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AFT retirees hear from Democratic presidential candidates at DNC summer meeting

A number of AFT retirees, including several from Education Minnesota, were on hand at the Democratic National Committee's summer meeting in Minneapolis in late August to hear directly

from the five declared Democratic presidential candidates—Lincoln Chafee, Hillary Clinton, Martin O'Malley, Bernie Sanders and Jim Webb. Many also attended the DNC Seniors Coordinating Council meeting, where they heard about Social Security, Medicare and other issues of concern to retirees. "It was enjoyable to hear from all of the candidates," said Walter Munsterman, a retired member of Education Minnesota. "But it was also encouraging to see a variety of people taking an interest in issues like Medicare and Social Security, because they are truly issues for everyone. We all need to come together to maintain these programs." Lauren Luchi, who directs the AFT's retirees program, spoke to the retirees about the surprising connection between student loan debt and Social Security. "People can be pursued for student debt even into their older years," said Luchi, who noted that Social Security payments can be withheld from retirees because of outstanding student loans.

Read Luchi's remarks

MEA-MFT efforts save retirement benefits

For the last two years, the MEA-MFT, which represents Montana public school educators and thousands of other public employees, has waged two legal battles to preserve guaranteed annual benefit adjustments in the Montana Teachers' Retirement System and the Public Employees' Retirement System. On Aug. 20, the state agreed not to pursue further appeals of its district court losses, thus securing guaranteed annual benefit adjustments in the teachers' and public employees' retirement systems. MEA-MFT president, Eric Feaver applauded the state and his union for their work to save the benefits.

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