

State's teacher group backs Clinton, again

CHICAGO — Keeping tabs on teachers union delegates to the Democratic National Convention:

LU BATTAGLIERI

"Based on Bob Dole's remarks, we're angry and we're enflamed," said Luigi (Lu) Battaglieri, delegate from Rochester Hills and president of Local 1 of the Michigan Education Association.

Two weeks ago, the Republican presidential nominee attacked "special interests" in education but said most teachers were OK.

"He said a lot of negative things about teachers unions — the old divide and conquer," Battaglieri said.

MEA has about 14 of Michigan's 157 delegates. The National Education Association's 404 delegates make it the biggest block in the national convention, he said.

MEA's decision to endorse President Clinton and Vice President Gore for a second term was made by 10,000 delegates to the MEA convention in Washington, D.C., earlier in the summer.

"That was the recommendation of the screening committee, and 97 percent voted to support it," said Battaglieri. The level of support was so heavy that he couldn't remember whether the other 3 percent supported Dole, Ross Perot or none of the above.

"This is my second convention," Battaglieri said. "The

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Lu Battaglieri
Oakland delegate

tenor has changed. In the past it was all politicking. Now it's more of a coronation." But if TV coverage is down, teachers union support is stronger than ever.

"I've been busy bargaining contracts," said the Local 1 president. "We have 16 school districts and 26 units in Oakland and Macomb counties."

GAIL NOLIN

She's a Michigan Education Association official from Sylvan Lake. He's a former Arkansas state official. And through Bill Clinton, they have become allies.

"This is Rodney Slater," said Gail Nolin, a Michigan delegate from the 11th Congressional District, as she introduced the assistant secretary of Transportation.

"He was transportation direc-

tor of Arkansas. I met him in 1992 when he was working for Clinton in Michigan. MEA was the first union to endorse the president in Michigan," Nolin said.

"Julius Maddox (MEA president) is not here. I know the schedule of meetings and get our people there. We meet daily after the delegation caucus and keep up to date."

Their paths crossed as Slater and his boss, Transportation Secretary Federico Pena, visited a Sunday Chrysler-UAW brunch at Chicago's Navy Pier.

For his part, Slater has come to know southeastern Michigan's roads.

"We're doing work with intelligent transportation systems,"

Slater said. "We're using techniques to enhance the capacity of roads in Detroit and the surrounding counties," he said, singing out Oakland.

"One is smart traffic signals to respond to movements of traffic. It's like managing airways with air traffic controllers. You can handle more traffic without building more lanes."

"Oakland County is a leader in that regard."

"Interstate-75 freeway has been improved from Florida to where it goes to Canada (at Sault Ste. Marie). Trucks don't have to stop so many times for weight checks. We have weight-in-motion technology and vehicle identification technology."

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NEWSPAPERS

County gets drug-prevention grant

Southeastern Michigan law enforcement agencies recently received a financial boost from three drug enforcement grants.

State Reps. Shirley Johnson, Barbara Dobb, John Jamian, Tom Middleton and Penny Crissman spoke highly of the 1996 Byrne Memorial Formula grants and the Michigan Office of Drug Control Policy.

"This money is an integral part of our continuing drug enforcement efforts," said Johnson, R-Royal Oak. "By providing additional funding to these valuable projects, we are protecting our communities and fighting the ongoing battle against drugs."

Dobb, R-Commerce Township, agreed. "We are pursuing drug problems on every level. This increased investment adds strength to our programs and ultimately can help and what has become a terrible blight on our society."

The three grants are:

• \$102,411 to the Oakland County Zero Tolerance Drug Offender Treatment program that mandates urinalysis for all misdemeanor and felony offenders on a weekly basis

• \$182,648 to the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office to aggressively pursue major drug dealers

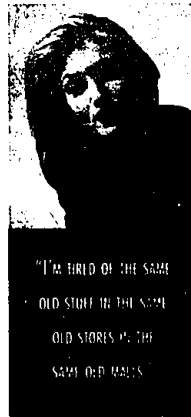
• \$61,488 to the Oakland County multijurisdictional drug team targeting mid-to upper-level drug dealers and their distribution networks

"We need to take the so-called 'war on drugs' away from the Washington bureaucrats and give it to those fighting on the front lines, in our hometowns," said Jamian, R-Bloomfield Hills. "It is sad that we have to devote so much effort to this problem. Nevertheless, if we do not act, the drug abuse will continue to plague future generations. I am pleased that Oakland County has programs in place to address this threat to our children."

Middleton, R-Ortonville, said "drug use among our young people is on the rise. By targeting the root of the problem, drug dealers, we can make the future safer for our children."

News of the grants comes on the heels of the U.S. Health Department study which found marijuana use among teenagers is up 141 percent since 1992. The report also showed that cocaine use rose 166 percent from 1994-'95, while the use of hallucinogens increased 183 percent.

"Directing our resources toward incarcerating drug dealers protects the young people targeted by these monsters," said Crissman, R-Rochester. "It's time to stop blaming and take action against those who are preying on our children." The grant program is 10 years old. Funds are awarded to ongoing projects which have proven successful.



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