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### ***Legislative Update Week 18***

*May 14, 2022*

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As of Thursday at 5 p.m., the 2nd regular session of the 124th South Carolina General Assembly adjourned Sine Die.

Sine Die is the last day of the regular legislative session. Legislators will return in June for budget purposes and other matters they included in the Sine Die resolution.

*Stay tuned for a full session recap coming soon!*

## **Top 3 Things to Know**

**1** ***Unencumbered Time Heads to the Governor*** - A core priority of The SCEA Legislative Agenda is headed to the Governor to be signed into law!

In both the Senate and the House, the bill passed unanimously and when returned the Senate, they even concurred unanimously! Your collective voice and the advocacy of The SCEA made duty-free unencumbered time for educators possible through [S.946](#)!

The SCEA has worked hard to push this important legislation over the finish line. The bill will guarantee 30 minutes daily unencumbered time for teachers of grades 1-5 and special education teachers at all levels who teach students removed from the general education setting for at least 20% of the school day.

This victory is one to build on—The SCEA advocated for ***all*** educators to be guaranteed 30 minutes daily unencumbered time, as well as for daily unencumbered planning time like [many surrounding and competing states](#).

Our collective voice makes our advocacy powerful. We will need your help as we work with legislators to expand unencumbered time when the Legislature reconvenes in January. [Be sure to sign up for legislative alerts to be notified when it's time to take action!](#)

**2** *Censorship Legislation Defeated* - After anti-truth education censorship bill [H.5183](#) failed to meet the crossover deadline, a number of anti-truth amendments were added in the House Education and Public Works committee to [S.945](#)—a bill passed by the Senate about live-streaming school board meetings.

On Wednesday evening, the House debated and voted on passage of the amended S.945. A number of pro-truth legislator advocates waged a fierce fight on the floor to protect educators' rights to teach without censorship. [Live-tweets of the debate can be read here.](#)

While the bill passed in the House Wednesday night, by choosing not to waive printing of the bill in the Senate calendar on Thursday, [the Senate allowed the anti-truth legislation to effectively die with Sine Die.](#)

The very vocal opposition of The SCEA, educators, and advocacy from the South Carolina ProTruth coalition partners like the ACLU of South Carolina, WREN, SC United, the Charleston Jewish Federation and chapters of the Jewish Federation across the state, the Lowcountry Black Parents Association, the E3 Foundation, PFLAG, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and so many more made all the difference in preventing the legislature from passing censorship legislation into law.

This shows that when we unite to fight for each other, we can make a difference. Of course, our fight for truth and for all to be accepted, respected, and reflected in our schools is not over. But together we'll continue this work to fight attacks on public education and are prepared to and well-organized to resume the fight against any attacks on educators that may surface in the next legislative session.

**3** *Conference Committees on the budget & raises, voucher schemes, and the LIFE Scholarship* - As part of the Sine Die resolution passed by both the Senate and the House, conference committees from both chambers will return to discuss several very important pieces of legislation.

The first is the budget—this is where the legislature will ultimately decide which proposal to pass for increasing the state minimum educator salary.

The second is for voucher scheme [S.935](#). After the House Ways & Means committee amended the Senate voucher scheme to strike and insert their own bill, which failed to meet crossover, the House took up and debated the bill on Tuesday. All voucher schemes damage public education. However, the Senate version of the bill is more harmful.

On Tuesday, Representative Russell Ott led the fight for public schools, proposing many amendments, speaking against the bill, and speaking up for the importance of public education as the cornerstone of our democracy, saying "What we do with education affects every aspect of the state."

Several other legislators, including Representatives King, Govan, Wetmore, McDaniel, Felder, and more, also rose to speak against the bill and to propose amendments. Voucher proponent Representative Shannon Erickson successfully moved to table all amendments other than her own and did not offer any

discussion or reason when tabling. [Live-tweets of the House debate on S.935 can be read here.](#)

The House voted to pass the voucher scheme. [Roll call votes can be found here.](#)

On Thursday, Senator Shane Massey made a motion to take up bills returned from the House ahead of other business, effectively prioritizing S.935 in the day's calendar. This ensured there was enough time to debate amendments and vote on concurrence or non-concurrence with the House and assign conference committee if needed.

During the debate, Senator Fanning once again led the Senate fight to protect public schools from voucher schemes, along with Senators Hutto and Stephens. [Live-tweets of the debate can be read here.](#)

To limit debates and amendments, Senator Massey successfully moved Senate Rule 15a.

Rule 15a states "that no further amendments be allowed on the desk other than one amendment each by the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader, as provided for in Rule 15A; that no Senator be the primary sponsor of more than one amendment for consideration, if the amendment was on the desk prior to the adoption of this motion; that the primary sponsor be allowed up to three minutes to explain each amendment; and upon consideration of all the amendments, the proponents and opponents be allowed up to three minutes for and three minutes against the Bill."

