

**KNEA: Kansas National Education Association**

## **ACORN and NEA announce plans to Support 100-Hour Agenda in Congress**

Members of Kansas ACORN and the Kansas NEA announced joint efforts to support Change America Now (CAN). The CAN campaign focuses on passing through Congress the economic elements of the 100-Hour legislative agenda, which includes raising the federal minimum wage and cutting the interest rates on students loans in half.

Speaking at a news conference in Topeka were (l-r) ACORN member Sarah Lott-Edwards, KNEA President Blake West and ACORN member Deni Coker (pictured at right).



Change America Now is a national campaign effort being mounted by nearly 40 organizations in 31 states to encourage Congressional leaders to vote on key issues in the first 100 legislative hours of the 110th Congress in early January. Between Dec. 11-15, ACORN and various partners are conducting campaigns in five states: Delaware, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

"Here in Kansas, we're interested specifically in increasing the minimum wage because more money will get into working families' pockets," said Sarah Lott-Edwards, Kansas ACORN member. "Congress has raised their salaries over nine times and upped their pay over \$30,000. Yet, they've done nothing for the minimum wage."

It's about helping low income families earn a livable wage, said ACORN member Deni Coker. "There's a misperception that low income folks don't want to work. Everyone needs to earn a wage that will support their families."

"The Kansas NEA supports key points of this important 'can-do' campaign," said KNEA President Blake West. "Increasing the minimum wage, for example, will have a profound effect on raising children out of poverty. Cutting interest rates for college loans makes higher education more affordable," he added. "This focus benefits the economy and society as a whole."

Besides increasing the wage and education issues, other items on the CAN 100 Hour Agenda are repealing tax breaks for big oil and eliminating the prohibition on Medicare negotiating with drug companies for lower prices. ACORN and the Change America Now campaign seek to pass these priorities with large bipartisan majorities in the House of Representatives in effort to build momentum for President Bush sign them into law.

*ACORN is the nation's largest community organization of low- and moderate-income families, with over 250,000 member families organized into 800 neighborhood chapters in 103 cities across the country. Since 1970 ACORN has taken action and won victories on issues of concern to our members, including better housing for first time homebuyers and tenants, living wages for low-wage workers, more investment in our communities from banks and governments, and better public schools.*

*Kansas NEA teachers, along with the National Education Association, continually work to provide and promote quality public schools, to improve the well-being of members and to strengthen the teaching profession.*