

## **2017 EDUCATION AND HEALTH POLICY STATEMENT**

A quality education opens minds to new possibilities and encourages students to think for themselves. While the Grange commends those who have followed the traditional path for higher education, we need to encourage those who fall outside the term “traditional student” to look at the educational opportunities available offered by vocational or trade schools or other nontraditional degree programs to expand their personal and professional lives. We implore the students of the technological age to pursue studies in the agricultural implement field due to the increasing complexity of the machinery. The purpose of education is to open the minds of young people to the world around them, to the lesson of the past, and the possibilities of the future. An understanding of the past is a part of education that is too often neglected. These important facts are even more powerful and useful when an understanding of their context and background are taught. The Grange will continue to promote the teaching of American Civics in our educational system. One of the core values of the Grange is the right to free expression and the respect of differing opinions. We especially see these as relevant in educational institutions.

We believe we must have a partnership between Federal, State and Local officials who all have a seat at the table when it comes to educating our children. Parents must be an essential part of the decision-making process. The National Grange encourages the teaching of patriotism and financial literacy as a major point of education if we are to see productive, prepared, responsible citizens and future elected officials, while contributing to our local and national economy.

The National Grange offers its continued support of OCRE (Organizations Concerned about Rural Education), the National School Boards Association and other educational associations as well as supporting the efforts to reduce the pupil to teacher ratio at all levels of education through 12th grade. The National Grange supports the idea of more study in regards to Common Core to determine the educational benefits.

The Grange urges educators at the primary, secondary and undergraduate levels to include basic knowledge of agriculture in their curriculum. Agriculture is man’s basic interaction with the environment. Every farmer learns to adapt and work with nature in order to be successful. The most simple and basic lesson, such as water is needed to grow crops, is critical for every American to understand. The National Grange supports legislation requiring education on prevention and handling of bullying of adults and children to be administered by employers and schools. We strongly encourage Grange members nationwide to play an active role in their local school systems and communities. It is essential for our members to invest in our children’s education through volunteering. Some examples of this are the donation of school supplies (such as the Words for Thirds dictionary program) and exposure to volunteerism and

community service. These contributions will help us remain positive role models for school children and increase the awareness of our organization. The National Grange encourages individuals to become educated consumers. Consumers, using modern technology, should research their purchasing and borrowing options carefully and make decisions that positively benefit their future and that of their community. The National Grange renews its historical commitment to free primary and secondary education, affordable higher education and support of the arts, music and athletics, recognizing their value in elevating the standard of social and intellectual life.

## **Health**

It is important that each of us take responsibility for our own health. The National Grange continues to support efforts to target the epidemic of childhood obesity, to return responsibility to the local communities to develop their own guidelines and to seek waivers on requirements that would allow farm to table produce and products to be fed to our children. We would recommend and encourage that the guidelines include healthy lunches, choice of milk and flavored milks, increased physical activity and limited access to soda and snack machines.

The National Grange supports the efforts of legislation to include cost effective, early intervention medical care to be covered by private and public insurance programs.

The National Grange encourages all Americans to be mindful of the opioid crisis that is sweeping America with a strong concentration in rural areas of our country. We recognize that many lives have been saved in the treatment of opioid overdoses with use of Narcan, we recommend addiction education and/or treatment be required when Narcan is administered.

The National Grange encourages all Americans to be mindful of prescription drug safety. Educational information should be provided by the prescribing physician, as well as by their pharmacists. We believe the information available through the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) and the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) should be provided to patients to give an unbiased opinion of the medication. Patients should be allowed to purchase their prescription from whatever reliable source they choose. The National Grange insists that all prescription drugs purchased from within the boundaries of the United States should meet or exceed the standards of the FDA and the DEA. Increased efforts must be made for the continuing education of Medicare recipients on the benefits available to them through Medicare.

The National Grange continues to support the prescription drug disposal program, while encouraging local Granges to get training and to take part in this program in their own local communities.

While not all products that enter the United States can realistically be tested to determine if they are defective or contaminated, we encourage government agencies and consumer safety advocates to be diligent in safety inspection on imported products. The National Grange requests that all products sold in the United States be labeled with the country of origin.

National Grange urges its members to be diligent in their communications with their legislators to continue the cost of living increases to Social Security recipients.

The National Grange encourages a commitment to quality healthcare for all. We encourage Congress to look for areas of common ground to continue to reform health care. We commend Congress on their bipartisan work toward eliminating the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB). We support further research and potential coverage by insurance or Medicare/Medicaid for alternative therapies for medical conditions such as acupuncture for pain management.

We support paid maternity leave and working with businesses to build a comprehensive policy that benefits both the employee and employer.

*This Policy Statement includes portions of the Masters External Address and the following resolution EH-521-NJ.*