

Bulletin

Issue 1 October 2020

Tennessee Retired Teachers' Association "Advocates for Retired Educators and Education" Since 1957

When educators recognized the need to come together as a group to advocate for retirees and the profession, they formed Tennessee Retired Teachers' Association. So, in addition to the fun we have at our meetings, it is important that we advocate for our profession. We can best plead our case for public education and retiree benefits through our membership and support of our professional organizations --- local chapters, TRTA, NEA-Retired along with our active locals. TEA and NEA.

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP EDITION

2020-2021 MEMBERSHIP CARD

Please remove your membership card from the back cover.

TRTA is the only organization in Tennessee totally dedicated to promoting and supporting the rights and needs of retired public school employees and serving as their advocate in legislative and other policy making bodies.

Tennessee Retired Teachers Association
801 Second Ave. North Nashville, TN 37201-1099

MEMBERSHIP PAYS!

Use NEA-R Member Benefits

IF YOU WANT	GO TO	FOR		
Ways to cut back on spending and trips to the store	NEA Click & Save at neamb.com/clickandsave	Savings on everything from shampoo to shoes		
To stretch your retire- ment savings	NEA Retirement Center at neamb.com/retire	Timely tips on Medicare, Social Security, taxes, inventing and more		
To protect your legacy	NEA Life Insurance Program at neamb.com/life	A wide range of plans, including guaranteed acceptance for you and your spouse		
More from a Medicare Supplement Plan	NEA Retiree Health Program at neamb.com/rhp	Competitive group rates, the free- dom to choose your own doctor and more		
Vacations that meet your accessibility needs	"Live Your Dream of Retirement Travel" at meamb.com/we-r-going	How to experience fulfilling and enjoyable vacations despite health and mobility issues		
To save money on important pharmaceutical medications	"Easy Ways to Save on Your Pre- scriptions" at neamb.com/beyond-part-d	10 simple tips to help you save money on your medications		
Cash to cover extra expenses should you be hospitalized	NEA Hospital Income Insurance Plan at neamb.com/hospital care	Affordable coverage to provide basic daily cash benefits based upon the hospital stay		



Tennessee Retired Teachers' Association an NEA-Retired affiliate

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Cut out your Membership Card on the back cover

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TRTA Staff

Donna Cotner

Executive Director Chief Lobbyist dcotner@tnea.org

Helen McMackin

Membership Associate hmcmackin@tnea.org

Judy Rodgers

Finance Associate jrodgers@tnea.org

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Amid the Pandemic

Now is a great time for reflection and personal growth. This may seem odd to many of you as we are in the middle of a pandemic, and our lives have changed drastically in just a few short months. We watched as our country experienced periods of shutdowns and slowdowns affecting most of our basic services and institutions. We watched friends, family, and strangers deal with disruption, illness and even death resulting from a viral infection. Although the COVID virus is invisible to the unaided eye, widespread fear and anxiety is clearly visible. We've all learned that a few basic precautions will give a level of personal protec-

tion as we navigate our "new normal" environment. Wearing masks, sanitizing hands and surfaces, and maintaining physical distance is becoming ingrained into our DNA. We also have seen remarkable examples of courage and creativity as families, businesses, churches and schools adapted to resume basic activities.

As an organization, TRTA is adapting and continuing to seek ways of remaining viable during this COVID time. The executive board and our committees continue to function. We meet regularly using Zoom or other platforms to work virtually. As I write this article, plans are being finalized for our fall regional workshops. Our work continues, and our focus remains unchanged. We exist primarily to **promote the economic, social, and professional interest of retired teachers,** and that is what we do. Although we may have had a slow-down or brief pause, we have adapted quickly and never stopped.

Our economic well-being remains priority for our members. As retirees, keeping watch on actions that may affect TCRS or Social Security has never been more important. During this period of physical isolation for many, we are reminded that social contact is vital for our physical well-being. No retired teacher should feel totally isolated or abandoned. Local association leaders are being asked to find ways to stay connected with members, and when we can't find a way, we will create new ways.

