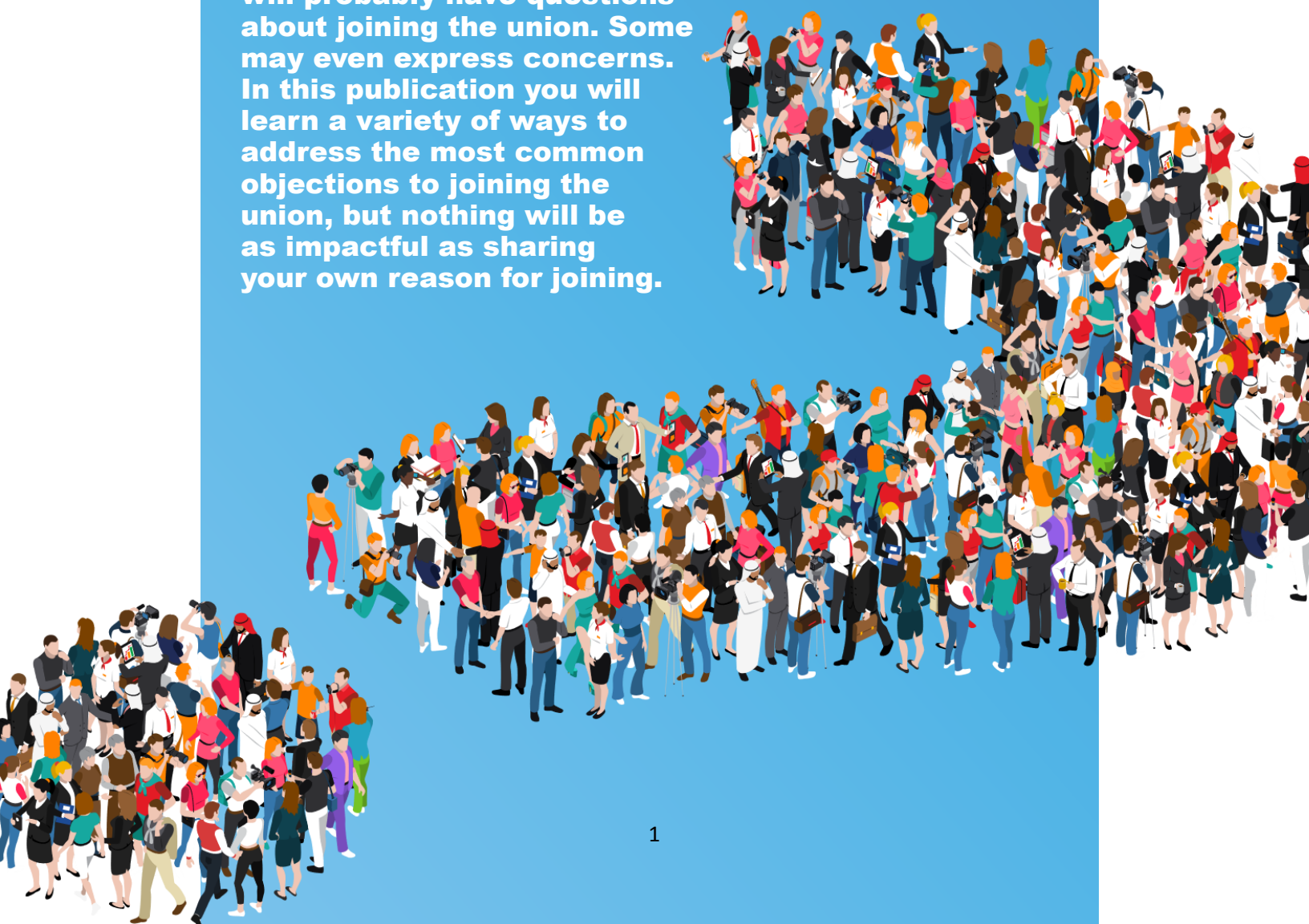


Tough Questions About Union Membership

When you are talking with a potential member, he/she/they will probably have questions about joining the union. Some may even express concerns. In this publication you will learn a variety of ways to address the most common objections to joining the union, but nothing will be as impactful as sharing your own reason for joining.



“Dues are too expensive. I can’t afford it.”

	MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
It’s like insurance. You don’t know when you are going to need help.	“How can you afford not to?” ----- Our union increased our salaries and fights to maintain affordable health insurance costs to employees. We are gaining ground, but only because of the union. ----- List protections members get 365 days a year for only \$_____per day in dues: lobbying; monitoring of state and federal agencies; contract enforcement; bargaining; precedent-setting legal cases; legal defense for members, which prevent others having to face the same thing; etc. ----- Equate dues to an investment: “You aren’t buying services, you’re buying into a cooperative, democratic organization that is only stronger if you belong.” ----- Equate to buying insurance: “You don’t know when you will need it. You don’t wait until your house is on fire to try to buy fire insurance.” ----- Save through special discounts via CTA and NEA Member Benefits program. Show ways to save. ----- “In fact, membership can actually save you money if you take advantages of special services opportunities.”
NEA provides a free \$1,000 life insurance policy for you.	
If you need an attorney to defend you against false allegations, how would you pay for that?	
Everybody is in the same boat. Some of us make it a priority.	
You insure your car and house. This is insurance for your career.	
What if you lost your job? Think of what that would cost you!	
The \$1 Million policy that you get with your NEA dues would cost you \$2,500 annually.	
You can save more than your dues when you access CTA and NEA Member Benefits.	
Dues are tax deductible.	

“Why should I join when I get it for nothing?”

	MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
It costs money to represent employees. Your dues pay for this.	Show a chart showing what a member receives in benefits and representation vs. a non-member. -----
You don't have a say in how the Association is run if you aren't a member.	“Members pay dues, which cover the cost of representation of bargaining and contract support for all bargaining unit members, members and non-members. Additionally, dues payment entitles members to vote, hold office, attend meetings and be represented on matters in addition to those covered by the negotiated agreement. It also entitles them to liability insurance and buying privileges reserved for members.” -----
It's not free. Your co-workers are paying the tab for you.	
If something happened, it would be too late to join.	
Only members get representation on non-contractual issues.	
Without a strong membership base, we can't win all we want for you and others.	“Forces which oppose public education and public school employee organizations have joined forces. Our collective resources and energies must be directed at those who oppose us from outside the profession. This is possible only when a majority determines the direction that the organization is to take, and works cooperatively with school administrators and boards to solve the problems and challenges we all face.” -----
If we stick together, there's a lot more we can get.	
Dues support the benefits you get, such as Association programs and professional development.	“We should all be working together to make our organization the very best it can be at representing all of us (for locals which do have agency fee agreements).” -----
CTA is a strong voice for schools and school employees. We need you to be stronger.	
With more members, we could have more support.	“As a member, you can take an active part in decision making, vote, hold office and have a voice in a democratic, representative organization.”

“I’d join the Local (or Local/ State) but not NEA.”

We’re working at all levels to improve schools and advocate for public education.
Precedents set across the state affect us all. CTA protects us.
Our NEA dues go primarily to provide the best representation possible.
NEA and CTA provide professional development, bargaining assistances, and legal programs to you through our local.
Only the tip of the iceberg shows here at the local.
What if you or a colleague had a problem and we didn’t have the resources to fight it?
Through its democratic process, the Association members make decisions. It’s not top-down.
Most of our local programs wouldn’t exist without CTA an NEA.
You’re represented at all levels by delegates you elect.

MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
Our local association, along with the CTA and NEA, is constantly working to protect, promote and strengthen members’ rights. Only the tip of the iceberg shows here at our local. Some unified programs are: UniServ Program Legal Services Professional Development Research Bargaining Assistance Economic Services Human and Civil Rights ----- “How would you be affected if a colleague had a problem and no one had resources or simply chose not to fight it? Precedents set in other cases protect all of us.”

“I don’t agree with (fill in the blank) of the Association.”

	MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
The voice of one or a few people can change things. Get involved and make a difference.	“Few people agree 100% with any group or organization’s actions. But representative government, in organizations as well as nations, depends on people who ‘pay their dues’ and who participate in decision making. If you don’t agree with some direction the association is taking, join; become active and work to change our course.”
I don’t agree with everything the government does, but I still pay my taxes.	-----
Public education is at stake. CTA is its strongest supporter.	“Our Association is democratic – no member is required to agree with the majority on every issue. But every member has a chance to try to sway the majority through representative democratic governance structures at every level of the Association. Furthermore, our representative bodies issue the recommendations of the majority; the Association doesn’t attempt to speak for every individual member in every decision.”
Association policies are determined by delegates election to our Representative Assemblies.	-----
If you don’t agree, get active to change things.	“How can you get involved, be informed, find out what is happening, and work for change if you don’t join?”
Join and run to be a delegate to the next Representative Assembly.	-----
You’re supporting services you get, just like you pay taxes for fire and police protection.	“Some positions do not affect us on a day-to-day basis. The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages of one or two things we do not like or agree with.”
CTA is a representative organization. You have a voice and vote in activities and policies.	-----
Some of CTA/NEA positions are distorted by the press. Find out the truth.	If the objection is to our protecting a “bad” employee, point out that we do not hire, fire, evaluate or judge an employee. “It is our responsibility to ensure an employee’s due process rights.” Point out that rights, like laws, must be enforced for each individual or they will not exist for all.

	“Do you agree with everything the Legislature or Congress does? But you don’t drop your citizenship, give up the right to vote or refuse to pay your taxes just because those bodies may take actions for which you disagree.”

“I don’t like unions.”

The school board has its association. We have CTA.
We are your exclusive representative.
Do you think we would have made the progress we’ve made if we didn’t work together on it?
Our working conditions are students’ learning conditions. The union protects both.
The union is your voice on issues like health care and wages.
Working people have always had to stick together to make progress.
What would happen if there were no unions to monitor what goes on?
What would your work life look like without CTA?
Let me tell you how things work in the Association...
The dictionary defines union as “joining together for a common cause.”

MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
“What do you think of when you say union?” ----- Define union from dictionary: join together for a common cause and a unified voice. ----- Cite professional development; community action; child protection; help for parents; available workshops; conferences on professional issues such as stress, discipline, censorship, etc. ----- “What would the effect be if no union existed to monitor, lobby, represent, enforce policies and contracts and ensure due process?” Cite records of Local/State/National.

“We shouldn’t be involved in politics.”

	MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
Members makes the decisions about which candidates to support.	“Every decision about every brick, every book and all or every education employee is made by persons elected to public office or appointed or hired by those persons. We are involved in the political arena. Education is politics.”
What exactly do you mean when you say you “stay out” of politics?	
Education decisions are political decision because they’re made by elected officials.	
CTA-PAC supports both Republicans and Democrats that support public education.	
Wonder why we did or didn’t support someone you like? Let’s look at their record on education.	
Only voluntary PAC contributions from members are used for contributions to candidates.	
CTA focuses on issues that affect public educations, educators and students.	

*“The Association doesn’t do anything
for kids and education.”*

	MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
We provide protection for you, so you can do your best with students, without worry.	Share information on professional development, lobbying activities on behalf of education, legislative goals and programs to benefit and improve education, organizational goals, and programs and activities that support education.
NEA and CTA provide professional development and resources for educators to be more effective for their students.	-----
The association works collaboratively with the Department of Education and the legislature on student issues.	Point out scholarships, community support, contests, workshops, courses, work on professional standards, NEA Professional Library, NEA Academy for Continuing Education, <i>NEA Today</i> , <i>Today's Education</i> , <i>NEA Progress</i> (for ESP members), <i>NEA Higher Education Advocate</i> , <i>NEA Higher Education Almanac</i> and <i>Thought and Action</i> (for higher education members), and <i>CTA California Educator</i> and <i>CCA Advocate</i> .
Would you like to get involved in a project like that?	
We’re the strongest voice in the state for funding our schools.	
Student learning conditions and our working conditions are closely linked – CTA cares about both.	
“Have you read NEA TODAY or the CTA Voice recently?	
CTA and local affiliates participate in community service projects.	
CTA advocates for a quality education for every student.	
CTA provides grants to locals to start their own community service projects.	

“My partner belongs, I don’t need to.”

	MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
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Each one of you has different needs and concerns, because your jobs are different.
You're both important members of your unit. CTA needs you both.
Most of your dues pay for direct services to you as a member.
If you are treated unfairly outside the contract, you won't have representation.
You both get salary gains and fringe benefits and you're both affected if we lose a battle for a contract.
I'm surprised to hear you say that. You are just as important as your partner and need equal protection.
Only one of you has liability insurance? What happens if you have a problem?
It's great that your partner is protected, but what about you?

