



Legislative Update Week 5
February 11th, 2023



Pictured above left to right: Rep. Doug Gilliam (Union); The SCEA President, Sherry East; Rep. Jermaine L. Johnson Sr. (Richland).

Gilliam and Johnson are new members to the House Education Committee

Cheers:

On Wednesday, “Read To Succeed” Endorsements were passed through the [Senate Education Committee](#). Read the full bill [here](#).

[S.418](#) as first introduced by committee this year and if passed by both chambers, the bill, in its current form, will eliminate courses required by teachers in the original “Read to Succeed” legislation. The SCEA has been pushing for “Read To Succeed” reform for several years to remove the unnecessary burden on educators.

The bill also, in its current state, streamlines the statute and empowers the State Board of

Education to make more of the decisions.

Reach out thank the [Senate Education Committee](#).

Jeers:

On Wednesday, the House debated bill [H.3728](#), the “Transparency and Integrity in Education Act.”

The bill prohibits certain concepts that promote “Critical Race Theory” from being taught in public schools. In this bill, parents would have the right to review a school’s curriculum and instructional materials and could censor lessons on race, gender, sexual identify and others.

This potentially harmful piece of legislation could make it more difficult for teachers to teach certain material, require schools to share curriculum with parents, and create a complaint form for outsiders to use if they disagree with the curriculum.

Critics argue that this bill controls what’s being taught in the classrooms and undermines teachers, eventually leading to even more teacher vacancies.

[Rep. Jermaine L. Johnson Sr. \(Richland County\)](#), spoke to members on the irony in discussing a bill that will prohibit black history from being fully taught, during black history month.

The SCEA is against any legislation that puts limitations on educators and students in their ability to have conversations about factual historical topics and current events, in a safe environment. Our educators are professionals, and already follow the approved South Carolina guidelines and curriculum. Many educators feel like this is an attack on the integrity of their profession.

[H.3728](#) passed the House with a 83-34 vote. It now goes to the Senate where it will be vetted by the [Senate Education Committee](#). The SCEA will continue to monitor this bill closely.

Express opposition to [H.3728](#)

[TAKE ACTION NOW TO STAND UP FOR TRUTH!](#)

Ballot Initiative

Currently the South Carolina Constitution, Section 4, has an amendment, “*The Blaine Amendment*”, that prohibits direct tax dollars going to K-12 private and religious schools. Republicans have, for years, tried many tactics to skirt around the Constitution in order to move public tax dollars to private schools.

House Bill [H.3591](#) is a joint resolution to amend the South Carolina Constitution – allowing public tax dollars to go directly to private schools, taking away from the already scarce resources our public schools have.

The House Constitutional Laws subcommittee heard the proposed language Thursday morning and passed the bill to be heard by the [House Full Judiciary Committee](#).

The bill is still in the early stages in House committees. If passed by a 2/3rds vote in both chambers, a very tricky worded ballot question will be posed to voters in the next statewide election in 2024.

[To see the potential ballot question click here.](#)

Vouchers

Vouchers are still a major area of concern for The SCEA!

The “[Scholarship Trust Fund Bill](#)” (S. 39) will provide a percentage of families with scholarships to send their children to private schools while costing taxpayers nearly 90 million in funds.

The bill is currently in the [Full House Education and Public Works Committee](#).

“[Providing Academic Choice in Education](#)” (PACE) (S. 0285) is another voucher scheme that will indirectly fund private and religious institutions that discriminate against our children. This bill also did not see any movement this week and remains in committee.

[Take Action On Vouchers!](#)

Members in Action



Pictured above left to right: The SCEA Member, Patrick Martin; The SCEA Lobbyist, John Brisini

The [SCEA](#) member, Patrick Martin (Charleston), founder of the [Safe Schools Project](#), was at the Statehouse Tuesday for lobby day with the [Coalition for Safer Schools](#). Martin spoke with legislators about increasing school safety educators and students.

“It was a productive day with many conversations revolving around giving students access to high quality counselors, teachers, and other school staff to ensure our schools are as safe as they can be,” said Martin.

South Carolina Supreme Court Election

Legislators gathered this week for a number of judicial elections, but none was more crucial than that of the [Supreme Court](#).

The General Assembly elected Judge Gary Hill as the new South Carolina Supreme Court Justice to replace outgoing Justice Kaye Hearn.

The election made South Carolina the only state without a woman serving on the state's highest court. Former Justice Hearn was the only woman on the bench before reaching the mandatory retirement age of 72.

Numbers to Know

- **1:** Number of states in the U.S. with no women serving on their highest court.
- **\$150,000,000:** Amount proposed by State Superintendent of Education to continue school building improvements in rural districts
- **1,474:** Number of teacher and school-based positions were vacant beginning 2022 school year
- **37%:** Percentage of women who make up the South Carolina Bar
- **\$3,500,000,000:** The cash balance that was overstated for 10 years by the State Comptroller's Office

Education Bills That Moved This Week

To follow all bills that The SCEA is tracking click [here](#).

