



**Committee on Political Education (COPE) Bylaws**  
**May 2009**

## **ARTICLE I—Name**

This organization shall be known as the AFT-Wisconsin Committee on Political Education (COPE)

## **ARTICLE II—Statement of Principles**

The Principles of AFT-Wisconsin COPE are:

### **Section 1. Excellence**

To support and strengthen the commitment of members, citizens, and government to excellence in education and public service

### **Section 2. Understanding**

To encourage our members to comprehend the functions of government and political processes and understand political issues, especially as these affect our members

### **Section 3. Activism**

To promote and strive for improvement of education and public service by encouraging and stimulating our members to take a more active part in elections (voting) and governmental affairs affecting education and public service

### **Section 4. Organization**

To assist our members in organizing themselves for more effective political action

### **Section 5. Labor**

To assist members to understand and support the broad range of Labor issues

### **Section 6. Action**

To engage in any suitable activities to achieve the principles stated above

## **ARTICLE III—Responsibilities**

COPE is Charged with the Following Responsibilities:

### **Section 1. Conduct Candidate Interviews**

Interview candidates or their surrogates for Local, State, and Federal office when deemed appropriate and pursuant to Article VIII of these Bylaws

### **Section 2. Recommend Candidates**

Make recommendations to the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board regarding candidates pursuant to Article IX of these Bylaws

**Section 3. Recommend PAC Expenditures**

Make recommendations for expenditures from the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Political Action Committee (PAC) pursuant to Article X of these Bylaws

**Section 4. Recommend Solidarity Fund Expenditures**

Make recommendations for expenditures from the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund pursuant to Article IX, Section 3 of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution and Article XI of these Bylaws

**Section 5 Recommend Legislative Agenda**

Recommend a Legislative Agenda to the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board

**Section 6. Plan**

Develop and recommend a budget and plan for the AFT-Wisconsin COPE PAC and Solidarity Fund

**Section 7 Report to Members**

Report to members on an annual basis the activities of the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Board as outlined in Article XIV section 4

**Section 8. Serve as Liaisons to Locals**

Each member of the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Board shall regularly communicate activities, principles, and responsibilities to their own Local

**Section 9. Perform Other Duties**

Any additional responsibilities delegated by the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, and the AFT-Wisconsin President

**ARTICLE IV—COPE Board**

**Section 1. Authority**

- (a) COPE is a standing committee of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board
- (b) The COPE Board is regulated by Bylaws as adopted and modified by the COPE Board and approved by the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board
- (c) The COPE Board is charged with:
  - 1. implementation of the principles, responsibilities, and duties set forth in these Bylaws
  - 2. the stewardship of the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund pursuant to Article IX, Section 3 of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution
  - 3. the stewardship of AFT-Wisconsin COPE PAC

4. the implementation of such other duties as are given it by the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board

## **Section 2. Membership**

- (a) The COPE Board shall consist of at least fifteen (15) members, with at least one member from each of the AFT-Wisconsin Councils
- (b) Members of the COPE Board are appointed by the AFT-Wisconsin President and approved by the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board
- (c) Each Local is encouraged to recommend members to serve on the COPE Board
- (d) The President of AFT-Wisconsin shall serve as an ex-officio member of the COPE Board
- (e) Voting membership of the COPE Board shall be limited to AFT-Wisconsin members in good standing
- (f) If the number of COPE Board members in good standing drops below fifteen (15) the AFT-Wisconsin President shall appoint AFT-Wisconsin members in good standing to fill COPE Board position(s) as outlined in (a) and (b) above
- (g) Local presidents shall make the AFT-W President aware of members no longer in good standing, and request their removal from the COPE Board member list.

## **Section 3. Length of Appointments**

- (a) The officers of the COPE Board shall serve for a term that corresponds with that of the office of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board
- (b) The members of the COPE Board shall serve for a term that corresponds with that of the office of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board
- (c) COPE Board members are terminated if she or he has missed three consecutive meetings and has not communicated to the chair, a co-chair, or staff that she or he will be absent.
- (d) If terminated, reappointment of the member to the COPE Board shall not be considered until the following term.

