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## *Legislative Update Week 8*

*March 5, 2022*

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# Top 3 Things to Know

**1 Honesty in Education** - On Tuesday the House Education and Public Works Committee met for second time to listen to public testimony on several bills that seek to that pit parents against educators. [H.4325](#), [H.4343](#), [H.4392](#), [H.4605](#), and [H.4799](#) would infringe 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 attack the lived humanity of members of the Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and LGBTQ+ community. [Read The SCEA's submitted testimony from the Feb. 16th hearing here.](#)

On Tuesday, many members of the public, educators, university faculty, parents, and more testified against these anti-Honesty in Education bills. However, many more voices that will be negatively impacted by these bills have yet to be heard. [Read more to learn how to take action!](#)

**2 Open Enrollment** - On Wednesday, the Senate Education Subcommittee discussed and heard testimony on [S.544](#), a bill that would create Open Enrollment program for all South Carolina's schools was discussed in the Senate Education Subcommittee. [The SCEA testimony outlining many concerns regarding funding, including impact to districts who may lose students, Title 1 Community Eligibility Provision, potential fiscal and enrollment uncertainty, and transportation costs is linked here.](#) The subcommittee voted to adopt [a working document](#) of the bill text. [The full discussion summary is linked here.](#)

**3 Senate Voucher Fight** - The Full Senate Education Committee has scheduled three meetings next week to discuss harmful voucher bill [S.935](#), with two meetings schedule for Wednesday and a third on Thursday.


In Subcommittee meetings, many concerns were expressed by educators, parents, and

constituents, as well as by Subcommittee Members Senator [Jackson](#) (Richland) and Senator [Hutto](#) (Orangeburg). In fact, over 700 South Carolina constituents have used [The SCEA's call to action](#) to contact the Subcommittee and their Senator to urge them to oppose [S.935](#).

As currently written, this harmful legislation would directly take public dollars from your local schools to fund tuition in private schools, which can pick and choose their students, even choosing to discriminate based on disability, gender, or sexual orientation. The full committee working document [can be read here](#). While public comment will not be taken during the three full committee meetings this week, you can still make your voice heard and take action to stop this harmful voucher legislation. [Read more to take action!](#)

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

## Use Your Educator Voice!

 **Cheers - Senator [Fanning](#) (Fairfield), proposed legislation to incentivize districts to provide housing for classroom teachers in their school district. [S.1119](#) would to exempt all real property owned by a nonprofit educational foundation of a public school district that is devoted to providing housing for classroom teachers in the school district. It has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee. [Click here to thank Senator Fanning for introducing legislation that helps districts reward the commitment of teachers!](#)**

**Representative [Annie McDaniel](#) for advocating all voices be heard on Anti-Truth Bills and for speaking up for the dignity of LGBTQ+ people in Tuesday's hearing.** In addition, Representatives [Henderson-Myers](#), [Rivers](#), [Govan](#), and [Alexander](#) for asking poignant questions about the impact of [H.4325](#), [H.4343](#), [H.4392](#), [H.4605](#), and [H.4799](#) on Public Education, educators, students, and communities under attack from this legislation.

**Senators not sponsoring harmful voucher bill [S.935](#), as well as Senators [Jackson](#) (Richland) and [Hutto](#) (Orangeburg) for not supporting a favorable report of harmful voucher bill [S.935](#), during subcommittee meetings on Wednesday.**

[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.](#)



**Above:** The House Education and Public Works Committee listens to public testimony on House Bills 4325, 4343, 4392, 4605, & 4799.

## Take Action!

The final hearing on **Anti-Honesty in Education** bills [H.4325](#), [H.4343](#), [H.4392](#), [H.4605](#), and [H.4799](#) will take place this Tuesday March 8th. [You can read The SCEA's submitted testimony from the Feb. 16th hearing here.](#)

The voices of so many who will be negatively impacted by these bills have yet to be heard, including many educators. [You can help by taking action now to contact five influential committee members by phone or email!](#)

If you want to learn more and find other ways to take action, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) has [a comprehensive resource](#) for learning about each bill, as well as how to draft and submit testimony. [In addition, you can reach out to The SCEA Public Affairs for support in taking action!](#)

The Full Senate Education committee will continue to discuss harmful voucher bill **S.935**.

**You can help** get the word out about this harmful legislation and the severe consequences it could have for public schools by [sharing on social media](#) and, most importantly, [writing to your Senator now](#).

**Click below to send an email to your Senator!**

Email Your Senator Now!

# On Our Radar

Currently **the Unencumbered Time bill S.946** has been assigned to the House Education and Public Works Committee and is awaiting a hearing. The SCEA is urging forward-progress on this bill and will keep you updated and aware of ways to take action.

[In the meantime, you can email your state representative and urge them to support S.946 and protected time for educators when these issues are up for discussion.](#)

There hasn't yet been any more movement on the **House Ways and Means Committee budget announcement** including a \$4000 increase to every step of the teacher salary schedule, a 5% bus driver pay increase, and an increase in classroom supply money to \$300. The SCEA is continuing to advocate that the legislature make investments for a substantial raise for all people employed in our Public Schools.

You can take action now to [thank the Committee for this proposal and to urge them to invest in every educator and school staff person in every stage of their career!](#)



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.

## Want the latest on federal legislation?

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