to Professional Organizations

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Teachers benefit from a relationship with their professional education associations. Currently, there exists a professional organization for every area of public education, evidence of the important role that professional organizations now play in education.

As SC continues to struggle with a shrinking budget, teachers seek electronic resources for ideas and material to enhance lesson plans and teaching strategies. Professional organizations that support public school teachers provide many of these resources, but free material is often reserved for those teachers who belong to the organization. In addition, shrinking budgets have caused school districts to purchase fewer textbooks and instructional material and they are sending teachers to the Internet for these resources. Teachers reach out to their professional organization first for the resources they need.

There is a financial benefit to South Carolina when teachers have access to their professional organization and the resources they provide.

The SC Department of Education's teacher website at <http://www.scteachers.org> provides a Resource page to make teachers aware of their professional organizations. The SCEA believes the important role professional organizations play in education is evident and teachers need convenient and unrestricted access to their professional organization as a partner in their professional growth.

Currently, 8-11-83 of the South Carolina Code of Laws provides some workers in South Carolina with access to their professional organizations, but teachers are not included. The SCEA believes this is disadvantageous to teachers, and that teachers should have equal access.

The SCEA supports state legislation and local school district policies that provide teachers with convenient access to professional organizations. This legislation would provide for the following:

Convenient Access to Professional Organizations

A teacher may sign and deliver to the office of the superintendent a form promulgated by the District authorizing deduction of unified membership dues to their professional association. Such authorization shall continue in effect from year to year unless revoked in writing between June 1 and September 1 of any year. Pursuant to such authorization, the school district shall

deduct one-tenth (1/10) of such dues from the regular salary check of the teacher each month for ten months. Deductions for employees who sign such authorization after the commencement of the school year shall be appropriately pro-rated to complete payments by the end of the school year.

SECTION 8-11-83, AS AMENDED, OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA is amended to read:

The Comptroller General and all other state agencies, upon request of employees of the State, shall make deductions from the compensation of the employees for the payment of membership dues for the South Carolina State Employees' Association, the South Carolina Troopers' Association and The South Carolina Education Association. The Comptroller General, state agencies and school districts shall pay the respective associations all amounts collected or withheld. Retirees from a state agency also may have withheld from their state retirement benefits their membership dues for the South Carolina State Employees' Association, the South Carolina Troopers' Association and The South Carolina Education Association.

Dues for the South Carolina Law Enforcement Officers' Association and The South Carolina Education Association may also be deducted from the compensation of state employees and retirees and paid over to these associations in the same manner as other dues under this section are deducted and paid. The same restrictions and conditions as apply to the other deductions under this section also apply to the deductions of dues for the South Carolina Law Enforcement Officers' Association.

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