## **Section 4. Frequency of Meetings**

- (a) The COPE Board shall meet at least quarterly
- (b) The COPE Board may also meet as deemed necessary by the COPE Board Chair or a Co-chair

## **Section 5. Staff**

- (a) The AFT-Wisconsin Government Relations Representative and the State Affiliate Political Organizer shall be assigned as staff to the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Board

- (b) Other staff may be assigned to the COPE Board in an advisory role.

## **ARTICLE V—Officers of the COPE Board**

### **Section 1. Chair**

- (a) The Chair shall be a member of the COPE Board in good standing
- (b) The Chair is appointed by the AFT-Wisconsin President
- (c) If the AFT-Wisconsin President so chooses, she or he may appoint Co-chairs to the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Board
- (d) Duties of the Chair or Co-chairs
  - 1. serve as presiding officer and chair for COPE Board meetings as a voting member
  - 2. jointly approve the agenda prior to the meetings
  - 3. send agenda and membership list to the COPE Board
  - 4. authorize expenditures in between meetings pursuant to Articles X and XI of these Bylaws
  - 5. coordinate COPE activities with and delegate COPE activities to the Government Relations Representative and State Affiliate Political Organizer
  - 6. perform other duties designated by the AFT-Wisconsin President
  - 7. initiate activities consistent with the principles, responsibilities, and duties in accordance with these Bylaws

### **Section 2. Secretary**

- (a) The Secretary shall be a member of the COPE Board in good standing
- (b) The Secretary shall be elected by the COPE Board at the first COPE Board meeting after the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board election
- (c) Duties of the Secretary
  - 1. Record attendance of those at the COPE Board meetings, including the presiding officer
  - 2. Determine quorum at the COPE Board meetings
  - 3. Take minutes of the COPE Board meetings and record when the presiding officer changes
  - 4. Record motions taken at COPE Board meetings
  - 5. Produce an electronic version of the minutes for distribution
  - 6. maintain, with staff, the roster of COPE Board members in good standing
  - 7. Preside over the COPE Board meetings when no Chair is present

8. Report out at each COPE Board meeting any members who have missed 3 consecutive meetings without notification and who are being removed from the membership list
9. Report out at each COPE Board meeting any members who have missed 2 consecutive meetings without notification

### **Section 3. Treasurer**

- (a) The Treasurer shall be a member of the COPE Board in good standing
- (b) The Treasurer shall be elected by the COPE Board at the first COPE Board meeting after the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board election
- (c) Duties of the Treasurer
  1. Serve as financial officer of the COPE Board
  2. On a monthly basis, provide to the COPE Board with the assistance of the AFT-Wisconsin Government Relations Representative and the State Affiliate Political Organizer, the financial status of monies and accounts delegated to the stewardship of the COPE Board pursuant to these Bylaws and/or at the direction of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board
  3. Function as a signatory to AFT-Wisconsin COPE PAC checks
    - i. Whenever possible, this role will be filled by a COPE Board member living in Madison
    - ii. Pursuant to state regulation, the AFT-Wisconsin COPE PAC signatory MAY NOT be a registered lobbyist with the Wisconsin State Elections Board
  4. Function as signatory for campaign finance reports with the Wisconsin State Elections Board
  5. Coordinate with staff in the preparation and signing of reports and checks
  6. Forward onto the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board the relevant financial information regarding recommendations made by the COPE Board
  7. Serve as liaison between the COPE Board and the audit committee and provide all necessary documents for the audit committee to function pursuant to Article XIV, Section 3 of these Bylaws
  8. Ensure, with the Government Relations Representative and State Affiliate Political Organizer, that disbursements recommended by the COPE Board and approved by the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board

- pursuant to these Bylaws are made in a timely and efficient manner
9. Engage the services and assistance of the AFT-Wisconsin Government Relations Representative and State Affiliate Political Organizer, Treasurer, Office Manager, or other personnel to carry out the duties of the COPE Board Treasurer
  10. Employ all due diligence to ensure that disbursements made on behalf of COPE are done so in accordance with local, state, and federal election law
  11. ensure that she or he is bonded

#### **Section 4. Vacancies of Officers**

- (a) If an officer of the COPE Board resigns or otherwise becomes unable to perform the duties of his or her office, the AFT-Wisconsin President shall appoint a COPE Board member to fill that vacancy
- (b) The appointment is subject to the approval of the COPE Board

### **ARTICLE VI—COPE Board Meetings**

#### **Section 1. Notice of Meetings**

- (a) Meetings of the COPE Board shall be called by the Chair or a Co-chair with at least 72 hours written notice to the COPE Board
- (b) Meeting notices shall be distributed to the COPE Board, the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, and all AFT-Wisconsin Local presidents

#### **Section 2. Quorum**

- (a) A quorum shall consist of eleven (11) members.
- (b) Ex-officio COPE Board members shall qualify for the purposes of quorum.

