

# THE LINK

FRESNO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

## Special Election Issue

VOLUME 56 NO. 1

APRIL 2014

### IMPORTANT ELECTION INFORMATION

Ballots will be sent to the homes of FTA members on Friday, April 11, 2014. Balloting begins on Saturday, April 12, 2014, and will close on Thursday, April 24, 2014.

Ballots not received by US Mail by the Independent Agency of DeMera, DeMera and Cameron by the last US mail delivery on April 24, 2014, will be declared invalid and will not be counted.

Ballots MUST be returned by US Mail. Do not deliver your ballot to either the FTA Office or to the office of the Independent agency of DeMera, DeMera and Cameron, or your ballot will be declared invalid and will not be counted.

**NOTE: It may take up to 3 days for your ballot to reach DeMera, DeMera & Cameron.**

**Your signature on the authentication portion of the return envelope is required. Any envelopes returned without signatures will be declared invalid and will not be counted.**

**NOTE: Each candidate's statement is limited to 250 words per office AND candidate names will appear on the ballot in the order of the official CTA 2013-2014 alphabet:**

**Y L U I Q V R E G W N F M A J  
P H O T D K C Z S X B**

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



*Eva Ruiz, President*

**The strength of FTA depends on our participation. When we stand together, we stand up for our profession.** The increased, visible involvement of FTA members this year has been wonderful; and definitely 'noticed' by our school board and administration! It has been the participation of so many FTA members throughout this bargaining season that is revitalizing our Association.

That high level of participation is needed again, now. Our FTA Elections in recent years have turned out a very low number of voters. That needs to change, for the good of all of us.

**Now is the time for FTA's teachers, nurses, librarians and speech pathologists' to exercise your Right and Responsibility to vote.**

Your Fresno Teachers Association Executive Board has 10 members, 4 officers and 6 Directors-At-Large. This year you will be voting to fill the seats of all 4 Officers. These elected positions, in conjunction with the 6 Directors, will be making crucial decisions about the direction and activities of our organization. Support for negotiations and electing a new school board are only two of the critical issues facing us, and ultimately our families.

Other open positions on which you will vote are representatives to the California Teachers Association State Council. Your representatives to State Council will work with other Members throughout the state on Ed Code issues and state legislation. Serving on the CTA State Council is an important job, serving all the CTA members in the state. This year, you will elect 4 FTA Representatives to the State Council. They will be your voice at the State level. It is

important that we choose leaders who are interactive and will listen to our Rep Council and our Members for guidance.

Help FTA continue to have strong, experienced leadership willing to stand up for the rights of our members. FTA is the 4th largest CTA association. Our voices are needed to help guide the way to better laws, better funding and more power over those who would keep us down.

**More than ever, we must all participate to ensure that FTA Members receive the respect we deserve.**

You make me very proud to be your President. Please take the time to evaluate and talk to the candidates who have stated their intent in representing you for the next two years. Participate in this election. Exercise your right to vote. Cast your ballot for those candidates who will best represent YOU.

Please vote as soon as you receive your ballot in the U.S. Mail.

Make this the largest FTA voter turnout in recent history.

Every ballot is important.  
**Make Yours Count!**



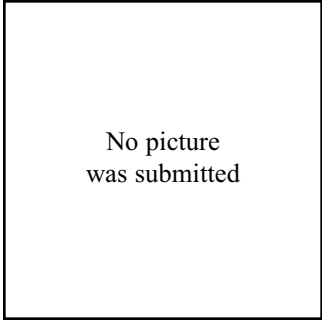
### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

●  
**APRIL 24, 2014  
BALLOT DEADLINE**

●  
**APRIL 25, 2014  
DEMERA ET AL, WILL OPEN AND  
COUNT BALLOTS AND PREPARE  
APPROPRIATE TALLY SHEETS**

●  
**APRIL 29, 2014  
THE FINAL REPORT SHALL BE  
POSTED AT THE FTA OFFICE  
AND MAILED TO SCHOOL SITES**

**OFFICE: President (1 Seat)**  
**TERM OF OFFICE: 2014-2016**  
**CANDIDATES: In Official CTA Alphabetical Order**



**OLGA VALLE-QUEVEDO #1**  
 No statement was submitted.



**EVA RUIZ #2**  
**(INCUMBENT)**



**TISH RICE #3**

Patience will not eliminate the crisis we face. With our members paying over \$100 a month for a strong, organized union that supports challenges unique to every FUSD campus, we still do not feel supported, valued, or heard. We lack the positive leadership to effect needed change. We cannot afford to have our voices ignored. It is these unresolved issues and my desire to correct them, that I have decided to run for FTA president.