So we live in a different world today, where so many things have changed, but some remain the same. We still hold elections, but we may vote in a different manner. During this historic time, there will be a **national election on November 3rd**. As retired teachers, we still have a voice if we choose to use it. **Every vote counts**, whether you vote by mail or in person, and officials we elect to represent us at all levels of government become our voice. Their actions in determining outcomes affect each of us. Don't let your voice fall silent.

TRTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Lynn Tucker Past President Ron Pendergrass President Elect Anna Booher ETN At Large **Kay Moss** ETN Regional Ron Moss ETN Regional Al Doty MTN At large Susanne Boshers MTN Regional Bill Deason MTN Regional Charles Sellars WTN At Large William Murray WTN Regional Alice Fennel WTN Regional Daisy Cleaves Ex Officio JoAnn Smith-Mashburn Ex Officio Linda McCrary Ex Officio Beth Brown Ex Officio Mike Barker

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

William Murray, Chair Lisa Field Barbara Gray Teresa Kelley Reba Luttrell Judy McCadams Alice Spicer Judy Whitehill Ellis Winkler

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Rose Anderson, Chair Beverly Berard Teresa Brown Juanita Cannon Al Doty Miley Durham Evelyn Robertson Carolyn Sims Ted Williams

Executive Director's Column: DONNA COTNER

"Patience and Fortitude Conquer all Things "

Ralph Waldo Emerson

If ever there was a time that challenged this concept, this is it! A tornado in Nashville did not shut down TRTA! COVID 19 has not shut down TRTA! Social distancing and limitations on having members in "live" attendance at meetings will not stop TRTA! We are STANDING STRONG AND GROW-ING!



Since the Coronavirus outbreak, we have utilized Virtual meetings and are implementing Virtual Conferencing and Training to replace the Fall

Training Workshops that we have offered across the state. Local associations are in the process of registering the President, President-elect/Vicepresident, Legislative Chairperson and Membership Chairperson for attendance and participation in the three regional workshops offered in October. Attendance numbers are very encouraging as our members are excited at this opportunity. The TRTA leadership, TRTA Legislative Committee and TRTA Membership Committee are working hard to make the training session both fun and interesting. It is essential that our members remain engaged and actively involved in the work of the Association if we are to promote the economic, social and professional interests of retired teachers and protect those benefits necessary for their wellbeing. Your TCRS pension checks arrived on time and, beginning with the July check, reflected 2.3 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). The expenditure of personal income from TCRS pension checks results in an economic impact that reaches every town, city and county in Tennessee! There will be NO PREMIUM INCREASE for those who purchase the State of Tennessee Medicare Supplement Plan (POMCO) for 2021.

Local Associations are utilizing Webinars, ZOOM meeting and Google "go to meeting" programs to connect with members. This is especially important to maintain the social aspects of membership. Isolation due to the virus or physical limitations can have a major impact on the health and well-being of our members. Local associations have instituted numerous methods of interaction including telephone trees for phone calls to members, written notes of encouragement to members, drive-by visits while displaying posters and horn blowing, appearances at "RING Doorbells" celebrating birthdays or other events, and increased publications of local newsletters. Additionally, some local associations have held meetings in parks or other open spaces that allow for social distancing. The creativity of our members and local associations is exciting and rewarding.

Our members are among the most intelligent, knowledgeable and welleducated population. There is nothing we cannot do once we become determined to achieve it! Remember and embrace...patience and fortitude.

Displaying Pride, Being Proactive and Planning During Difficult Times

Last year I proposed a bold and optimistic goal for our organization. Obviously Covid-19 has undermined that goal, but does that mean we stop trying? I believe we as retired educators are resilient enough to regroup and continue to work toward improving our



organization. The importance of membership has not decreased just because we are struggling to meet and communicate. We may need to use new technology to contact members, or we may need to turn to tried and true measures like the telephone or letter writing. Communication is important.

I hope each of you will help your local officers develop a plan for growing your association. These plans must be developed and turned in to TRTA. Growth will not happen without planning. Being proactive cannot happen without members.