#### **Section 3. Minutes**

- (a) Minutes shall be distributed to the COPE Board, the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, and all AFT-Wisconsin Local presidents. Minutes will also be available upon request to any interested member, pending verification of status as a member in good standing
- (b) Minutes shall be considered for approval at a subsequent COPE Board meeting
- (c) The COPE Board has the right to revise, extend, edit, and amend minutes by a two thirds (2/3) of votes cast.

## **ARTICLE VII—Parliamentary Procedure**

### **Section 1. Roberts Rules of Order**

All meetings of the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Board shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, unless otherwise provided by these Bylaws

## **Article VIII—Candidate Interviews**

### **Section 1. Authority**

Pursuant to Article III, Section 1 of these Bylaws and by sanction of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, the COPE Board is charged with interviewing candidates or their designated surrogates for local, state and federal office

### **Section 2. Interviews Open to Members**

Candidate Interviews are open to all AFT-Wisconsin members in good standing

### **Section 3. Notice to Attend**

Whenever possible AFT-Wisconsin members who plan to attend candidate interviews shall provide prior notification to the COPE Board or staff; this is in order to accommodate needs for physical space and food

### **Section 4. Prior Notice of Interviews**

- (a) Whenever possible, prior notice of candidate or surrogate interviews shall be given to the COPE Board, the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board and Local Presidents
- (b) Whenever possible, updates to the interview list will be communicated to the COPE Board and other attendees.

## **ARTICLE IX—Recommendations for Candidate Endorsements**

### **Section 1. Authority**

Pursuant to Article III, Section 2 of these Bylaws and by sanction of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, the COPE Board recommends endorsements of local, state, and federal candidates to the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board.

### **Section 2. Endorsement Process**

There are six (6) steps to an AFT-Wisconsin endorsement of a candidate

- (a) An appropriate party requests consideration for an interview
- (b) The COPE Board considers candidates' voting history (if one exists)



- (c) The COPE Board considers candidates' questionnaire responses
- (d) The COPE Board interviews the candidates or their surrogates
- (e) The COPE Board, by two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast, recommends a candidate.
- (f) The AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board shall consider the COPE Board recommendations at its next meeting

### **Section 3. Request for an Interview**

- (a) Interviews are most likely to be initiated by the COPE Board Chair or a Co-chair, given their authority to set the COPE Board agenda pursuant to Article V, Section 1(d)1 of these Bylaws
- (b) Requests, to the COPE Chair or Co-Chairs, for candidate interviews may also be made by:
  - 1. a COPE Board member
  - 2. an AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board member
  - 3. an AFT-Wisconsin Local
  - 4. any AFT-Wisconsin member in good standing

### **Section 4. Voting Records**

- (a) Whenever possible, recommendations for endorsement shall be made on the basis of each candidate's voting record regarding:
  - 1. education
  - 2. public services
  - 3. workers' rights
- (b) Recommendations shall be made without regard to party affiliation

### **Section 5. Questionnaires.**

- (a) Whenever possible, candidate questionnaires will be distributed to all candidates in races the COPE Board intends to consider for recommendation
- (b) Questionnaires will be representative of the concerns of all of the AFT-Wisconsin constituencies
- (c) Questionnaires will be appropriate to the type and level of the office sought
- (d) In the case of federal candidates, whenever possible, the COPE Board will work with AFT National for information and questionnaires
- (e) Completed questionnaires will not be posted on the AFT-Wisconsin website

### **Section 6. Interview Format**

- (a) Interviews for the COPE Board will be formatted by the Chair or Co-chairs

- (b) Format will be based on:
  - 1. the number of candidates\_or surrogates likely to be interviewed
  - 2. the number of members who plan to attend
  - 3. the physical space of the room
  - 4. time restrictions