Our union needs a vision that unites and moves us forward as we fight unreasonable burdens levied on us. I pledge to work tenaciously to build unity and always put the interests of our members first. With 23 years of classroom experience and having served on councils and committees, I have learned when professionalism is strictly maintained, unity is possible, even when there are disagreements.

As your president, I will make safety and discipline a top priority, improve our communication system, redesign the FTA website, utilize surveys, increase school visitations, and provide reps time to network more effectively. Finally, I want to begin a public relations campaign to communicate FTA's position to the public.

A diverse group of our membership has begun to organize, to advance us in a direction that restores our union's credibility and power. Join Adam Ebrahim, Debbie Henell, Teri Reichert, and myself if you are tired of excuses. Let us lead you to build the strong, professional organization we all deserve.

I am Eva Ruiz, your current **FTA President**. I'm a teacher, a parent and for the last seventeen years, a proud and active member of the Fresno Teachers Association. In the course of those seventeen years, I've served in many roles at every level of our Association's governance.

I have been your **President** for the last two years; I have been your Treasurer for four years and a Director at Large for two years. I have served on the Negotiations team, Organizing Committee, Political Action Committee and Social Committee.

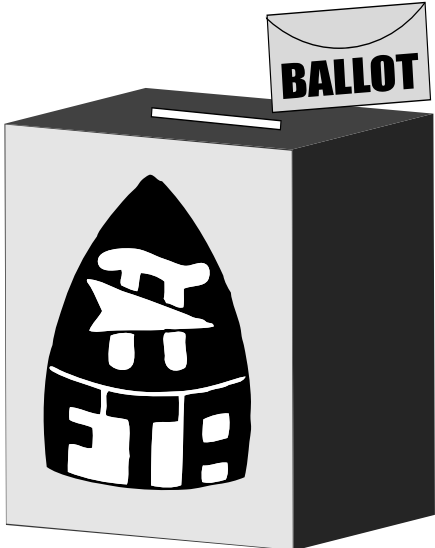
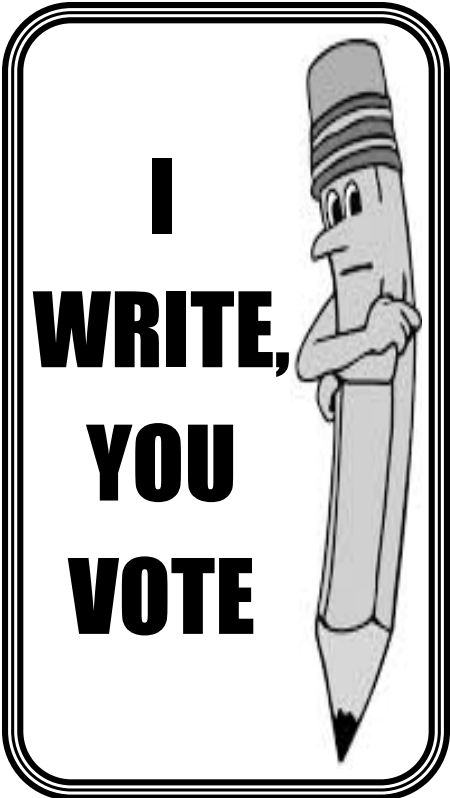
As your **President** here are some of the actions that have taken place during my leadership:

- Established school site visits
- Hired an Executive Director
- Membership Email Data Base
- Connected members with FTA email blast
- Receiving Support from CTA
- Identifying Leaders and Sending to CTA Leadership Conference
- Joining with the CTA Service Center for Rep Training
- Establish a diverse Negotiations Team and proper Training
- Building Capacity within our membership
- Communications with members in a professional manor

Experience counts and teachers know it. That's why teachers need to know what is in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. We are the experts on what should be happening in the classroom and we need to be the experts on our own profession. I want to continue working for you by continuing to build a stronger organization for teachers.

