

Sanctions Imposed Against Virginia Education Association (VEA)

August 30, 2018

NSO Affiliate Presidents,

The NSO Executive Committee has approved the imposition of sanctions against the Virginia Education Association.

The Virginia Professional Staff Association (VPSA) called for sanctions against the Virginia Education Association (VEA), as Association management has continued in its attempts to intimidate and harass staff members. The most obvious example is management's calling of the University of Richmond police to remove VPSA members who were distributing snacks and a newsletter to members during VEA's Reggie Smith Organizing School. If a local school system had used this tactic on VEA members, management would have been outraged and demanded an appropriate response in support of educators.

The following is an account of what happened to Virginia Professional Staff Association members who were handing out snacks and a flyer at an event conducted by the Virginia Education Association on the grounds of the University of Richmond.

On Wednesday, July 18 four members of the Virginia Professional Staff Association (VPSA) assembled outside of the Jepson Student Center on the grounds of the University of Richmond to distribute water, granola bars, and informative flyers to members of the Virginia Education Association (VEA) who were attending the first day of the Reggie Smith Organizing School. The intent of the exercise was to both show appreciation to VEA members attending the first day of the event, and to update the same members on the working conditions of VPSA members employed by the VEA. The newsletter was an update on a newsletter that was distributed outside of the VEA convention in Hampton, VA at the April convention of the VEA without protest from VEA management.

A half hour or so into the distribution, a University of Richmond policeman responded to the call and asked the VPSA participants (Evette Wilson, Chandra Smith, Robin Gardner, and Fred Glover) what they were doing. Having been told that the four were supporting the members at the event, the officer started to leave. Shortly after, after having been called by a "female director of the event", another officer responded to a complaint that people unaffiliated with the association were working outside. These four VEA employees and union VPSA members were then forced to leave the premises after having been told by the second policeman that "we were told that you are not affiliated with the VEA."

This has been the pinnacle of the tactics of retaliation and isolation used by current VEA management in the past two years on VPSA members. Many of our members are also VEA members, and it was a direct slap in the face to be identified as "not affiliated with the organization." Staff in Virginia have been ignored and siloed in a way that makes them feel like nothing more than the hired help rather than a valued component of a team. In March VPSA voted unanimously in a vote of no confidence regarding a specific component of VEA management, yet the VEA has done nothing to address these concerns. VPSA members have had a new territory map foisted upon them that did not reflect the input by the field staff who have the experiences in the field to be able to make fewer staff over a large state work. The specific management component from the vote of no confidence continues to show disregard to VPSA members by refusing to respond to staff queries in a timely manner (if at all), has cancelled staff development and staff meetings in the past to keep staff from getting together, makes arbitrary and capricious decisions regarding reports submitted by staff, refuses to continue with a mentoring program for new staff, and intentionally depicts staff in an unprofessional light when addressing groups of VEA leaders.

In accordance with NSO sanctions procedures, all job postings, including the vacant Executive Director position, are hereby sanctioned by NSO. We are requesting that NSO members boycott all support, training, or assistance requested by VEA. Lastly, we ask that the sanction information be distributed prior to the announcement of any further openings at VEA.

An injury to one is an injury to all.

Yours in union,

Brad Darjean, President

cc: Executive Committee Members/NSO Officers