## **Section 7. Recommendation Criteria**

- (a) Whenever possible, candidate recommendations shall be based upon two of the following:
  - 1. a candidate's voting record
  - 2. responses to the AFT-Wisconsin COPE questionnaire
  - 3. a COPE Board interview
- (b) Any recommendations by COPE requires two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast by COPE Board members
- (c) Recommendations will take into consideration the endorsements of Wisconsin AFL-CIO and AFT National
- (d) Recommendations for political endorsement shall be sent to the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board for final approval
- (e) This process does not preclude the COPE Board from making recommendations for referenda, campaign committees, or independent expenditures

## **Section 8. Recommendation Criteria for Local Candidates**

- (a) Whenever possible, candidate recommendations for local office will take into consideration the endorsements of other labor organizations, and shall be based on two\_or more of the following:
  - 1. a candidate's voting record
  - 2. a COPE Board interview
  - 3. responses to the AFT-Wisconsin local questionnaire
  - 4. responses to another local candidate questionnaire
  - 5. current membership in AFT-Wisconsin
- (b) Any recommendations by COPE requires two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast by COPE Board members
- (c) Recommendations for political endorsement shall be sent to the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board for final approval
- (d) This process does not preclude the COPE Board from making recommendations for local referenda, campaign committees, or independent expenditures

## **Section 9. Final Approval of Recommendations**

- (a) No recommendation for the endorsement of a candidate is legitimate or final until it is approved by the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board

- (b) After the COPE Board makes a recommendation, the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board shall consider the COPE Board recommendation at its next meeting
- (c) Whenever possible, due to the time sensitive nature of campaigns, the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board shall conduct a teleconference to consider recommendations

## **Article X—PAC Expenditures**

### **Section 1. Authority**

- (a) Pursuant to Article III, Section 3 of these Bylaws and by sanction of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, the COPE Board recommends expenditures from the AFT-Wisconsin COPE PAC
- (b) Any recommendations by COPE requires two-thirds (2/3) of votes cast by COPE Board members

### **Section 2. Accounts**

The PAC shall be kept in a separate, segregated, non-interest bearing account

### **Section 3. Compliance**

The PAC shall only make expenditures that are in compliance with local, state, and federal election law

### **Section 4. Residence**

The PAC checkbook and records will be maintained in the AFT-Wisconsin office in accordance with state and federal law

### **Section 5. Limitations**

- (a) Whenever possible, and in accordance with state and federal law, PAC contributions shall be limited to contributions to candidate committees, campaign committees, and independent expenditures appropriately registered with the Wisconsin State Elections Board or the Federal Elections Commission
- (b) Contributions to any appropriate party listed in Article X, Section 5(a) may not exceed the maximum contribution allowed by local, state, or federal election laws

### **Section 6. Income**

- (a) Contributions to the PAC shall be made from voluntary contributions from AFT-Wisconsin members
- (b) Other legal sources pursuant to state election law are also acceptable

## **Section 7. Disbursements**

The AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board may take action for disbursements upon the recommendations of the COPE Board. The following methods are also acceptable:

- (a) Upon
  - 1 Approval or authorization of a majority of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, and
  - 2 Notification of the COPE Board
- (b) By the AFT-Wisconsin President and the COPE Committee Chair or a Co-chair, when all of the following conditions are met:
  - 1. the amount does not exceed \$500 per request and
  - 2. the next AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board meeting will not be timely to the request
  - 3. members of the COPE Board and AFT Executive Board are notified by the co-chair involved of the expenditure in a timely fashion

## **Article XI—AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity fund**

### **Section 1. Authority**

Pursuant to Article IX, Section 3 of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution, Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, and by sanction of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, the COPE Board is charged with recommending expenditures from the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund

### **Section 2. Accounts**

The AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund shall be kept in a separate, segregated, account

### **Section 3. Compliance**

The AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund shall only make expenditures that are in compliance with local, state, federal election law, and the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution, Article IX, Section 3(b)2

### **Section 4. Residence**

The AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund checkbook and records will be maintained in the AFT-Wisconsin office in accordance with state and federal law

### **Section 5. Limitations**

- (a) Pursuant to Article IX, Section 3(b)2 of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution, the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund resources shall be divided equally for the dual purposes of:

1. communication with members regarding legislation and electoral information
2. communicating with the public in advocacy of AFT-Wisconsin membership
3. contributions from the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund shall not be made to campaign or candidate committees