**"Continue to Move FTA Forward"**  
**"Vote Eva Ruiz for FTA President"**

**VOTE**



**OFFICE: Vice-President**  
**TERM OF OFFICE: 2014-2016**  
**CANDIDATES: In Official CTA Alphabetical Order**



**ROSEMARY VELASCO #5**

I am Rosemary Velasco, and I am running for Vice President of the Fresno Teachers Association. As your Treasurer these last two years, I have worked to update our financial reporting systems so that they are more easily understood and consistent with the intent of our Association Bylaws. I have also begun work on the Treasurer's Manual as recommended for 5 years in the annual audit process prior to my tenure. The manual will help new Treasurers, as well as our Representative Council and Executive Board to better understand the processes involved with our fiduciary responsibilities.

As Vice President, one of my goals will be to continue the work to align our Bylaws, Standing Rules, and manuals to make our association run more smoothly while continuing to build and strengthen our association. The Vice President plays a pivotal role in that activity as stated in FTA's Bylaws.

I previously served on the FTA Representative Council for 16 years. In addition to currently serving as your Treasurer, I am currently the Board Liaison to the Special Ed and Elections Committees, and I am the Chair of the Budget Task Force.

I believe that strengthening these committees and creating new ways for members to participate are key to increasing member participation. The more we participate, the more we stand together to improve working conditions, salaries and benefits.

Please vote for me, Rosemary Velasco, for Vice President of the Fresno Teachers Association, so that we can continue to build and strengthen our association.



**ADAM EBRAHIM #6**

A UNITED VOICE for TEACHERS

The transition to Common Core has opened up a brief space of opportunity for teachers to determine what the next decade of education will look like in our District. However, we lack the degree of organization to assert our voice and the unity to articulate a shared vision. If I am elected Vice President, I will work to directly organize teachers in asserting ourselves as professionals, as the subject matter experts in our classrooms, and as the true advocates for students in the city of Fresno.

Our union needs to evolve. We have failed to match the District's efficiency in advancing its agenda, resulting in a school system that does not appropriately honor the educational needs of students and does not respect teachers. We have fallen behind our statewide organization in terms of professionalism, member service, and effective communication. We must correct ourselves now.

My agenda:

- 1) Enhance the professionalism of FTA by moving into closer alignment with statewide best practices
- 2) Increase FTA responsiveness through modernizing our communication system
- 3) Connect our teachers to the incredible professional development opportunities offered through CTA

I am a former enlisted soldier and military officer. I am disciplined and principled. I know how to lead and I know how to move organizations forward. I am running with Tish Rice, Debbie Henell, and Teri Reichert because I respect their integrity and trust their purposes. We are asking for your vote and asking that you get involved. Thank you.

**OFFICE: Secretary**  
**TERM OF OFFICE: 2014-2016**  
**CANDIDATES: In Official CTA Alphabetical Order**



**TERI REICHERT #8**  
**(INCUMBENT)**

My name is Teri Reichert, RN. I am running for FTA Secretary and I would like your vote again. I hope in this short time period I have begun to earn your confidence and respect. I have worked hard to obtain in depth information about the workings of FTA so that I could present not just the minutes but accurate and real time information. Information that would inform you as to the direction your Directors and Board members are leading your organization. I believe one of my roles as your Secretary is to provide you with appropriate, pertinent, accurate information. I also believe with this knowledge you can and will make informed decisions and recommendations to your officers and board members. An organization cannot ask its' members to be interested and active if it is not willing to provide them the information that affects their professional lives and the dues they pay. I believe my role is to help lead the organization and protect its members. I can only effectively support the members if I receive feedback from the members because they trust I will keep them informed and respect the confidence they give to me.

I ask for your vote again to continue to work for you, provide the information you need, so that all our members actively participate in the decisions that affect the direction their working lives, careers take in FUSD.

Thank you for the time I have been able to work for you.

Sincerely, Teri Reichert, RN  
FTA Secretary 2013-14.

*SECRETARY, cont., next page*



**✓ DON'T FORGET**

Your signature on the authentication portion of the return envelope is required.



**OFFICE: SECRETARY,**  
continued



**JANET RENTERIA #9**

My name is Janet Renteria, and I am running for FTA secretary. I have over ten years of experience representing teachers, nurses, and speech pathologists. Two years ago I was on the team that spoke in favor of Proposition 30 and against Proposition 32. I am the current secretary for the FTA's Election Committee. I have attended our local FTA representative training and the Fresno-Madera Service Center weekend training. I have also attended the CTA Leadership Conference. I mention all of the things that I have done to demonstrate my experience and qualifications for office.