I am proud to be a part of an organization that has been involved in the development and protection of my pension and other benefits. This summer I got the good news that I would receive a cost of living adjustment on my pension. Recently I was notified that my state sponsored Medicare supplement would not have a premium increase for this coming year. I can thank TRTA for past accomplishments and for future oversight of these important benefits. I can't help but think the political landscape is going to become more difficult in the future and we must have a strong united membership to continue to receive the benefits you have worked and paid for throughout your career.

"Each One Reach One, Everyday" Anna L. Booher

A few days ago I called a longtime educator friend just to see how she was doing. I met this talented lady when I first began my teaching career in Tennessee. She was the reason I joined the association and why I am still a member.



How I admire this fabulous lady. Her career began as a classroom teacher and then moved on to association work. Over her long career she worked for several state associations and for the NEA. On February 29, 2020, she retired with a burning desire to travel. Within a few short weeks her lifelong plans came to a halt because of COVID restrictions. Across Tennessee, there are similar stories of individuals who have taken the extraordinary step of sheltering in place and restricting the amount of contact with friends and colleagues.

Isolation for educators is especially difficult because we have spent our whole career communicating with others. In other words, we love to talk. As my friend and I talked about friends, family, and an assortment of other things I felt myself laughing and smiling more. Oh, how I enjoyed the conversation! I am sure that she did also because when she answered the phone it was with such a surprised voice. We shared the common bond of both our professional careers and of being "seasoned" human beings.

I love to communicate almost daily with another friend who lives down the road. It may be by text, email, or phone but no matter the method the outcome is the same. We do not feel quite as isolated.

Just imagine how much happiness we can pass along if we just communicate with someone. "Each one reach one every day" should be our mantra and, it will make a huge difference in our emotional state of mind. As an association, we need to make contacts frequently with others, just to lift their spirits and our own.

THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW...VIA YOUR COMPUTER Make the Most of Video Visits with Your Doctor

The need for healthcare alternatives due to the COVID-19 virus has accelerated the development and utilization of Telemedicine technology. Your next doctor's visit may be virtual, and it is vitally important that this visit results in the best care possible for you.

Your visit may be with your existing provider or with a telehealth-service doctor you have never met so there are certain procedural steps that you need to implement before and during the virtual visit.

TEST THE SOFTWARE: You will need to use a computer or mobile app that has a camera. Eye contact and non-verbal cues assist in making a diagnosis. Once an appointment has been made, you will receive a text or an e-mail message with a link and directions for you to test the system and the appropriate forms for you to complete. Do not wait until the last moment to do this as you may have some difficulty and need assistance. You will receive guidance through a few screens to be certain that your camera and speakers can be accessed (that you can see and hear the doctor and that you can be seen and heard by the doctor). Please note and follow all prompts from the system. If you have poor internet connections, you may want to try running the test on your other device(s) to see if that platform works better for you.

TAKE YOUR VITAL SIGNS: Depending on the nature of your call, you will need a thermometer, bathroom scale and blood pressure cuff. Utilize these immediately prior to the visit so you can report the results to the provider. If you are managing a chronic condition you may need to invest in a monitoring tool such as an advanced blood glucose monitor for diabetes that can store and relay information to your doctor's office or if you have COPD you may need a fingertip pulse oximeter for measuring blood oxygen level.

create talking points/script of your symptons and concerns: It is important that you stay focused and do not omit any details or questions. This is especially important if you are not accustomed to communicating through a computer/device. State your concerns at the beginning of the appointment so these can be prioritized and receive the attention/time they deserve. If you have an issue that requires a visual examination -such as a bruise, swollen joint, etc.- take a picture before the appointment and send it to the doctor as an e-mail attachment as it may be impossible or awkward to show this during the appointment.

HAVE A WRITTEN HEALTH HISTORY AS READY REFERENCE: This will be helpful in communicating the pertinent parts of your medical history to a new provider or a reminder to you provider. Provide a detailed list of medications including names, dosage, frequency, the name of the prescribing physician and contact information for the pharmacy at which the prescription was filled.

HAVE YOUR CARE ADVOCATE WITH YOU: Just as you had someone with you at your regular doctor's visit, your care advocate should be with you during the virtual visit to assist you and/or take notes. Read back any notes to the doctor during the visit for clarification and request that any instructions be e-mailed to you.

