

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

The Presidential Campaign Takes a New Turn

With the announcement of candidate Romney's vice-presidential running mate last week, the 2012 campaign took a new turn and voters in November will have clear ideological choices. According to the political pundits, it's the first time

**Republican Candidates
Romney & Ryan**



in many years that the ideological and philosophical lines have been so clearly drawn between the two candidates.

As the election draws nearer, you'll be asked to



**Democratic Candidates
Obama & Biden**

be an informed voter and make the choice for the candidates that most clearly align with your priorities for the country, your principles and philosophy.

Both campaigns have put out ideas and "plans" and you'll see those solidify after the national conventions that will take place shortly. SECA states will host both of those conventions.

The **Republican National Convention** will take

place on August 27-30, 2012 in Tampa, FL. The **Democratic National Convention** will take place on September 3-6, 2012 in Charlotte, NC.

The conventions will do two primary things:

1) **Select the "official" party candidate.** All candidates are "presumed candidates" at this time.

2) **Adopt a party platform** on which the campaigns will be based.

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Want to Know More?

If you'd like to know more about the National Conventions, go to these websites:

Democratic
<http://www.demconvention.com/>

Republican
<http://www.gopconvention2012.com/>

Why Have National Conventions?

National conventions are designed to accomplish three primary goals according to *Presidential Elections in the United States: A Primer*.

- 1) Nomination of candidates for the office of President and Vice-President.
- 2) Formulation and adoption of a statement of party principles—the platform.
- 3) Adoption of rules and procedures governing party activities, particularly the nomination process for presidential candidates for the next cycle.

“As initially prescribed by the Constitution, the election of the President was left to electors chosen by the states.

Final authority for selecting the President still rests with the electoral college, which comprises electors from each state equal in number to the state's total representation in the House and Senate.

All but two states award electoral votes on a winner-take-all basis to the candidate with a plurality of the state's popular vote.”

At this point in the process (prior to the conventions), Obama and Romney are still “**presumptive**

candidates.” For 2012, Mitt Romney and Barack Obama have secured enough votes in the state primaries to be elected as the party's candidates, but it's not official until the state delegates cast their votes at the convention. Once those votes are cast, the “official” candidates go into full campaign mode, culminating in the election in November.

If you'd like to learn more go to <http://www.ifes.org/~media/Files/Publications/VRC/Civic%20Education/2000/CE02746/CE02746.pdf> for a copy of the *Primer*.

South Well Represented at the GOP Convention



Fallin
Oklahoma

Haley
S Carolina



Scott
Florida

a list of potential speakers in Tampa, and the South is well represented in that list.

Current Southern Governors **Mary Fallin**, **Nikki Haley** and **Rick Scott** join former Governors **Jeb**

Bush of **Florida** and **Mike Huckabee** of **Arkansas** as potential speakers in Tampa, FL.

Other speakers include:

- ◆ Ted Cruz, former Solicitor General of Texas
- ◆ San Olen, Attorney General of Georgia
- ◆ Pam Bondi, Attorney General of Florida
- ◆ Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky.

The planners of the Republican National Convention have released

Race to the Top District Competition Applications Available

On August 13th, the U.S. Department of Education announced that the 2012 Race to the Top applications are now finalized and available. These funds are available to LEAs (Local Education Agencies) or school districts and will assist “*in implementing local reforms that will personalize learning, close achievement gaps and take full advantage of 21st century tools that prepare each student*

for college and their careers.”

There is no requirement in the application to include early learning; however, according to **ChildCare Aware of America**, there are several areas in which early learning could be included.

Absolute Priorities. Selection Criteria, (E)3, LEA-wide reform and change

Continuous Improvement, (E) (3) Performance Measures

Competitive Preference Priority

An **Intent to Apply letter** must be submitted by August 30, 2012 and **applications** are due October 30, 2012. Go to <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/index.html> for more info.

It's the Campaign Season: Non-Profits, Be Careful!