Four years ago I had the responsibility of representing myself during the Reduction in Force (RIF) hearings. I worked closely with FTA leadership and CTA lawyers and found myself using skills and knowledge that I had learned in my former career as a bank auditor. Those hearings brought about in me a renewed desire to use my knowledge and ability to represent the members of the Fresno Teacher's Association. You need leaders who understand how to read and abide by laws, rules, and regulations. An added bonus would be leaders who are trained in how to write reports and deliver presentations to board members. I have this kind of training and experience. I also have twenty years of teaching experience in grade levels one through ten. My mother is also a retired teacher who still substitutes every day. A vote for me is a vote to continue moving forward!



**OFFICE: Treasurer**  
**TERM OF OFFICE: 2014-2016**  
**CANDIDATES: In Official CTA Alphabetical Order**



**DEBBIE HENELL #11**

A UNITED VOICE for TEACHERS  
Every organization is only as strong as the membership and to a degree, its finances. The membership provides the intellectual means to find solutions to difficult situations, advance their field of work, and be forward thinkers for what lies ahead. The finances of the organization provides the means to the problem solving, training and information sharing that advances the work, as well as provides the security for future events. As a former Program Manager I've seen how effective budgeting can provide staff and students with the resources needed. I strongly believe that information should be shared with our membership and that each member's Voice of concern needs to be heard. I believe that forward thinking and planning in the area of fiscal responsibility is a must. The work we do for the children and families of the community is not easy. We will not be successful if we continue to work in isolation from each other and the other professional organizations such as CTA and NEA. Let's work together to create a synergy in Fresno that increases opportunities for this membership and the families that we serve. I believe that in order to achieve this, our FTA board needs to be filled with independent thinkers that focus on the good of the whole membership. There are others running that also share the same vision: Tish Rice (President), Adam Ebrahim (Vice President) and Teri Reichert (secretary). Vote and let your Voice be heard.



**FELICIA BURRELL #12**

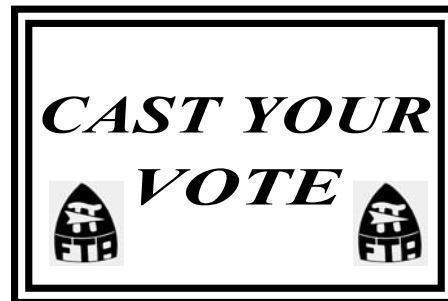
I, Felicia Burrell, a Special Education Teacher at Tehipite Middle School and a member of your Negotiation team would like your support in my run for **Treasurer**.

I feel it is important to provide the best training and education for our members on our Collective Bargaining Agreement. I am a lifelong learner and willing to continue to further my education to ensure our Association remains solvent.

A key to bettering our Association is experience; I have served as a Representative for 6 years, served on the Special Education committee for the past four years. When I commit to an endeavor, I give 110% to the responsibility; I will give that commitment to **Treasurer** of our Association. As **Treasurer** I would like to provide the membership a diligent and respectful management of our Association dues.

I would appreciate your support and your vote for **Treasurer**. Thank You for your consideration.

**"Continue to Move FTA Forward"**  
**Vote Felicia Burrell for Treasurer**



**NOTE**  
*Each candidate's statement is limited to 250 words per office. AND candidates appear in official CTA Election Alphabetical order for 2013 - 2014*

**OFFICE: State Council Delegates (4 Seats)**  
**TERM OF OFFICE: (4) 3 year terms ending June 2017**  
**CANDIDATES: In Official CTA Alphabetical Order**



**MAI SUMMER VUE #14**

VOTE for me for State Council Representative, if you like the positive change I have helped bring to FTA recently: new FTA Board members, a new and effective Executive Director, and a Secretary that puts detailed minutes out at every Rep Council meetings. I have proven over and over again that I am a leader you can trust and count on to bring positive change to FTA.

**Why State Council:**

▶ This year, I sit on the NEA Asian and Pacific Islander Caucus Executive Board as their Secretary. This seat automatically grants me the right to become a member of the Ethnic Minority Affair Advisory Committee to the NEA Board. For the first time, I was able to bring our issues and concerns to the NEA table. I want to connect the dots from local to state to national for you!

