

COPE

Achievements

By creating a favorable climate of public opinion and by working with public officials at all levels of government, COPE fosters the kind of environment in which the union's legislative priorities can be adopted. The list of recent achievements is notable:

- **Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE)** — For more than a decade COPE worked to keep up the pressure until the courts, the governor and the Legislature finally came together to provide a more equitable portion of state education funding for New York City schools. The result has led to new school construction and the first steps toward meaningful class-size reduction.
- **55/25 Pension Improvement** — The UFT negotiated this landmark benefit with the city but it still requires approval by the state Legislature and COPE is lobbying hard for its adoption.
- **Whistleblower Protections** — Without legislation to shield educators from retribution for reporting conduct that could harm schoolchildren, educators might be reluctant to risk their careers. COPE had to work overtime to achieve this law, first getting the City Council to pass it and then to override the mayor's veto.
- **Organizing 28,000 Home Day Care Providers** — COPE worked to have the Legislature pass a bill to allow the providers (who are independent agents) to organize, but Gov. Pataki vetoed it. Then COPE worked to have Gov. Spitzer sign an executive order to permit them to organize.
- **Maintaining Funding for Teacher Centers** — A legislative priority each year, it requires strenuous political work to keep the budget-cutters from short-changing this vital support group for educators.
- **SAVE Legislation** — Years of effort by COPE resulted in a law that makes assault on an educator a felony and allows teachers to remove disruptive students from their classrooms.
- **Increasing Teacher's Choice allocations** — COPE keeps the pressure on the City Council to upgrade this important program.
- **Education tax credits for all children** — The original notion was to provide credits for children who went to parochial and other private schools — vouchers, in effect. Swift political action broadened the legislation to include all low- and middle-income children in both public and private schools.

Future Goals

- ✓ Improve NCLB
- ✓ Stop Privatization of Medicare
- ✓ Protect Tenure Rights
- ✓ Influence Presidential Candidates
- ✓ Keep Congress Progressive
- ✓ Protect Social Security
- ✓ Increase COLA Benefits
- ✓ Seek Pension Improvements
- ✓ Secure National Health Care
- ✓ Reform the Taylor Law
- ✓ Protect the Right to Organize
- ✓ Further Reduction of Class Size
- ✓ Stop Budget Cuts/Freezes
- ✓ Develop a school governance program that meets the needs of students and enables teachers to teach

The Challenge

At a time when those who don't like teacher unions and who want to privatize public education have great influence around the country, it is especially important that we maintain our vigilance. This is a never-ending task that requires enormous resources.

That's why we need a strong and healthy COPE to support the candidates who support us, to organize campaigns, to do phone banks and lobbying and leafleting and all the other important political work. So when there is yet another attempt to shift all the responsibility of educating our kids onto teachers, COPE is there. When there is yet another attack in the Legislature on teacher tenure, or promoting school vouchers, we have COPE to fight it off. When there is yet another attempt to make individual merit pay part of the education law, we have COPE to fight it off.

We need COPE to safeguard our future
AND COPE NEEDS YOU!