[A video of Senator Fanning speaking against the bill prior to the vote to concur or not concur can be seen here.](#)

The Senate voted to non-concur with the House version of the bill, which will be taken up in conference committee. [A roll call of the votes can be seen here.](#)

A third important bill that will be taken up in conference committee is [H.3588](#), the LIFE Scholarship bill. The Senate voted to extend the Scholarship to include education majors, as well as a service requirement for education scholarship recipients to teach in South Carolina for each year they receive the scholarship. The House chose not to concur with the bill.

South Carolina is currently facing a five-alarm educator shortage crisis. Attracting and retaining educators has never been more urgent, and reducing the debt burden of aspiring educators working to become certified educators is one way to meaningfully attract talented new educators to the profession.

These valuable changes to H.3588 could begin to address the recruitment and retention crisis to ensure every student in South Carolina has the highly qualified educator they deserve in their classroom.

The SCEA will keep you informed on how conference committees and special sessions proceed and any action you can take!

Don't forget that with any legislation or issue, you can reach out to your elected official by phone, email, or even social media [using this tool!](#)

There are no meetings of interest scheduled for the week ahead at this time.



Above: Representative Govan, Representative Ott, Senator Fanning, and Senator Hutto fight private school voucher scheme S.935. In the House, Representative Ott led the charge, while Senator Fanning led the charge in the Senate.

## Use Your Educator Voice!

👍 Cheers - **You** for making your voice heard to advocate all session long! Your collective voice and the advocacy resulted in wins and fought off attacks, demonstrating the power of the collective voice of educators and public school supporters when we all speak out as one.

Representative [Ott](#) for leading the House fight against private school vouchers, as well as Representatives [King](#), [Govan](#), [Felder](#), [Wetmore](#), [McDaniel](#), [Brawley](#), [Cobb-Hunter](#), and [Henderson-Myers](#), and [all Representatives](#) who voted against S.935 and voucher schemes.

Senator [Fanning](#) for leading the Senate fight against voucher schemes this week, as well as Senators [Stephens](#), [Hutto](#), [Martin](#), [McLeod](#), [Sabb](#), [Matthews](#) and [Jackson](#) for working to fight voucher schemes in the Senate.

💡 **Take Action!** 💡



The SCEA Legislative Report card is coming! You'll be able to see if your legislators "make the grade" on public education with their voting record.

Tell your legislators you will support candidates who are champions for our students and public schools.

Take the pledge now!



# 📦 Primary Day is Coming! 📦

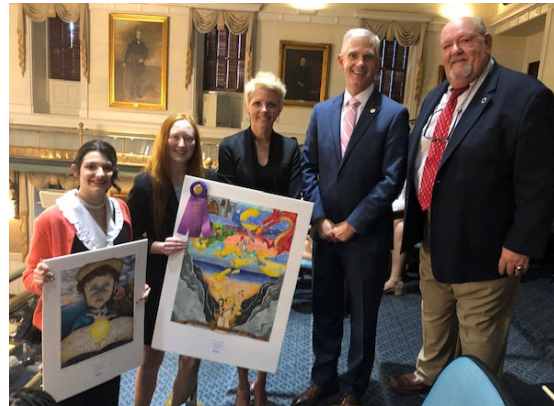
The statewide primary election takes place on Tuesday, June 14, 2022.

Make sure your voice is heard—Check your voter registration or register to vote!

## Registration Deadlines & Information:

- ONLINE - Sunday, **May 15, 2022**
  - BY MAIL - (POSTMARKED) - **Monday, May 16, 2022**
  - **IN PERSON - Friday, May 13, 2022 - deadline is passed!**
- [Click here to check your registration](#)
  - [Click here to register to vote](#)

## Read Across South Carolina Student Artist Recognition



Above: The SCEA member and art teacher Kelly Lucarelli and award-winning student artists Anna Dellinger and Stephanie Stokes pose with The SCEA President Sherry East and Representative Raye Felder in the Statehouse Lobby; Lucarelli, Dellinger, and Stokes pose with Senator Michael Johnson and Representative Bruce Bryant in the gallery at the Statehouse.

This week The SCEA's 7th Annual Art Contest "Best in Show" & "Artist Award" Winners were recognized at the state house in Columbia.

These students from Fort Mill High School created artwork based on the theme "From the Mountains to the Sea, Read with Me"

Only The SCEA supports literacy and art in our school across South Carolina.

[Click here to check out all of the winners.](#)

Below: Award-winning student artists Anna Dellinger and Stephanie Stokes pose outside the Statehouse with their works of art.



## The Week Ahead & Legislation of Interest

There are no meetings of interest scheduled for the week ahead at this time.

## Want the latest on federal legislation?

[Check out Education Votes by NEA and subscribe to the weekly Education Votes email.](#)