HJR3591: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT (SMITH, JR. G)

- *Current Status:* 2/9/2023 - House Subcommittee recommends passage Judiciary: Constitutional Laws
- *State Bill Page:* [HJR3591](#)
- *News Stories:*
 - 12/28/2022 - [Funding of religious schools, abortion access: SC legislation to watch for in 2023 session](#)

SB418: READ TO SUCCEED ENDORSEMENTS (HEMBREE G)

- *Current Status:* 2/9/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected
- *State Bill Page:* [SB418](#)

HB3728: TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY IN EDUCATION ACT (FELDER R)

- *Current Status:* 2/9/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Education
- *State Bill Page:* [HB3728](#)
- *News Stories:*
 - 2/10/2023 - [SC "critical race theory" bill undermined by proposed changes, says GOP lead sponsor](#)
 - 2/9/2023 - [SC House approves bill allowing parents to sue over suspicions of racist classroom lessons](#)
 - 1/25/2023 - [S.C. committee advances limits to classroom teaching on race](#)

SB234: PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS (LOFTIS D)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected
- *State Bill Page:* [SB234](#)

SB237: SCHOOL SAFETY (ADAMS B)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected
- *State Bill Page:* [SB237](#)

HB3515: ENTREPRENEUR FREEDOM ACT (PACE J)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Member(s) request name removed as sponsor: White
- *State Bill Page:* [HB3515](#)

SB210: TRANSPARENCY IN JUSTICE ACT (MCLEOD M)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected
- *State Bill Page:* [SB210](#)

HJR3312: CHILD FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES STUDY COMMITTEE (HADDON P)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources
- *State Bill Page:* [HJR3312](#)

SB134: SCHOOL BOARD MEETING (HEMBREE G)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Committee report Senate Education: Favorable
- *State Bill Page:* [SB134](#)

SB8: JUNETEENTH-STATE HOLIDAY (JACKSON D)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected
- *State Bill Page:* [SB8](#)

SB125: SCHOLARSHIP STIPEND (HEMBREE G)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected
- *State Bill Page:* [SB125](#)

SB299: JOINT CITIZENS AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN (SHEALY K)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Committee report Senate Family and Veterans' Services : Favorable
- *State Bill Page:* [SB299](#)

HB3485: FAMILIES' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT (MAGNUSON J)

- *Current Status:* 2/7/2023 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Ligon, Guffey, Hixon, B.Newton, Forrest
- *State Bill Page:* [HB3485](#)

SB39: EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND (GROOMS L)

- *Current Status:* 2/2/2023 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
- *State Bill Page:* [SB39](#)
- *News Stories:*
 - 2/1/2023 - [What's the price tag on private education? Here's what Midlands schools charge for tuition](#)
 - 2/1/2023 - [SC Senate approves school voucher bill, next headed to House of Representatives](#)
 - 1/26/2023 - [SC governor renews push for abortion ban in State of State](#)
 - 1/23/2023 - [SC lawmakers, superintendent push for school vouchers, but do they help students succeed?](#)

- 1/17/2023 - [Tax money for students for private school on SC Senate floor](#)
- 1/17/2023 - [Editorial: If private schools get SC tax money, they need to be accountable to taxpayers](#)
- 1/10/2023 - [Abortion, taxes, school choice: What to watch in 2023 as SC lawmakers return to the State House](#)
- 12/28/2022 - [Funding of religious schools, abortion access: SC legislation to watch for in 2023 session](#)

In The News

SC pushes for Mexican drug cartels to be declared foreign terrorist organizations

The attorney general for South Carolina joined 20 other states in a letter to President Biden urging Mexican drug cartels to be federally designated as foreign terrorist organizations.

WTHR

Palmetto flag design bill for SC flies through Senate committee

The story goes that during the 1776 siege of Charleston when Col. William Moultrie's indigo Liberty flag was blown off the ramparts by the British bombardment, a plucky young sergeant ran into the open to retrieve and hoist it once more.

The Post & Courier

Warmer waters, more salt, fewer blue crabs - a grim report urges SC lawmakers to act

In 2021, blue crab landings in South Carolina reached a 50-year low. This was no surprise.

The Post & Courier

SC Supreme Court, on heels of abortion ruling, now all male for the 1st time in 35 years

South Carolina Judge Gary Hill will become the state Supreme Court's next justice, marking the first time in more than three decades the high court will not have a female justice on the bench.

The State

Coalition pickets for school legislation at state house

As multiple school districts investigate a string of threats that disrupted schools last week, a coalition for safer schools gathered at the state house on Tuesday morning.

WISTV

Dueling abortion bans emerge in South Carolina chambers

Dueling abortion bans are once more advancing in the South Carolina House and Senate as Republican lawmakers approach a familiar standstill.

WLTX 19

Horse race betting gets another chance to become legal in gambling-shy South Carolina

Gambling on horse racing in South Carolina has another chance to become legal after a failed effort a year ago, as lawmakers advance a bill aimed at helping the state's struggling equine industry.

The State

When South Carolina teachers get priced out of their communities, students pay

It's pitch-black outside when David Bonezzi wakes up at 4:30 a.m.

The Post & Courier

Charleston vertical farm lands more seed money from SCRA

The S.C. Research Authority has plowed some additional seed money into a sustainability-minded Lowcountry agribusiness that grows its primary crop indoors and without fresh water.

The Post & Courier

Longtime SC state senator makes history while approaching another milestone

A longtime South Carolina statesman is on track to break a state record after making national history. But he doesn't plan on quitting anytime soon.

The State

SC House passes fentanyl crime bill after debate on mandatory minimums

House Republicans and a few Democrats passed legislation Feb. 1 to criminalize fentanyl trafficking, with supporters hailing the vote as an important step toward stopping the flow of the lethal drug into the Palmetto State.

The Post & Courier

SC Broadband office announces \$132.8 million ARPA investment

The South Carolina Broadband Office (SCBBO) is pleased to announce 56 newly funded projects through its American Rescue Plan Act, State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Priority 1.0 (ARPA SLFRF 1.0) grant program. For this round of investments, the SCBBO committed \$132,799,403 to 15 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in 33 counties. The total project cost for this round of broadband expansion is estimated to be \$256,755,322. This amount reflects an overall match rate of 48% non-ARPA funds (other

ABC Columbia

