



The Truth behind POE’s Comparison with OEA

“You Get What You Pay For”

What they say about themselves

Source: 2011 POE Comparison of OEA/NEA

Dues

\$227/ year for professional membership.

Coverage

• \$2,000,000 liability coverage

• Identity theft protection

Legal Services

• Employment protection –NO discretionary screening

• On-staff legal counsel

• Speak directly to an Oklahoma licensed attorney

• Attorney returns legal calls within 24 hours, including holidays and weekends

• Personal legal services at discounted rates through attorney referral program.

Politics & Lobbying

• Does NOT request political affiliation or race

• Does NOT endorse ANY political candidates

• Does NOT give money to ANY political campaign

What they say about us

Source: 2011 POE Comparison of OEA/NEA

Dues

\$450 / year plus mandatory local dues. (source: www.okea.org)

Coverage

• \$1,000,000 liability coverage (source: www.okea.org)

• Identity theft protection (unknown)

Legal Services

• Employment protection (source: www.okea.org)

• On-staff legal counsel (source: www.okea.org)

• Speak to advocacy specialist (not an attorney) (source: www.okea.org)

• Unknown

• Personal legal services at discounted rates through attorney referral program. (source: www.okea.org)

Politics & Lobbying

• Request political affiliation and race (source: membership application)

• Endorses political candidates and uses soft money endorsements (source: www.okea.org, FEC disclosure reports)

• Financially supports political campaigns (source: FEC disclosure reports)

The facts

Dues

• Dues are **determined by a formula** at both the national and state level, and voted on by delegates at the OEA Delegate Assembly and the NEA Representative Assembly. You join all three organizations – local, state and national – because you receive representation and benefits on all three levels.

Coverage

• \$1 million in liability is more than anyone would ever need. Oklahoma **law limits tort claims to \$175,000**. A copy of the policy is provided to every member. (Potential POE members should ask for a copy of their liability policy to compare with OEA’s.)

• **Identity theft protection is offered** through NEA Member Benefits and OEA’s Personal Legal Services Program offers **free assistance** if your identity is stolen.

Legal Services

• OEA created the **gold standard in legal protection**. No organization provides any better representation of its members than OEA.

• **OEA has three in-house attorneys** who are experts in education law. Their work has established legal rights for education employees and they have represented members at every level, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

• OEA advocates are the **first line of defense** for our members, allowing attorneys to get involved only when issues become legal in nature. Advocates help defuse many issues before they ever become employment issues.

• Calls for assistance to the OEA office are **answered immediately** and all OEA staff return calls the same day.

• **OEA provides a Personal Legal Services Program** as part of its membership. Many issues are handled for free, while more serious situations come with five hours of legal consultation and reduced attorney fees thereafter. **In addition**, OEA and NEA offer attorney referral services for certain off-the-job situations, with members receiving a 30 percent discount on attorney fees. *Potential POE members should ask if the legal services offered to their members are provided through the insurance policy, and not through the POE (i.e, up to X dollars for consultation, up to XX dollars for a board hearing, etc.).*

Politics & Lobbying

• On its membership **registration form**, OEA does ask for demographic information. The section is **clearly labeled as “optional,”** and the information is used to better serve our members.

• The OEA Fund for Children and Public Education (OFCPE) does recommend candidates for office, but does not use soft money. Since OFCPE does not participate in federal elections, the **OEA Fund is not required to fill out an FEC report**. The NEA’s Fund, which works in federal campaigns, is different. It, too, follows all the laws regarding participation in elections.

• OFCPE collects **voluntary donations** from members to support the election of friends of education. Only candidates who agree to sit for an interview with members are eligible for a donation. **No dues dollars** are ever given to candidates.

What they say about themselves

Source: 2011 POE Comparison of OEA/NEA

- Representation at State Capitol & D.C.