CLARIFY PROCEDURES FOR FOLLOW-UP: If your next step is a lab test, ask to whom the script will be sent and how the results will be communicated to you. If an in-person check-up is necessary, you may be able to schedule this visit at this time. BE PATIENT: Just as in an actual physician's office, you may experience a wait time. It will become easier to access care without leaving your home.

2020 NEA RETIRED VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Linda McCrary, NEA-Retired Executive Council

Sarah Borgman, President of NEA-Retired, presided. Lily Eskelsen Garcia, NEA President's remarks followed the opening rituals. Lily's last visit to the Annual Meeting as NEA President concluded with a warm welcome to the NEA-Retired family and a donation of \$700 by NEA-Retired leaders to the Kinnaman Scholarship in her honor.

The credentials report indicated three hundred fifty-five (355) delegates registered with 295 in attendance.

Linda McCrary moved, on behalf of the NEA-Retired Executive Council, to temporarily suspend the current standing rules and adopt the Rules of Procedure for the Virtual 2020 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting as posted on the NEA-Retired website and mailed to the delegates. The delegates adopted the proposed agenda with flexibility and approved the minutes of the 2019 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting.

President Borgman addressed the attendees stating that if reelected, her goal of the year will be membership. She said, "We will not give up, and we will not give in; we will simply give it all we have got! For we are NEA-Retired, and we are needed now more than ever as our commitment continues."

Jean Dobashi discussed The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. The silent auction raised almost \$20,000. NEA-Retired members, during 2019-2020, donated a total of \$755,148.00. Sarah thanked the state PAC Captains, including **Lynn Tucker**, for their first year of reaching out to the average Joe and Jane in their respective states.

 ${\bf Linda\ McCrary}$ reported on actions taken on 2019 Retired New Business Items.

The NEA-Retired Bylaws Advisory Committee worked in conjunction with the NEA-Retired Executive Council on the entire NEA-Retired Bylaws documents, as recommended by the delegates to the 2019 Annual Meeting. Because the 2020 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting is virtual, and debate is challenging, the Advisory Committee and the Council agreed to bring only one amendment to the NEA-Retired Bylaws for discussion by the delegates.

Linda McCrary moved, on behalf of the NEA-Retired Bylaws Advisory Committee and the Executive Council, that the delegates add a new subsection C to Article VII 2 as follows: The NEA-Retired President shall serve temporarily as the duly elected alternate for NEA-Retired members of the NEA Board of Directors in the event no alternate is available.

The delegates passed the amendment in a vote by mail-in secret ballot. It became effective on September 1, 2020.

The Legislative/Lobbying Committee, Grants Committee, and the NEA Budget Committee gave reports. The Grants Committee awards \$136,000 annually to affiliates of NEA-Retired through a competitive grant process.

Lynda W. Smith presented Membership Awards to the state with the most significant numerical retired membership gain

Runner-up – Education Minnesota Retired – 410; Winner – CTA/ NEA-Retired (The California Teachers Association-Retired) – 528 State with the most significant percentage retired membership gain

Runner-up — Federal Education Association - Retired — 1.033%; Winner — Education Minnesota Retired — 1.052%

Membership Hall of Fame - Winner – Education Minnesota Retired

Roberta Margo presented Communication Awards to

Established retired state newsletter – Tie for first_THE CLARION – Maine Retired Edu-

cators Editor – Kay Grindall and IN THE

LOOP - Georgia Retired Educators Editors -

Toni Smith and Karen Solheim

Established local newsletters - Tie for first - MNRTA NEWSLET-

TER - Metropolitan Nashville Retired Association - Editor Doris Hendrix and DISCOVER NEW HORIZONS - Western Ohio
Retired Education Association - Editor - Wayne Wlodarski
Website Award - First Place Only - Maine Education Association
Retired-Web Designer - Pam Partridge

Spotlight Award: State Active Newsletter/Magazine covering retired issues *KNOW* – Georgia Education Association Editor – Kevin Pearson

NEA-Retired's Communication Hall of Fame -_Georgia Education Association's *KNOW* magazine – 2016, 2018, 2020

Hall of Fame Inductees from 2019 - State Established Newsletter — California 2015, 2018, 2019; Website — Michigan 2014, 2018, 2019

Alen Ritchie presented five Kinnamon Scholarships, each in the amount of \$2,500. Sarah Borgman presented the Distinguished Service Award posthumously to Tom Curran, Immediate Past President of NEA-Retired. Tom's brothers accepted the award.

