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Legislative Update Week 9

March 12, 2022

Top 3 Things to Know

1 Honesty in Education - On Tuesday, ahead of the House Education and Public Works Committee's final hearing to listen to public testimony on anti-Truth bills [H.4325](#), [H.4343](#), [H.4392](#), [H.4605](#), and [H.4799](#), The SCEA joined the E3 Foundation, Lowcountry Black Parents Association, ACLU of South Carolina, NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF), Grand Strand Action Together, and SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center, as well as Representative Marvin Pendarvis, Representative Annie McDaniel, Representative Krystle Matthews, and Senator Mike Fanning, to speak out for all students to be reflected and respected as whole people in the classroom and to receive a complete, honest education about our nation's history. [You can watch The SCEA's Livestream of the Press Conference here.](#)

That evening during testimony, the majority of speakers, including several The SCEA members, higher education faculty, district level administration, parents, community members, and students, spoke against this harmful legislation that seeks to divide by pitting parents against educators and infringing on educators' and employers' ability to teach truthful history, discuss relevant current events, censor speech relating to concepts such as unconscious bias and equity, and by attacking the lived humanity of members of the Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and LGBTQ+ community. In fact, many comments made in support of the bills directly attacked and attempted to dehumanize these communities, reinforcing the need to stand up and speak out. [The full meeting summary can be read here.](#) While public testimony is over, it is still important to [make your voice heard](#) to to the committee!

2 Senate Voucher Fight - On Wednesday and Thursday, the full Senate Education Committee discussed harmful voucher bill [S.935](#). The committee had initially scheduled three meetings--two on Wednesday and a third on Thursday--but the second meeting

on Wednesday was cancelled due to prolonged debate on the Senate floor that afternoon and evening.

Wednesday's meeting mainly set the stage for amendments proposed on Thursday, with several Senators asking questions regarding the funding mechanisms and impact of the bill. [Wednesday's full meeting summary can be read here.](#)

On Thursday, the committee met and deliberated several bill amendments, including amendments regarding what types of tests schools would be required to give to students receiving vouchers, eligibility and non-discrimination, who would be on the panel evaluating the program, funding sources, and the monetary amount of each voucher awarded.

An amendment by Senator Jackson to require private schools not to discriminate against LGBTQ+ students was tabled, while an amendment from Senator Hutto to limit the amount of money for each voucher and to change the funding source so that it was not coming from local schools were withdrawn. Both of these matters, as well as fair accountability based on standardized testing, and other issues are certain to resurface in floor debate. [The full meeting summary can be read here.](#) The committee voted to give a favorable report to the amended bill, which is why it is more important than ever to [take action!](#)

3 Advocate Raises for ALL Educators & School Staff - There have not been changes made to House Ways and Means Committee budget announcement for a \$4000 increase to every step of the minimum teacher salary schedule, a 5% bus driver pay increase, and an increase in classroom supply money to \$300.

The current proposal would only give a full \$4000 raise to districts that only pay the minimum salary, which is a starting pay of \$36,000.

As we are at the halfway point of Legislative Session and the legislature will begin budget talks this week, it [especially important now to advocate that the legislature make investments for a substantial raise for ALL people employed in our Public Schools.](#)

[Check out the Week Ahead with Legislation and Meetings of Interest!](#)

Use Your Educator Voice!

 Cheers - Senator Fanning, Representative Marvin Pendarvis, Representative Annie McDaniel, and Representative Krystle Matthews for standing for Truth at Tuesday's press conference. [Click here to send an email to thank them!](#)

Representative Rita Allison for holding three hearings over 20 hours to hear from as many constituents as possible in the public testimony on H.4325, H.4343, H.4392, H.4605, and H.4799, as well as for addressing how educators feel threatened and disrespected by the anti-Truth legislation by repeating a commitment to making sure educators are not attacked by legislation and expressed concern over items that may attack educators. [Click here to thank her!](#)

Senators not sponsoring harmful voucher bill [S.935](#), as well as Senators [Jackson](#) and [Hutto](#) for once again demonstrating a commitment to the

rights of all students and the needs of public schools during the committee meetings on Wednesday and Thursday.

[Use this link to check out whether your Senator is one of the Senators not sponsoring S.935 and to send an email thanking them for not sponsoring and urging them not to support the bill.](#)

 **Jeers** - Twenty out of 29 Republican Senators are sponsoring [S.935](#) Education Scholarship Account Vouchers.

[Use this link to check out whether one of these 20 Republican Senators is your state Senator, and to let them know you are disappointed in their support for S.935, a bill that harms public schools.](#)

Representative [Taylor](#) (Aiken) for adding his name to sponsor [H.3498](#), a bill that would repeal the SC Constitutional prohibition on sending public dollars to religious and private education institutions. You can email Representative [Taylor](#) by clicking his name.

Representatives [Calhoon](#) (Lexington) and [Daning](#) (Berkeley) for adding their names to sponsor harmful House voucher bill [H.4879](#). Click their names to tell them that any investment in education must be made in Public Schools!



Above: (left) The SCEA President Sherry East & Organizing Fellow Alana Ward wait to speak at Tuesday's ProTruth Press Conference. (right) The SCEA Retired Vice President Beverly Frierson poses for a photo with her sister after testifying on House Bills 4325, 4343, 4392, 4605, & 4799.

 **Take Action!** 

South Carolina's students deserve to have fully staffed schools & a highly qualified educator every classroom. Legislators need to fund it.

Urge your Senator and Representative to [fund raises for ALL](#) South Carolina educators and schools staff.

Advocate for raises for ALL!

The Full Senate Education committee voted to give harmful voucher bill S.935 a favorable report. [It is more important now than ever to advocate!](#)

You can help get the word out by [sharing on social media](#) and, most importantly, [writing to your Senator now](#)

Take Action to Stop Vouchers Now!

Testimony on anti-Truth bills in the House Education and Public Works Committee may have concluded, but testimony is not the only way to make your voice heard on this important issue.

Visit [The SCEA Honesty in Education Action Center](#) to make calls and email all committee members now!

Stand Up for Truth!



Contact your elected officials at any level on any issue.

Click this button to find their contact information, including email, phone number, and even their Facebook or Twitter.

Find & Contact Elected Officials



Do you believe every South Carolina student deserves a great public school?

Make sure your state Senator & Representative know that Public Education issues will have most impact your decision as a voter.

Take the Pledge!

The Week Ahead & Legislation of Interest

[Click here for a look at the meetings scheduled for next week on bills](#) of interest to education.

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