

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Wrapping Up 2016: From SECA's Executive Director

December 2016

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Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection.

Winston Churchill

As 2016 draws to a close, we not only celebrate the holidays and family but take time from our busy lives to slow down and reflect on the events of the past year.

This year has been a "civics" lesson as we spent the year in a contentious and surprising presidential campaign. Recent history can't produce a more clear-cut choice between the two candidates, their philosophies and personal histories.

We had the establishment candidate with years of public service behind her and the anti-establishment candidate whose credentials were based upon business acumen and personality.

The *electoral college* became a major factor in deciding who would be the next president and it ultimately worked much as it was designed to work. The popular vote was overridden by the electoral vote system and larger, populous states were on equal footing with smaller, rural states. In 2016, a voting constituency,

middle class working individuals in small, rural states, carried as much weight as the larger urban populations on the East and West coasts.

As we enter 2017, it's essential for us to remember that nothing is all good or all bad....there's always some middle ground.

Change is the only constant and it can be viewed as an opportunity or a challenge. As the dialogue begins with the new administration:

- ◆ Are there ways to "make our case" that will resonate with the new leadership?
- ◆ Can we find new rationale for investing and supporting our causes and priorities?
- ◆ Can we, as individuals, take up the mantel to ensure that our voices are heard?
- ◆ **Can SECA become "the voice for Southern children" as this dialogue begins?**

2017 will be a year of change...it's inevitable. Will we be ready to influence the debates and the decisions being made?

"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

Abraham Lincoln

Will you be ready to participate in the dialogue, informed with the latest news, and trained to "make your case"? SECA will continue to provide you with the tools that you'll need to advocate effectively and we look forward to working with you to ensure that the South's children and families are represented as the work begins.

[Winston Churchill, BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2016. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/w/winston_churchill.html, accessed December 19, 2016](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/w/winston_churchill.html)
[Abraham Lincoln, BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2016. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/abraham_lincoln.html, accessed December 19, 2016.](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/abraham_lincoln.html)

Coming in 2017

In deference to the busy lives of our members during the holidays, we've decided to provide you with a two page, hopefully thought provoking, look at the year that is ending. With the beginning of 2017, there will be a wealth of information that you'll need to be an informed advocate. Beginning in January, you'll receive information on:

- ◆ The President-elect's picks for cabinet positions and Senate confirmation hearings.
- ◆ An update on the federal budget process as Congress debates the 2018 fiscal year.
- ◆ Significant policy shifts as the new administration takes office.

Stay tuned!

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"A Voice for Southern
Children"

How to Use Public Policy Notes

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.

This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information

that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at

<http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/public-policy/public-policy-notes/>

to receive notice of its availability each month.

Where We Are Today: A Final Look

Before recessing for the holiday break, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution to keep the doors to the federal government open and the agencies operating; however, it's only a temporary fix and will be revisited in early 2017. Budget battles await.

President Obama is finishing out his 8 years as President and he and his staff are working to finish business in 2016, prior to the inauguration of the new President.

On Monday, December 19, 2016, the electors met in each state to cast their votes

for the next President. In spite of some attempts to sway electors to change their votes, Donald Trump was elected by the Electoral College and will assume the presidency in 2017. Congress will ratify the Electoral College vote in January 2017.

A new and different world order may emerge in 2017, and America's role in that process is still to be defined by the new administration. We can only hope that the final days of the civil war in Syria are near and that the civilians who have been caught in that horrendous conflict will quickly see the end. What will 2017 bring for the children caught in the middle?

Terrorism remains a constant and our friends around the world haven't escaped from the opportunistic events such as those in a Christmas market in Germany. We'll continue to face this threat in 2017.

The economy appears to be mending and the stock market is going for historic highs. American consumer confidence appears to be on an upward trajectory and we may finally be experiencing the end of the great recession. More jobs, better finances for families?

Let's begin 2017 by honing our skills as advocates and ensuring "a voice" for children in 2017.