

Extension Employees And Proposed Legislation

WSU Extension is an educational organization and as such has assumed responsibility for helping the people of the state obtain a better understanding of public affairs issues and problems. This is an important educational job where a great need exists. For this reason, Extension develops programs to increase the effectiveness of work on public affairs problems and issues.

In conducting educational work on public policy problems and issues, it is very important that Extension faculty and staff strive in every way possible for objectivity. It is important that both sides of any issue be brought out. As far as possible, all of the factors both for and against should be brought out and discussed objectively on the basis of accepted economic facts and principles.

Faculty and staff should never take a stand for or against a proposed measure or a proposed piece of legislation. Experience shows that once a stand is taken, people are often inclined to spend most of the time seeking facts and arguments that will support their stand, rather than looking objectively for facts and principles that will throw more light on both sides of the issue in question.

Usually it is unwise for educators to appear as witnesses at hearings of legislative committees, if the educators are requested to appear at such a hearing by a proponent or opponent of a proposed measure or piece of legislation. If, however, the request is from a legislator then it is probably advisable to appear. If this happens educators should present clearly established facts, not opinions. The WSU Office of Governmental Relations should be notified as early as possible.