

US FORUM CONNECTION #91, JULY 2011

This publication is intended for your information about issues important to education, women and children. How you choose to use the information included here is up to each individual.

This free newsletter is sponsored by the United States Forum of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is an organization of leading women educators with over 100,000 members. Delta Kappa Gamma members wishing to subscribe to this FREE newsletter should send a request to Angela.Bedenbaugh@usm.edu. We urge you to share this newsletter with other interested individuals who are not members of Delta Kappa Gamma or members who do not subscribe to this publication. This publication is intended for your information about issues important to education, women and children.

RESOLUTIONS FROM REGIONALS PROMOTING THE ARTS IN SCHOOLS PRESERVING SOCIAL SECURITY NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR

PROMOTING THE ARTS IN SCHOOLS

PLEASE NOTE THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROPOSAL IS AT CHAPTER, STATE AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.

Proposal/Resolution: The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International endorses and supports ARTS education in schools.

Rationale: Funding for ARTS education in schools has been significantly reduced. A balanced education at all levels (K-12) includes a need for music, dance, theater, and the visual arts. These contribute to the education and creative spirit needed to augment other subjects. The Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) (2002) identified the Arts as a core academic subject in federal law. "The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of the nation, is close to the center of a nation's purpose—and is a test to the quality of a nation's civilization." - John F. Kennedy

The ARTS Definition: The Arts—dance, music, theater and visual arts—are basic and core subject areas, and are essential to the well-rounded education of the whole child, that quality instruction in the ARTS should be provided by Arts specialists and classroom teachers, supported by partnerships with professional organizations and community programs in the arts.

Instruction based on these partnerships will enhance student literacy, and meaningful and purposeful educational learning opportunities supporting preparation of 21st century citizens.

Implementation: This will occur on the three levels of the Society.

1. The International Excellence in Education Committee will investigate ARTS education, research information, and post it on the Society's web site.
2. States will determine what resources and guidelines are currently available. These may include curriculum guidelines, alliance for arts education organizations and state arts commissions. State organizations will identify and disseminate information on these programs and funding sources to chapters.
3. Individual chapters will advocate for the ARTS, identify resources available in communities and participate as trainers, art docents, or volunteers in schools.

*Although this resolution was voted on and formally adopted by a show of hands at the NE Regional Conference, it was agreed to at the other three regional conferences. Alpha Sigma State (Washington) was the source of the information and was responsible for seeing that information was presented at all four regional conferences.

PRESERVING SOCIAL SECURITY

Although this resolution was passed only at the Northeast Regional Conference, strong concern about preservation of Social Security and Medicare was expressed by many attendees at the Forum Session at the other three regional conferences.

Northeast Regional Resolution: Preserving Social Security

Proposal/Resolution: The Northeast Regional U.S. Forum of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International supports Social Security as a safety net for the American People and urges legislation that protects Social Security in its current form.*

Rationale: As the United States legislature works to balance the federal budget and come up with a plan for reducing the national debt social programs, including Social Security, are in danger. Social Security has been an effective means for providing a safety net for the family members of deceased or disabled individuals in addition to providing a defined-benefit retirement and disability plan for all individuals. For many, Social Security is an essential source of income. Approximately one-third of Social Security benefits are not retirement benefits, but are benefits paid to disabled individuals and survivors of deceased workers.** Two-thirds of seniors receiving Social Security benefits receive at least half of their monthly income from Social Security, while one-third rely on Social Security for at least 90% of their monthly income. Eliminating Social Security or changing its format may very well result in a reduction or elimination of benefits that will be damaging to present and future recipients. It is estimated that without Social Security, half of seniors would be living in poverty, a percent consistent with the above statistics and historical data from before the implementation of Social Security. Although we recognize the benefits of a balanced budget and reduction to the national debt, we do not believe that these goals should be met on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens.

Society purposes four and six direct the Society “to initiate, endorse and support desirable legislation or other suitable endeavors in the interests of education and women educators,” and “to inform the members of current economic, social, political and educational issues so that they may participate effectively in a world society.”[1] We believe that the preservation of Social Security is of vital interest to women educators who often rely on the benefits of Social Security, and to the children and families to whom we provide an education. Poverty and financial insecurity effects children’s ability to focus on learning. Social Security provides a safety net for many who would live in poverty were it not for the benefits that Social Security provides. It is for these reasons that we were compelled to act. Because “the U.S. Forum is dedicated to being an advocate for children by implementing actions which enable change and improvement in social institutions, systems, legislation, and practices that impose hardships or impacts negatively on individuals, groups or families,”[2] we believe the U.S. Forum is the appropriate body to communicate our support for the protection of Social Security.

Implementation: Delta Kappa Gamma Society International and the United States Forum will support this resolution in the ways outlined below.

1. This issue will be addressed by at least one session at the National Legislative Seminar (NLS) of United States Forum to be held in Washington, DC March 18-21, 2012. Registration forms for NLS can be found at <http://deltakappagamma.org/US-Forum/documents/files/NLS%20Reg%20Form%202012.doc>

2. The United States Forum Steering Committee will share this resolution with the other regions of the US Forum at each region’s next meeting.

2. An article about Social Security and Medicare will be published in the August or September issue of the U.S. Forum Connection, the Forum’s newsletter, educating members about the state of Social Security and the importance of protecting Social Security in its current form and, following current practice. This newsletter will be posted on the U. S. Forum web site.

* This resolution was passed by a majority show of hands at the Northeast Regional U.S. Forum Thursday, July 21, 2011 at the Northeast Regional Conference in Hershey, PA.

** Source for all Social Security statistics cited in this document: National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare (NCPSSM) (2011). *The Truth about Social Security*. Washington, DC: NCPSSM.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR

The National Legislative Seminar is slated to be held at the Comfort Inn in the DC area March 18-21. The registration form is available at <http://deltakappagamma.org/US-Forum/documents/files/NLS%20Reg%20Form%202012.doc>. We have negotiated an extremely good rate for the guest rooms. Check future issues of the U.S. Forum for information on speakers. As mentioned above NLS will be addressing Social Security and Medicare issues.

CONTACT ADDRESSES FOR GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

U.S. GOVERNMENT CONTACT INFORMATION can be obtained through **Congressional Switchboard [1-866-327-8670](tel:1-866-327-8670)** (this is a toll free number). You can contact your Congressman and Senator through this number without paying long distance charges.

<http://www.house.gov/> for members of the House of Representatives <http://www.senate.gov/> for members of the U.S. Senate

White House [1-202-456-1111](tel:1-202-456-1111)

Telephone numbers for the White House switchboard [202-224-3121](tel:202-224-3121) or [202-225-3121](tel:202-225-3121)

STATE GOVERNMENT CONTACT INFORMATION can be obtained through <http://www.emailyourgovernor.com/> Information available at this site allows contact with governors, members of the state legislature, state supreme court, congressional delegation and state agencies such as the Education Department, Attorney General, Motor Vehicles Department and Voter Registration. PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME OF THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OUT OF DATE

INFORMATION ON HOW YOUR CONGRESSMAN VOTED ON KEY BILLS

<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/111/bills/>

FIVE CONSTITUENT CONTACTS WILL CAUSE A LEGISLATOR TO PAY SERIOUS ATTENTION TO A GIVEN ISSUE.

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