"How many salaries do you get? If one belongs, only one gets the benefits of membership: only one gets liability insurance; only one gets representation available to members only; if affected by layoff, only one gets representation beyond contractual provisions."

"You both get salary increases and bargained benefits."

"Could either of you afford to pay for attorney fees to defend yourself?"

"There are special needs by special groups and issues at the worksite level."

"You were not hired because you were a couple. Each must stand on her/his own. You are both important members of the unit. We all need participation from both of you – on the job and in the association."

“I don’t like (past or present) leaders.”

We need people with your views to be part of things.
What should we stop or start doing?
How well do you know the current leader? Let’s get together and talk to him/her.
We all have equal access to decision-making through our votes.
Have you ever thought about running?
All our leaders are elected by open nominations.
What is it that concerns you?

MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
“They are elected by means of open nominations and secret ballot by majority vote – one person, one vote proportional representation.” ----- “What should we start/stop/continue doing?” ----- “Who would you suggest as a better leader?” ----- “How well do you know (the leader)?” If current leader, schedule him/her to follow up. ----- “Get involved and help make things better.”

“We don’t need it this year (non-bargaining year).”

Union membership provides protection all the time, not just when we’re bargaining.
What about research and professional development?
We’re not just about dollars. We’re working to make schools better for students and employees. That’s an ongoing job.
The school board and legislative see our membership numbers as a sign of strength and weakness.
Between contracts is when a lot of the work on contract maintenance occurs.
We’re always fighting unfair and arbitrary decisions that affect everybody.
We’re your strongest lobbying voice at the state level.
Fighting to defend the contract goes on all the time.
We’ve got to fight to get more funding and protections.
We’ve got to fight to fund our salary EVERY single year.

MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
“What happens in neighboring districts and states affects us when we bargain next time (e.g., rollbacks, strikes, arbitrations, legal cases, and unfair decisions, etc.). ----- There are continuing programs to support our members and enhance public education for our students: Research Training of leaders and bargaining teams Lobbying for education funding Monitoring of state and federal agencies Monitoring retirement funds Legislative programs Community relations Public relations to support public education Professional development programs Contract enforcement

“Disgruntled from past.”

	MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
I understand and respect your feelings.	Ask questions about how the potential member can get involved to effect change:
Nothing can change the past. We can work together to make the future better.	“Even if that were true, what can we do to get better results this time?”
I don’t know much about what happened then, but I know what is happening now.	“That’s history. What do we need to do now?”
What can we do to improve going forward?	“I understand that. How can we make changes?”
It might not have been so good in the past. What are you willing to do to change things?	“You’re right. Now what can we do?”
We’re working to build membership, so we can be strong next year.	“A lot of us used to feel that way. What are you willing to do to change it?”
Many people who share your feelings are active members now.	“We’re working/investing this year so we will be strong. Are you willing to be part of that investment?”
It might not have been so good in the past. What are you willing to do to change things?	“Even if that were true, it’s the best option we have now. If we don’t stand up for (ourselves/members), who will – the board? The administration/regents?”
I like to think positive. Just look at what we’ve accomplished since then.	----- Let the potential member know the association is listening and we must stand together. ----- If the problem is a poor record in the past, especially in bargaining, acknowledge it if it is true. Then ask the person to join in helping to improve it or cite positive gains in most recent bargaining. “We’re doing a lot now.”

‘I’m getting ready to retire.’

NEA has terrific benefits for members.
Be a part of making us stronger. CTA-Retired will welcome you when you retire.
CTA has fought to protect your pension for years.
Even if you’re here for a year or two, the Association is working to improve your pay and benefits.
CTA is your voice on all the issues that affect your retirement.
You’re not the kind of person who lets someone else pull the weight for you.
All the more reason to be involved in the effort to improve your retirement.
We monitor and help you navigate the state retirement system.
You’ve already got so much invested. Don’t jeopardize it now.

MORE APPROACHES/ STRATEGIES
“The investment will be small.” ----- “You may choose to stay or return. Salary and working conditions will improve while you’re gone.” ----- “You’ll benefit from the support of Association members.” ----- “Your retirement depends upon salary gains these last years. We need your support to maximize gains.” ----- “Join now and stay involved through CTA-Retired. You’ll not only remain a vital part of education, but the Association and CTA-R will continue to work 365 days a year to protect your investment and your future.”