The first general session closed with a Moment of Remembrance and a tribute to NEA-Retired veterans.

in the Second General Session, Becky Pringle, NEA VP, Carrie Pugh, NEA Senior Director for Campaigns & Elections, and Brandon Rettke, Associate Director, talked about the incredible importance of the 2020 elections.

Princess Moss, NEA Secretary/Treasurer, made remarks, and Steve Gorrie explained the election rules and oversaw the NEA-Retired candidates' speeches. Voting was by mail-in secret ballot. Successful candidates were:

NEA-Retired President - Sarah Borgman

NEA-Retired Executive Council – **JoAnn Smith Mashburn** and Tom Wellman

NEA Board of Directors Representing Retirees – Julie Horwin and Judy Rohde

NEA Board Alternate Representing Retirees – **Diccie Smith**Ginny Bosse replaced Judy Rhode on the NEA Resolutions Con

Ginny Bosse replaced Judy Rhode on the NEA Resolutions Committee.

Following NEA's recommendation, members and alternates of NEA Resolutions will hold their seats for an additional year.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2020 October 12 WTN regional workshop for Local RTA leaders October 19 MTN regional workshop for local RTA leaders October 26 ETN regional workshop for local RTA leaders Postmark deadline for delegate nominations to the 2021 NEA-Retired/NEA RA, Denver, CO December 11 2021 March 8 WTN regional workshop for local leaders and membership chairs March 15 MTN regional workshop for local leaders and membership chairs March 22 ETN regional workshop for local leaders and membership chairs June 8 TRTA Representative Assembly Embassy Suites, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Tennessee Retired Teachers Association Enrollment Form Name:	Unified membership is required if you retired after August 1992. You must belong to NEA-Retired, TRTA and the local Association to be a unified member Member # NEA-Retired Annual Membership \$ TRTA Annual Membership \$ Local RTA Annual Membership \$ Total Dues paid \$ Check # if paying by Check	Optional Automatic Dues Withholding from your TCRS Pension Check I hereby authorize TCRS to deduct the following due from my TCRS pension check. I agree that the dues shall be deducted until such time as I notify TRTA and TCRS in writing that I no longer wish to have such dues deducted. Authorization signature SS# if payroll deduction Date: NEA-Retired Annual Dues Der month TRTA Annual Dues Der month Local Annual Dues Der month
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Clip this membership form and <u>take it to a friend</u>. We must all work together to protect our future.

Give the completed form to the local RTA treasurer or membership chair.

NEA Retired Annual Dues \$35 TRTA Annual Dues \$25 Check with your local treasurer concerning local dues or at TRTA website http://www.tnretiredteachers.com/

RETIREE Association Dues Payment Clarification

Dues for retiree members continue to be payable by cash, check, or pension deduction through the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS). The EZPAY system (credit card, debit card, or checking account) option **DOES NOT APPLY TO RETIREES**. EZPAY is for active teachers only.

If each person will recruit one new member we will not be left with no one to speak up!

EACH ONE REACH ONE

NEA Representative Assembly 2020 Report: JoAnn Smith-Mashburn, NEA Director for Retired, NEA Board of Directors

NEA Board of Directors Report

Virtual Meeting

July 1, 2020

Approved Committee Appointments

Approved the new "NEA Standards of Conduct at NEA Events & Meetings and Member Anti-Harassment/Non -Discrimination Policy and Procedures"

Membership Report from Princess Moss Retired 321,985 (up 879)

<u>Strategic Plan and Budget</u> Approved to recommend to the RA

Alice O'Brien report. NEA has won 3 out of 4 Supreme Court battles

Barbara Schram was elected to the NEA Member Benefits Committee

NEA Representative Assembly 2020

The 2020 NEA Representative Assembly was held virtually on July 2 and July 3 from 3:00 – 8:00 pm EST each day.