## **Section 6. Income**

- (a) Contributions to the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund shall be made from segregated contributions from AFT-Wisconsin members pursuant to Article IX, Section 3(b)1 of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution
- (b) No other funds shall be used as income for this Fund

## **Section 7. Project Grants**

- (a) Locals, Councils, Committees, and individual members may apply for project grants under the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund
- (b) For grants to be approved, they shall meet the following criteria:
  1. the goals and objectives are consistent with the restrictions and goals of the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund pursuant to Article IX, Section 3 of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution
  2. the proposals are submitted in writing
  3. the proposals include an itemized budget
  4. the proposals include a timeline
- (c) Matching grants will be given priority
- (d) When a Local requests a grant, the Local's size and financial status can be taken into consideration
- (e) All expenditures must be documented with receipt
- (f) Any expenditure disbursed for any project grant not used or documented with receipts must be returned to the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund

## **Section 8. Disbursements**

The AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board may take action for disbursements upon the recommendations of the COPE Board. The following methods are also acceptable:

- (a) Upon
  1. approval or authorization of a majority of the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board and
  2. Notification of the COPE Board
- (b) By the AFT-Wisconsin President and the COPE Committee Chair or a Co-chair, when all of the following conditions are met:

1. the amount does not exceed \$500 per request and
2. the next AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board meeting will not be timely to the request
3. members of the COPE Board and AFT Executive Board are notified by the co-chair involved via email of the expenditure in a timely fashion

## **Article XII—Compliance**

### **Section 1. Legal**

The COPE Board shall comply with all local, state, and federal election laws

### **Section 2. AFT-Wisconsin Constitution**

The COPE Board shall comply with all requirements of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution, specifically those enumerated in Article IX, Section 3

### **Section 3. AFT-Wisconsin COPE Bylaws**

The COPE Board shall comply with all requirements of these Bylaws

## **ARTICLE XIII—Finances**

### **Section 1. Operational Costs**

The operational costs of the organization shall be borne by AFT-Wisconsin

### **Section 2. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the COPE budget and Solidarity budget shall begin January 1 and end December 31

## **Article XIV—Audits and reports**

### **Section 1. AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund Audit**

Pursuant to Article IX, Section 3(b)3 of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution, an independent audit of the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund shall be conducted annually

### **Section 21. AFT COPE PAC**

An independent audit of the AFT-Wisconsin COPE PAC shall be conducted annually

### **Section 32. Audit Committee**

- (a) the Government Relations Representative and State Affiliate Political Organizer will identify candidates for the Audit committee

- (b) The Audit Committee shall be appointed by the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Board and made up of three (3) AFT-Wisconsin members in good standing who do not serve on the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Board or the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board
- (c) The Audit Committee shall consult with the COPE Board Treasurer, the AFT-Wisconsin Treasurer, the AFT-Wisconsin Government Relations Representative and State Affiliate Political Organizer, and any other party the Audit Committee deems appropriate to collect the information needed to conduct an independent audit
- (d) The Committee shall write a final report to be included in the annual report pursuant to Article XIV, Section 4 of these Bylaws

### **Section 43. Annual Report**

- (a) Pursuant to Article IX, Section 3(b)4 of the AFT-Wisconsin Constitution, an annual report shall be provided to the members at the AFT-Wisconsin Convention which includes the audit and the previous year's activities of the AFT-Wisconsin Solidarity Fund
- (b) The annual report shall include an account of the previous year's activities of the COPE PAC

## **ARTICLE XV—Amendments**

### **Section 1. Proposed Amendments**

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by:

- (a) Any COPE Board member in good standing
- (b) A sub-committee appointed by the COPE Board to review these Bylaws
- (c) Any AFT-Wisconsin member in good standing

### **Section 2. Written Submissions**

All proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing before they may be considered by the COPE Board

### **Section 3. COPE Board Consideration**

No more than ninety (90) days after receipt, the COPE Board shall review and consider all proposed amendments to these Bylaws and make recommendations to the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board

### **Section 4. AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board Consideration**

The AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board shall act on COPE Board recommendations for Bylaw amendments at its next meeting

**Section 5. Effective Date**

The amendments shall take effect immediately upon ratification by the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board

**Section 6. Distribution**

Upon ratification of amendments to the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Bylaws, revised copies shall be distributed to the AFT-Wisconsin COPE Board, the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board, and all AFT-Wisconsin Local Presidents