Operating as a non-profit (501-c3) as defined by the IRS gives you many advantages –not the least of which is that you don't pay federal taxes. However, it does restrict your ability to participate in political campaigns, and you need to make sure that you're participating appropriately if you are active in this year's presidential campaign.

501-c3 organizations are PROHIBITED from endorsing political candidates or participating in a political campaign.

This doesn't mean that you can't participate as an individual in the campaigns but you must be very careful to ensure that it's **YOU** as an individual that's endorsing or participating. You want to make sure that your organizational affiliation is not part of a discussion or endorsement.

Failure to ensure that your organization is not in the business of endorsing political candidates (on any level of state and federal politics) could mean that the IRS could revoke your 501-c3 status. This has

recently been tested with some religious groups that have endorsed candidates.

If you need more information, SECA has a short Policy Brief, *Non-profits & Political Advocacy*, that will provide some information. It can be found at

www.southernearlychildhood.org/upload/file/Public%20Policy%20Docs/Non-profits%20and%20Lobbying.pdf. Read what the IRS has to say at <http://www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/article/0,,id=163395,00.html>

Quality Rated: Georgia's New System

In a press release on August 1, 2012, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced that the 700th early learning program had enrolled in **Quality Rated**, Georgia's new quality rating system.

The agency noted that, in only six months, they had met their goal of enrolling 700 programs during the first year of **Quality Rated**.

The new voluntary system is designed to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Programs that meet the **Quality Rated** system criteria meet standards that exceed the state's minimum licensing requirements.

According to DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle, "*Governor Deal has clearly communicated his vision for a*

state where children attend quality early care and education programs that support the whole child and prepare them

for ongoing success in life." The **Quality Rated** system includes financial incentives for programs to achieve higher levels of quality. **Source:** <http://decalfga.gov/documents/attachments/qualityrated700.pdf>



Governor Deal

Update: West Virginia and Child Care Subsidies

In the July issue of *Public Policy Notes*, we included an article on changes that were coming to the child care subsidy system in West Virginia. During the last 4 weeks, some of the changes have been put on hold. Governor Tomblin asked DHHS to drop plans to restrict eligibility for the program and to freeze enrollment in the program (slated to begin August 1st.) The increased co-pays for families were

implemented as planned on August 1st.

Following is the July 27th statement posted on the Governor's website: "*Because this program is important to thousands of working West Virginia families I have lifted the freeze on the childcare subsidy program—allowing qualified families to enter this program. We need to strike a reasonable balance between access to and quality of*

childcare while placing a priority on funding services for the families and children who need it most. Over the next several months I will be working with parents, childcare providers, members of the legislature and staff within the Department of Health and Human Services to share ideas about how to sustain this critical program for our families." **Source:** <http://www.governor.wv.gov/media>

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Southern Early Childhood Association



"A Voice for Southern
Children"

We're on the Web!
www.southernearlychildhood.org

How to Use This Newsletter

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

Welfare Waivers: The Latest Campaign Issue

On July 12, 2012, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a memorandum to administrators of the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) program that will allow states to modify their definition of work requirements under the welfare law.

In 1996, President Clinton signed into law the welfare reform bill that created TANF. The bill was a bi-partisan effort, shepherded by then Speaker Newt Gingrich. Title IV, Part A of Section 1115 of the Social Security Act specified "that the purposed of the act was to increase flexibility of states in operating a program designed to:

- I. Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.*
- II. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.*
- III. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies.*
- IV. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.*

Within the Act that created TANF, very specific work require-

ments were stated and definitions of acceptable work related activities were included.

With the offer of waivers, the ideological battle on the campaign trail has intensified. It remains to be seen what type of waivers will be allowed by HHS and how those will affect potential work requirements. The debate is whether waivers will weaken work requirements for welfare recipients.

To read a copy of the memorandum, go to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/policy/im-ofa/2012/im201203/im201203.html>