During the opening ceremonies, NEA-Retired President Sarah Borgman read the NEA Mission Statement.

Credentials report: 6814 registered delegates

2020-2022 Strategic Plan and Budget was presented by Secretary Treasurer, Princess Moss. The budget passed in the secret ballot vote with 89.90% in favor.

Vice President Joe Biden listened and spoke to educators.

The Political Action Committee recommended Joe Biden for the Office of President of the United States. The secret ballot vote approval rate 89.63% Inspiring speeches were given by:

NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia; NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson, Teacher of the Year—Tabatha Rasproy of Kansas; ESP of the Year—Andrea Beeman of Ohio; Higher Educator of the Year—Elizabeth Davenport of Alabama

The Friend of Education Award was presented to Climate Activist, Greta Thunberg.

Candidate speeches were delivered. The following NEA positions were elected by mailed secret ballot:

President—Becky Pringle
Vice President—Princess Moss
Secretary Treasurer—Noel Candelaria
Executive Committee-Hanna Vandering (Run-off between Mark Jewel and Amber Gould)

9 ESP at Large positions on the NEA Board of Directors

6 won on first ballot—Ashanti Rankin, Lisa Jennings, Gerry French, Margaret Powell, Saul Ramos and Stephanie Ervin

Run-off for 3 positions:

Gwendolyn Edwards, Carmen Hill, Pamella Johnson, and Debby Chandler

Alternate ESP At-Large elected: Kathleen Meltsakos

During the HCR Awards, the Mary Hatwood Futrell Human and Civil Rights Award was presented to **Zulfat Suara of Nashville Tennessee.**

2021 MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT RATE (POMCO) NO CHANGE IN PREMIUMS

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2021

Base Monthly Premium

\$140.55

	State	Retiree
30+ years of service	\$50.00	\$90.55
20-29 years of service	\$37.50	\$103.05
15-19 years of service	\$25.00	\$115.55
Less than 15 years of service	\$0.00	\$140.55
Dependents (spouses)	\$0.00	\$140.55
Local education support staff	\$0.00	\$140.55
Local government	\$0.00	\$140.55

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2021 NEA Retired Annual Meeting/ NEA Convention Nomination Form			
Membership Number: 000			
Name:			
Address:			
City, State and ZIP			
Local Retired Teachers Association (RTA):			
Phone :	Cell:		
Home E-mail:			
*Signature:			
Nominations must be postmarked no later than Decem	ber 11, 2020. Send the nomination form to:		
Tennessee Retired Teachers Association, 801 Second Av	venue North Nashville, TN 37201-1099 (*signature required)		
Convention to be held in Denver, CO June 29-July 6 2021			

YOUR VOICE! YOUR VOTE! YOUR FUTURE!

Voting is both a right and a responsibility! Make your voice heard on election day!

Election Deadlines for November 3, 2020

October 5, 2020 Registration Deadline

October 14-29 Early Voting Period

October 27 Deadline to request an absentee (mail in) Ballot

November 3 Election Day and deadline for receiving absentee ballots

Please check with your local election commission for additional information.

Voters can find early voting and Election Day polling locations, view and mark sample ballots and much more at GoVoteTN.com

For the latest news, visit the TRTA Website at: http://www.tnretiredteachers.com/

We are also interested in how many of our members view our <u>Facebook</u> page. If you view the page please leave a comment so that we will know you have visited the site.





HEAR in America is an endorsed benefit for TRTA members

Basic Benefits & Discount Information

Members of TRTA are entitled to the following benefits:

- Free hearing screenings for yourself and immediate family members at a local provider's office.
- Discounts from 30% to 50% off manufactuere suggested retail prices for hearing aids
- 2 year supply free batteries
- 2 year warranty on hearing aids
- Office service (retests, cleanings and adjustments) are included for the lifetime of the hearing aids
- ♦ 45-day trial period to decide if you want to keep your hearing aids

1-800-286-6149

For information call 1-800-286-6149 or go on line to www.hearinamerica.com

Tennessee Retired Teachers Association 801 Second Avenue North Nashville, TN 37201-1099 NON-PROFIT ORG. U.S. Postage PAID Nashville, TN Permit No. 1

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