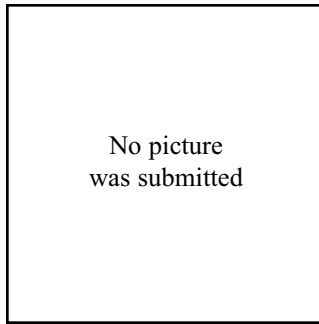
▶ My goal with the CTA State Council is to bring you more news and resources from CTA. Furthermore, I want to:

▶ Connect you to quality trainings they have, such as “know your rights,” “Common Core,” and more.

▶ Learn what committees and caucuses they have established at State Council to address concerns and issues so that we can duplicate it in FTA to better support our members.

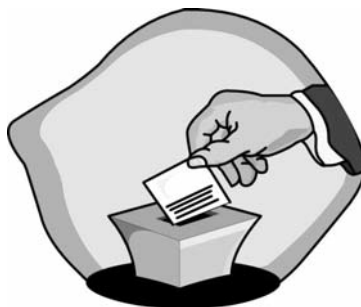
▶ Ultimately, I want to help close the FTA, CTA, and NEA gap, so that we get our money’s worth.

Your VOTE will get me there. If I win, we ALL win. Thank you!



**OLGA VALLE-QUEVEDO #15**

No statement was submitted.



**GLORIA RUIZ #16**

My name is Gloria Ruiz and I am running for CTA State Council.

The educational system is in crisis with an increased focus on testing and teacher evaluations that affect our profession. We need our voices to be heard at the State and National level by a strong advocate such as myself.

My mission is to be actively involved in setting policy for the organization that represents educators by voting on issues affecting education and educating FTA teachers about their rights in their profession.

As an educator of twenty-two years, I have been actively involved as a School Site Representative along with serving on the Elections and Social committees. At the school site, I was a Lead Teacher and actively involved on the School Site Council and School Building Committees. I am currently serving as a CTA State Council Alternate.

I look forward to personally serving as your CTA State Council Representative.

**PLEASE VOTE FOR ME  
 EXPERIENCE MATTERS!  
 VOTE GLORIA RUIZ FOR  
 CTA STATE COUNCIL**

*STATE COUNCIL DELEGATES, cont.. next page*

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**OFFICE: STATE COUNCIL DELEGATES,**  
continued



**ALBERT ROCHA #17**

Over the course of the last 3 years, I have been serving as a CTA State Council Representative and can attest that strong leadership and commitment has been essential to being a part of making constructive changes of the current Legislative and State decisions. This is exactly what I've been a part of by advocating to elect friendly candidates who prioritize all educational causes and initiatives. I've served on both the political action committee (PIC) and, currently sit on the Adult and Career Technical Educational Committee (ACT) focused on re-establishing career life skills that are relevant to each and every student. When elected to another term as a State Council Delegate, I will continue to fully participate, advocate and vote on behalf of all your concerns related to how Public Education and the significance of teachers must be held to the highest priority.

As the State's fiscal finances improves with LCFF, we must become even more proactive of how new funding will support classroom teachers especially related to common core implementation and teacher evaluations. We must stand together to defend our profession, as well as the rights of students who do depend on us to be their advocates by way of social emotional guidance. These are some of the many issues I will continue to protect and stand up for in the next term, as a State Council representative for the Fresno Teachers Association.

**Please remember to vote Albert J. Rocha for CTA State Council Representative. Thank You**



**VIOLA MELELLA #18**

My name is Viola Melella. I have had the privilege of meeting and working with many fellow teachers, nurses, librarians, DIS personnel and support staff in my 29 year career with Fresno Unified. My first year as a teacher, I was elected School Site Representative and have subsequently served as a Rep for 3 different schools. I have been a member of the Negotiations Committee, SPED committee and Social Committee. I am currently on the Joint Health Management Board and the chair of the Special Education Committee. I have attended various trainings and conferences through FTA, CTA and NEA. I have walked precincts, phone banked, passed out informational flyers, attended and presented at School Board meetings and proudly stood alongside my fellow educators at several rallies. I have the experience, knowledge, professionalism and dedication to work hard on your behalf. It would be an honor for me to represent you as a State Council delegate. I am asking for your support by voting for me in the upcoming election.



**ARTURO PEREZ #19**

My name is Arturo Perez and I am running for the CTA State Council Delegate. I have been an FTA school site representative for the past 12 years. I have seen and experienced teacher rights and issues come under greater scrutiny and attack by the district over recent years. I am a person who has and will continue to defend teachers.

