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An injury to one is an injury to all

At Thursday's Presidents Meeting, state affiliate presidents got a lesson in trickle-down economics. NSO President Chuck Agerstrand detailed the impact membership losses are having on not only individual states, but also on NEA and ultimately, NSO. Anti-union sentiment and legislation that's raging across the country is translating into serious membership losses and staff cuts.

Fifteen states are considered to be financially distressed because of membership loss and their very survival is in jeopardy. And because of financial hardship, 41 state executives are on NEA's payroll instead of being paid by their state. Two states—Indiana and South Carolina—remain under an NEA trusteeship.

Unfortunately, North Carolina is an example of the kind of problems facing state affiliates. Recent legislation ended payroll dues deduction so an alternative way of collecting dues has to be devised in order to continue doing business.

Maria Hampton, North Carolina staff union treasurer said, "We have a temporary restraining order until March to prevent the legislation from going forward but we're struggling to work through this. Luckily, NSO is helping us connect with other states who are working through the same issues."

Membership losses and the precarious financial position of some states mean an estimated \$12 million shortfall this year for NEA and a projected \$27 million shortfall next year. As a result, NEA is looking to reduce 88 staff positions. Currently, 124 NEA staff are eligible to retire and have until March 15 to take a proposed retirement incentive.

NSO can't escape these realities but it can be part of the solution.

With an estimated 1.5 million school employees who are not affiliated with any union, NEA is concentrating on developing a culture of organizing. NSO will be working with NEA on devising an organizing strategy that will help avert a financial crisis for both organizations.



NSO President Chuck Agerstrand warned state affiliate presidents of a precarious financial picture for state affiliate presidents.

Contact [Rosemary Carey](#), NSO Communications Director
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