

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

It's Finally Over...What a Surprise!



The election process has concluded and we have a new President-Elect of the United States, **Donald J. Trump**. His running mate, **Governor Mike Pence** is now Vice-President-Elect. Both men will assume office in January 2017 and begin a four year term in the nation's highest office.

To say the least, the polls and pundits missed this outcome and the election has caused much discussion about the philosophical transition that will occur as President Obama departs and President Trump assumes office.

It's important at this point to focus on what we know.

- ◆ **The Trump campaign agenda was silent to a great degree on children's issues.** The focus during the campaign was more on economics and the role of America in the world than on any specific initiatives that were planned. It remains to be seen what his



domestic policy agenda will look like.

- ◆ During the last few weeks of the campaign, Mr. Trump issued a **dependent care plan** that carried the hallmarks of a traditional Republican approach to this issue: income tax deductions, dependent care savings accounts, and incentives for employers to create worksite child care centers. The plan was focused on dependent care, both child and elderly.

- ◆ Mike Pence, as **Governor of Indiana**, implemented the largest tax cut in Indiana's history and pushed for more funding for education initiatives.



Melania Trump, has stated her desire to focus on the issue of **"bullying"** during her time in the White House.



Karen Pence, the wife of Mike Pence, has focused

her time as First Lady of Indiana on Art Therapy Initiatives at several children's hospitals. She was a school teacher for 25 years.

As with any change, there's always speculation and trepidation about what's coming and the people involved in those changes. We'd encourage you to take another look at the personalities involved: they will tend to dictate where priorities are set. Some resources:

[The Vice-Presidential Candidates and Their Wives](#), [Public Policy Notes, July 2016](#)

[Trump Launches Child Care Plan](#), [Public Policy Notes, September 2016](#)

We'll keep you posted as the presidential appointments roll out.

November 2016

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Inside this Issue:

115th Congress: Senate Leadership 2

The South was Red 2

New SECA Governors 3

Conservative Leaders for Education

News from the States 4

A Better Way

In our June 2016 issue of *Public Policy Notes*, we shared the specifics of a plan put forth by House Speaker Paul Ryan.

A Better Way outlined many specific initiatives that may play a part in the final domestic agenda for President Trump.

Take some time to review the specifics. You'll get a better idea of where policy may lead during the presidential transition and what we might expect. [Click here](#) to access a copy.

U.S. Senate Elects Leadership for the 115th Congress

In the aftermath of the 2016 election, the U.S. Senate has moved forward in selecting leadership for the 115th Congress.

On the **Republican** side, the leadership has stayed basically intact from the 114th Congress and representation by Senators from the SECA states is strong in this leadership structure. **Senator Mitch**



McConnell of Kentucky has retained his position with the Republican Caucus and is now Majority Leader in the U.S. Senate.

Other SECA state Senators include: **Senator John Cornyn of Texas** and



Senator Roger Wicker of Mississippi.



On the **Democratic** side, leadership includes **Senator Mark Warner of Virginia** who will serve as a Vice-Chair of the Conference and as a ranking



member on the Senate Intelligence Committee.



Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia will serve as Vice-chair of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee.



Senator Bill Nelson of Florida will serve as a ranking committee member on the Commerce Committee.

The South Was Solidly Red in 2016

In the 2016 election, the trend that began several years ago manifested itself again. The South voted overwhelmingly for the Republican presidential candidate and helped to propel Donald Trump into the presidency.

Only one SECA state, Virginia, produced a majority vote for the Democratic candidate. A couple of states had razor thin margins: others were lopsided in support for the Republican candidate.

Following are the vote totals as reported by the Associated Press.

Alabama

Trump (62.9%), Clinton (34.6%)

Arkansas

Trump (60.4%), Clinton (33.8%)

Florida

Trump (49.1%), Clinton (47.8%)

Georgia

Trump (51.3%), Clinton (45.6%)

Kentucky

Trump (62.5%), Clinton (32.7%)

Louisiana

Trump (58.1%), Clinton (38.4%)

Mississippi

Trump (58.3%), Clinton (39.7%)

North Carolina

Trump (50.5%), Clinton (46.7%)

Oklahoma

Trump (65.3%), Clinton (28.9%)

South Carolina

Trump (54.9%), Clinton (40.8%)

Tennessee

Trump (61.1%), Clinton (34.9%)

Texas

Trump (52.6%), Clinton (43.4%)

Virginia

Trump (45.0%), **Clinton** (49.9%)

West Virginia

Trump (68.7%), Clinton (26.5%)

Source: NY Times, [Presidential Election Results: Donald J. Trump Wins](#), 11/17/2016

The soul searching among the political pundits is just beginning, and you'll see a variety of perspectives and ideas about why the election took the direction that it did in the end. One of the most balanced reviews of the political process can be found at [Sabato's Crystal Ball](#), produced by the University of Virginia Center for Politics.