My experience of being involved as a member of my school building committee and school site council has shaped my outlook and perception of how important educational issues and politics are locally, statewide, and national. While attending the NEA Representative Assembly in Atlanta this past summer, my experience of interacting with other union members across the country was inspiring and has motivated me to more active within my union in representing and advocating educational agendas that truly benefits students and our profession.

Significantly now and in the future, it is vital for teachers to become united and strong in participating and demonstrating union solidarity and not be divided in the face of a common obstacle. I firmly believe positive, constructive, and professional collaboration accomplishes more successful diplomatic outcomes and resolutions than heated rhetoric. Active and unified union members conveys an unequivocal and powerful message to administration, conservative detractors and closed-minded critics. Teacher union solidarity is our most powerful tool in achieving positive outcomes in the immediate and upcoming future.

I would be honored to represent FTA as a delegate to CTA State Council. Please vote for Arturo Perez. Thanks!

*STATE COUNCIL DELEGATES, cont.. next page*





**CAROL KURNOSOFF #20**

Vote and Reelect Carol Kurnosoff for CTA State Council. I serve on the Negotiation Policy Committee. I have been a past school site rep and executive board member. Many changes have occurred. Teachers have voiced their concerns about Common Core. It is time to listen. I will take your concerns to CTA State Council. We need to restore teacher pride and dignity at work. Teachers are harassed in the workplace. In many instances, it goes unreported because of retaliation. Many teachers have been targets of multiple unannounced classroom visitations, negative lesson debriefs, verbal abuse, in the hostile workplace environment. Administration embellishes data collected to use on assessment evaluations.

Tenured teachers are facing age discrimination, harassment, hostile workplace environment, and poor evaluations before they reach retirement. Teacher's work hard to prepare lessons for their students to be successful and the challenges they face. Teachers are the foundation of what education was built on.

Last year, I brought New Business Item 14 to NEA. I discussed the harassment teachers are facing in the work place environment. I collected stories and presented them at NEA. It passed all 50 states and a toolkit was created by NEA.

My parents were educators. They taught me teaching and giving time to your students is what makes me proud to be a teacher. I am committed to helping my student's families and fellow teachers in my community. Vote for Carol Kurnosoff for CTA State Council.



**FELICIA BURRELL #21**

Representation is the key to our voices being heard, that is why I am running for **California Teachers Association (CTA) State Council Delegate**. I have been a teacher for eight years and a district employee for nineteen (19) and I have had the pleasure of providing support as a site representative for six years. I would like to take the next step and provide a conscientious voice for Fresno Teachers Association, the fourth largest district in California.

As your **State Council Delegate**, I would ensure that our voices are heard and our interests are known at the state level. It is also important that we as member of the California Teachers Association be informed of the decisions and outcomes that come from the state level.

I would be honored to represent you as a **Delegate of CTA State Council**.

**Vote Felicia for  
CTA State Council Delegate**



## **FTA STANDING RULES**

### **RULE IV - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

#### **C. ELECTIONS PROCEDURES FOR OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AT LARGE, CTA STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES, AND NEA REPRESENTATIVES ASSEMBLY**

##### **H - Declaring Winners**

1. The winning candidate for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be determined by a majority vote which means more than half the legal votes cast.
2. The winning candidates for the offices of FTA Director-at-Large shall be determined by plurality vote which means the largest number of votes given any candidate.

Candidates shall be listed in the order of the total number of votes they have received. Beginning with the candidate who has received the most votes and moving down the list, candidates shall be declared winners until all vacancies are filled.

3. The winning candidates for the position of CTA State Council Representatives shall be determined by a majority vote.
  - a. Candidates shall be listed in the order of the total number of votes they have received. Beginning with the candidate whose received the most votes and moving down the list, candidates shall be declared winners until all vacancies are filled.
  - b. If all the positions are not filled by candidates receiving a majority vote, a run-off will be held among the remaining candidates, ranked in order of number of votes received.
  - c. Candidates for the office of CTA State Council Representative who are not elected shall be designated as alternate delegates. Ranking in accordance to the number of votes received shall determine the order of entitlement to delegate positions should the use of alternate delegates become necessary. A rotation system should be used each time an alternate is needed.

Thank You For Caring!!! ★ Thank You For Voting!!!



# ***THE LINK***

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