



What is COPE?

- **COPE** stands for **C**ommittee **O**n **P**olitical **E**ducation. It's our union's Political Action Committee. We don't use membership dues to contribute to candidates and ballot initiatives, so we need a separate fund to fully participate in the political process.
- **COPE** gives us a fighting chance in the era of unfettered spending by anti-union, anti-teacher Super PACS (google Citizens United for a better understanding of this). As unionized educators, people power is undoubtedly our strength, but we also need financial resources to support, protect and improve public education.

What has COPE done for us lately?

- **COPE** helped pass Proposition 55, an extension on the millionaires' tax that will help stabilize school funding across the state for 12 more years.
- **COPE** helped re-elect state legislators who support unions and listen to teachers.

Why join COPE?

- To defend our right to due process, which is currently under attack.
- To defend our legal right to bargain our working conditions, which is currently under attack.
- To defend our right to approve voluntary deductions so we can continue to have powerful local unions and a Political Action Committee to fight back! This is currently under attack.
- To help elect our state and local leaders who set the policies we live and work under. Here are a few concrete examples: Our elected school board members set the District's negotiating parameters (how much of a raise they can agree to); Our elected state legislators introduce, support, or oppose bills that govern state education policies and directly affect the education budget; Our elected county supervisors appoint the agricultural commissioners that have the power to improve policies for pesticide use around our schools.

(Pony your form to the union office, drop it off, or give to your site rep. to turn in)



PVFT Committee on Political Education (COPE)

Name	School site	Non-work email
Street Address	City	Zip
Signature	Date	

I hereby authorize the Pajaro Valley Unified School District to deduct from my salary the sum of:

- \$5.00
 \$10.00
 \$15.00
 \$___ (other amount)
 Increase my amount to: \$___

per pay period and forward that amount to the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers, Local 1936 COPE, Committee on Political Education.

- I sign this authorization voluntarily. I understand that PVFT Local 1936 COPE will use this money to make political contributions.
- Contributions to PVFT Local 1936 COPE are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Income Tax purposes.

Why do we need to donate money? We already pay union dues.

COPE is one way for educators to have a voice in the political decision making process at the state and local level. Unions can't use their membership dues to donate to political campaigns, so we have a Committee on Political Education (COPE) to raise the funds needed to support candidates and initiatives that defend public education and its employees.

Does it really help if each person only gives a little bit every month?

Yes! Union members from across the state donate a little bit every month to their local COPE accounts so we can have a collective chance against the billionaires who fund initiatives and candidates that want to gut our union protections, implement unsound instructional and testing practices, and implement policies that make it hard for anyone to want to stay in the profession.

Why do we need to influence who our state and local leaders are?

Our state legislators write, sponsor and vote on bills that become the laws and policies we have to enforce and enact at the workplace. Our school board trustees set our district policies and make budget decisions that directly affect our working conditions and our students' learning conditions. We want educators to have the resources to help elect state and local folks who understand our issues and are willing to listen to what we have to say.

What are the most pressing current political issues that we're facing in education?

One of the most significant threats we currently face is an ill-informed and well-funded effort to strip us of our due process rights. Simply put, these rights safeguard us from being fired without a legitimate reason, or just cause. Without this, we are "at will" employees and can be let go for almost anything our supervisors decide. We don't have to imagine what would happen if these rights were weakened or eliminated; we just have to look to the roughly 20 states where this has happened in the last few years. These changes lead to test scores dictating who stays and who goes, teachers who cannot advocate for students without fear of becoming unemployed, difficulty retaining quality teachers, a lack of accountability for administrators in providing support for teachers, and a school system that silences the voices of the people who actually do the work of educating our students every day.