New Governors in Two SECA States



West Virginia will welcome a new governor on January 16, 2017.

Jim Justice, a billionaire businessman and **Democrat** was elected to the office this month. Defeating his Republican opponent by a percentage of 49.1 to 42.3, Mr. Justice becomes one of two Democratic governors in the SECA region. (Current Governor Earl Ray Tomblin was term-limited.)

Mr. Justice ran on a platform of bringing jobs back to West Virginia and reviving an economy that

has seen significant downward trends due to the decline of the coal industry. From his campaign website: *“Jim’s foundation is simple. He first has a sincere commitment to the good Lord, second his family, next are his employees and then his strong involvement with young people. He believes that we as people know the difference between right and wrong and we have gotten too far away from those simple principles.”*

Source: www.justiceforwv.com



North Carolina appears on its way to switching parties in the Governor’s office. **Democrat Roy Cooper** is leading incumbent Republi-

can **Pat McCrory** with a vote of 49% to 48.9% as reported by the *New York Times* on November 17th. (At the time of writing of this newsletter, the final results had not been certified.) Source: *New York Times, [North Carolina Governor Results: Roy Cooper Leads](#), 11/17/2016*

Cooper formerly served in the North Carolina House and Senate and, in 2000, was elected Attorney General for North Carolina. McCrory is a former mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina who became embroiled in controversial legislation this year. *If Cooper prevails, the SECA region will welcome a second Democrat to the capitol of one of our states.*

Conservative Leaders for Education

A new group, [Conservative Leaders for Education](#), has been formed by former U.S. Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett.

“Conservative Leaders for Education is a new campaign comprised of leading Republican state lawmakers and education chairs focused on ensuring conservative principles gain traction in state policy decisions as states begin to develop accountability plans under the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).” The members of the new group are:

Senator Scott Hill of Colorado

Mary Scott Hunter, a school board member from Alabama

Senator Peggy Lehner of Ohio

Senator Luther Olsen of Wisconsin

Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury of Nevada.

According to the campaign’s [website](#), implementation of conservative education means:

◆ **Local Control**

Reaffirm that educating students is predominately the responsibility of states and localities, especially in the areas of funding, personnel, and reviving poorly performing schools.

◆ **Parent Choice**

Advance educational choice and innovation for parents and students by trusting that parents will do what is best for their children, while not absolving lawmakers

from providing oversight.

◆ **Accountability**

Demand that states, local districts, and individual schools be transparent through the provision of information to parents that is accessible, timely, comparable, and easy-to-understand.

◆ **Quality Content**

Assert that high academic standards and aligned tests – both chosen by the state – are crucial because they evaluate what a student is learning.

Southern Early Childhood Association

1123 S. University, Ste 255
Little Rock, AR 72204

Phone: 800-305-SECA

Fax: 501-227-5297

E-mail:

info@southernearlychildhood.org

www.southernearlychildhood.org

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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.

News from the States



North Carolina

Superintendent of Education in North Carolina, **June Atkinson**, lost her re-election bid this month. Ms. Atkinson was first elected in 2005 and had overseen the Department of Public Instruction since that time.



Her Republican challenger, **Mark Johnson**, ran on a platform of returning control to local districts and minimiz-

ing the reach of the state into local school affairs. An attorney, he currently serves as a member of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education in 2014. He is corporate counsel in a technology firm and taught two years in North Carolina as a participant in the Teach for America program.

Texas

Two school districts in Texas, the Austin Independent School District, and the Dallas Independent School District, are experimenting with single gender schools.

Dallas opened three single gender schools this fall. Austin established the **Ann Richards School for Young**

Women Leaders a few years ago.

For more information about the Austin school, [click here](#). You'll find a serious discussion about the value of and justification for these schools.

West Virginia



Michael Martirano, West Virginia's 30th State School Superintendent has announced his resignation, effective June 30, 2017.

He began his tenure in West Virginia in 2014 and was a former science teacher in a number of districts in Maryland.