

Ithaca Teachers Association's Political Action Committee
(in connection with VOTE-COPE)

Political Action Values and Endorsement Policy

Revised by All Member Vote- 3/12/2025

Our Political Action Values

Politics impacts every school district and public higher education institution, and the working conditions of every school employee, because laws and regulations affecting every member's terms and conditions of employment are passed by lawmakers and implemented by government agencies in Albany and Washington DC.

- NYSUT Political Action

The Ithaca Teachers Association (ITA) is committed to ongoing political activism and advocacy through the Political Action Committee (PAC). In all of our work, we strive to uphold the following values:

- We fight for what is best for teachers and all school related professionals.
- We fight for what is best for students in prek-higher ed.
- We fight for the resources and programs our students need and our ability to provide equal access to comprehensive public education.
- We fight for community involvement in discussions and decisions about what is best for our schools.
- We fight for, and in solidarity with, unionized public employees.

Therefore, we are committed to:

1. Generating revenue for political action through a robust VOTE-COPE campaign.
2. Advocating on relevant legislative issues through petitioning, lobbying, and other methods of civic involvement.
3. Sharing information about electoral races that are pertinent to the members of our school community.
4. Supporting and encouraging equal access to all members of our school community to voting in any and all elections.
5. Participating in conversations with and about Board of Education initiatives, actions, and candidates both elected and potential.

Our Endorsement Policy

As a result of our commitment to political advocacy, The ITA PAC may, at times, consider endorsement of electoral candidates. In general, the ITA PAC will advocate for and share endorsements made by AFT, NEA, or NYSUT and will not announce endorsements before these organizations endorse unless these organizations encourage early endorsement by locals.

In the event that a race is too small to garner national or state endorsement, The ITA PAC will consider the endorsements of the state Working Families Party, and the recommendations of the local chapter of the Working Families Party when making political endorsements. The PAC reserves the right to adopt recommendations and endorsements made by the Working Families Party in place of holding an internal endorsement meeting open to all members, and the PAC maintains the right to interview and endorse candidates that have not been endorsed by the Working Families Party as part of an internal endorsement.

All potential endorsements will be announced to members through a special written communication which includes the time and date of the endorsement meeting so that as many members who would like to participate in the process are able to do so.

When considering endorsements, the PAC will evaluate candidates based on the following criteria:

- **Values:** how closely the candidates values, as expressed in candidate questionnaires, public appearances, candidate forums, and voting records (where available) align with the values of the ITA PAC.
- **Accessibility:** how willing the candidate has been to meet with us and work with us on decisions that align with the values of the ITA PAC.
- **Advocacy:** how hard the candidate has fought to ensure that decisions made in their field align with the values of the ITA PAC.

If the ITA offers an **endorsement to a candidate**, this indicates a willingness on the part of the PAC to actively engage in campaigning for this candidate. These campaign actions may include: issuing public statements on the candidates behalf, distributing mailings on the candidates behalf, organizing, participating in, or encouraging members to participate in campaign actions like phone-banking or door knocking, or offering financial support from VOTE-COPE funds to a candidate's campaign.

At times, the ITA may issue a **statement of support for a candidate**. These statements enable a candidate to use our name and logo on their own campaign materials, but limit our involvement in directly supporting a candidate's campaign in any organized manner.

If the ITA chooses to make **No Endorsement**, the PAC will still communicate information about all candidates and voting processes to assist voters in their personal decision making.