



SVFT COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (C.O.P.E.) BYLAWS

Adopted by SVFT Executive Board 4/26/2006

I. MEMBERSHIP

A. Any member of SVFT may be a member of the Committee on Political Education (COPE). To be a member in good standing, members joining for the first time become a member upon completing a COPE membership enrollment form and shall make a financial contribution of at least \$1.00 per month, ten times a year via payroll deduction from the employer to the COPE fund. Should a member quit or resign from COPE, COPE financial contributions shall be made for three (3) consecutive months prior to becoming a member of COPE in good standing.

B. The chair of COPE shall be one of the Vice Presidents of SVFT decided upon by the President, in conjunction with the Executive Committee of the Local, as stipulated in the SVFT constitution. The chair of COPE shall be a member in good standing of COPE at all times.

C. COPE shall be a standing committee of the SVFT Executive Board. COPE shall present a report at each SVFT Executive Board meeting.

II. ENDORSEMENT PROCEDURES

A. COPE shall coordinate endorsement procedures with SVFT's affiliated labor organizations.

B. COPE shall defer to state, national, and local labor council endorsements, subject to exceptions included subsections II.C-E below.

C. SVFT's Executive Board may endorse independently of COPE only if the endorsement is in agreement with state, national, and local labor council affiliates. However, the Executive Board, as its only discretion regarding conflicting endorsements, may only make open endorsements when in disagreement with state, national, and/or local labor council affiliates. In the interest of solidarity and collective labor strength, nothing shall preclude SVFT members and COPE from coordinating with the political efforts of state, national, and/or local labor council affiliates.

D. COPE shall focus its political efforts on issues and political offices most directly linked to the interests of classroom teachers and the objectives outlined in Article II of the SVFT constitution. However, nothing shall preclude COPE from pursuing political interests, as long as such pursuits are in accordance with subsection II.B above.

E. COPE members are free to recruit and pursue political interests, however, interests leading to endorsements and/or financial contributions from COPE, shall be subject to all COPE bylaws.

III. INTERVIEWS OF CANDIDATES FOR ENDORSEMENT(S)



A. COPE shall conduct interviews of candidates for only those political offices directly tied to the governing boards of employer districts of the local's bargaining units. The interview committee shall be comprised of the COPE chair and at least two (2) additional members of COPE in good standing.

B. The COPE chair may make advanced decision(s) to recruit candidate(s) for office(s) if such person(s) is/are member(s) of the local in good standing, AFT member retiree(s) in good standing, or any candidate(s) aligned with SVFT's objectives outlined in Article II. of the SVFT constitution, subject to the approval of SVFT's Executive Board. However, any retroactive COPE endorsements and/or financial contributions are subject to the COPE election bylaws found in section IV. of the COPE bylaws.

C. Prior to any COPE endorsement, all candidates for an office under consideration shall be invited to COPE interviews. The COPE chair shall document all invitations sent to candidates for interview(s) with the local's secretary for archiving.

D. The interview committee shall draft a list of appropriate questions, all of which shall be asked of all candidates. Additional or follow-up questions, if deemed appropriate, may also be asked of the candidates.

E. The interview committee shall interview each candidate separately.

F. The interview committee shall appoint one member to take candidate interview notes that shall include pertinent quotes of candidates and the dates of the interviews. The interview committee shall review and cooperatively edit these notes. These notes shall constitute a report of COPE to SVFT's Executive Board.

G. The interview committee shall make recommendation(s) for endorsements to both the COPE membership and SVFT's Executive Board. The interview committee's recommendation for endorsement shall be simple by majority vote comprised of the members of COPE in good standing who were present during all of the interviews of candidate(s) for office. The polled votes of the COPE members making a recommendation for endorsements following interview(s) of candidate(s) shall be made available to SVFT's Executive Board.

IV. COPE ENDORSEMENT AND/OR SUPPORT ELECTION PROCEDURES.

A. An election of COPE members in good standing shall make final decisions on COPE endorsements and/or support, including financial support and/or publishing the committee's notes on interviews, either whole or in part.

B. The decision shall be made via a majority vote by either the casting of ballots or a meeting of the COPE membership. Decisions made via a meeting of the COPE membership should be conducted only when it is timely in order to effectively carry out endorsements and support of candidates. The will of the majority of those COPE members voting will prevail.



SALINAS VALLEY
FEDERATION OF
T E A C H E R S

21 W. Laurel Drive, Suite 61, Salinas, California 93906
831.442.8234 ♦ Fax 831.442.8563 ♦ www.svft.net

C. Nothing shall preclude COPE from publishing or providing access to lists of endorsements by state, national, and/or the local labor council, provided that the source(s) of such endorsements are clearly identified.

D. Any financial contribution from the local's COPE bank account for any purpose shall be signed by both the COPE chair and the local's treasurer. The treasurer of SVFT shall be the acting COPE treasurer, manage all COPE funds, and submit all required reports to SVFT's Executive Board and to the California Secretary of State.