- ONLY lobbies on educational issues

- Conducts member surveys throughout the year about issues

National Organization

- May join at state level only, or at local level only

- Is not controlled by or sending money to a national group
 - Professional Oklahoma Educators works alongside two national groups that promote and support the independent teacher movement:
 - Concerned Educators Against Forced Unionism
 - Coalition of Independent Education Associations

Collective Bargaining

- Team approach

- Inclusive and open

- Can address issues impacting students and teachers outside of pay and benefits

Other

- Professional Organization – IRS Classification 501(c)(6)

- SmartCard discount card

- Does not accept kick-backs from annuity or insurance companies

What they say about us

Source: 2011 POE Comparison of OEA/NEA

- Representation at State Capitol & D.C.

- Financially supports and lobbies for non-educational social issues (i.e. gay rights, abortion, gun control) (source: NEA financial disclosure report, nea.org)

- Unknown

National Organization – NEA

- MUST join at all levels – state, local, AND national (source: www.okea.org)

- NEA controls state group and supports them financially (source: www.okea.org, NEA financial disclosure report)

Collective Bargaining

- Adversarial “us against them” mentality

- Exclusive and secretive

- Addresses teacher pay and benefits only

Other

- Labor Union – IRS Classification 501(c)(5) (source: NEA IRS letter)

- Discount card (source: www.okea.org)

- Financial gains/payments from annuities/investments

The facts

- **OEA has three lobbyists** on staff who cover the Oklahoma Legislature when it is in session and cover every agency meeting that could have an effect on public education. The NEA lobbies Congress on the behalf of its members and public education. Members participate in lobbying at both levels.

- This accusation quite simply uses **semantics as a scare tactic**. Fact – neither OEA or NEA funds or lobbies for gay rights, abortion or gun control. The NEA has partnered with various agencies on health-related programs for schools, and some of those agencies may provide reproductive counseling, but never has abortion been an issue they’ve “worked on” together. The NEA has partnered with a number of organizations on anti-bullying measures, and some of those organizations represent gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people, but never has the NEA or OEA promoted a gay lifestyle. If you count lobbying for laws to keeps guns off school campuses, then one might be able to claim NEA lobbies for gun control.

- OEA **regularly polls** its members and nonmembers.

National Organization – NEA

- Yes, members join all three organizations – local, state and national – because you receive **representation and benefits on all three levels**.

- Quite frankly, we don’t know what is meant by “...controls state group...” Our board of directors make decisions without influence from the NEA. Our **members**, through the Delegate Assembly, **determine the direction and scope** of our Association. Members of our Board of Directors are elected by the members they represent; our state officers are elected by state-wide election; Oklahoma has two representatives on the NEA Board, both elected by the people (OEA members) whom they represent. Yes, NEA does send money to Oklahoma in support of statewide programs and benefits. These are your dues dollars coming back to serve you. OEA does not accept donations from private foundations to fund programs and services, and therefore is not “beholding” to outside organizations.

Collective Bargaining

- OEA locals utilize all methods of bargaining: **traditional, collaborative and Interest-Based Bargaining**. They also work with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to settle disputes.

- OEA locals **follow the bargaining laws** established by the state legislature, and routinely survey their members prior to bargaining and keep them updated during the process. All members of a bargaining unit are allowed to vote in an election to ratify a collective bargaining agreement.

- As required by law, OEA locals “... **negotiate in good faith** on wages, hours, fringe benefits and other terms and conditions of employment.” As an example of something besides pay and benefits, one local has bargained for a school-district sponsored day care for all employees’ children.

Other

- The **OEA** received exempt status from the IRS in October 1938 and is recognized as a **501(c)(6) “professional organization,”** same as the POE. The NEA is classified as a 501(c)(5) organization.

- Members have **great discounts** through NEA Click & Save, which features savings on dining, travel, shopping and services. In addition, some local associations work with local businesses to offer discounts to their members.

- Any business relationship OEA has is transparent and lawful.