



Legislative Update Week 4
February 4th, 2023



The SCEA President, Sherry East, and lobbyist John Brisini meet with House Education Chair, Representative [Shannon Erickson](#)

After weeks of debate, the Senate passed [S.39](#), the Education Savings Account bill, by a vote of 28-15 along strict party lines.

The bill would give parents \$6,000 a year of taxpayer funds to send their children to attend private schools. The 15 Democrats who voted against the bill emphasized that [S.39](#) lacks basic accountability measures and does nothing to improve the state's schools; rather, it only encourages parents to send their child to private schools.

According to WIS News, if fully implemented, the bill could cost up to \$90 million, giving up to 15,000 students a year — scaling up from 5,000 students in the program's first year and 10,000 in the second — \$6,000 in state money in an Education Scholarship Account (ESA) to pay for private-school tuition and other allowable costs, including books, fees, and transportation.

Read full story [here](#).

[S.39](#) is now moving to the House Education & Public Works Committee. [Make sure the committee does not also silence your voice!](#)

When we choose to send public funds to schools that can pick, choose, and discriminate against students, we harm ALL students. When we invest public funds into voucher schemes to help a small portion of students, we harm ALL students.

[Take Action Now on Vouchers!](#)

Meanwhile, in a Senate Finance subcommittee, senators discussed an even broader voucher bill, [S.285](#), known as the Providing Academic Choice in Education ("PACE") legislation.

This was a signal by some Republican legislators that the already controversial Education Savings Account bill does not go far enough for them. The subcommittee plans to meet again in the near future to continue its discussions.

[Reach Out to Your Senator on their Vote on Vouchers!](#)



Censorship

[House Bill 3728](#), a censorship bill that will put more constraints on public school teachers, was debated on Tuesday in the House Public Works and Education Full Committee.

The "South Carolina Transparency and Integrity in Education Act," could restrict educators from teaching certain material, and requires schools to share curriculum with parents, and create a complaint form for them

to use.

Prohibited areas include the notions that “an individual, by virtue of the race, sex, ethnicity, religion, color, or national origin of the individual, inherently is privileged, racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or subconsciously” and that a person “bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members” sharing their identity.

The SCEA believes that every student should have the right to receive an accurate and inclusive education. Truthful and inclusive discussions about United States and South Carolina history, as well as current events pertaining to ongoing race and gender inequalities, are essential to quality academic instruction.

This bill’s potential silencing of honest discussions about history denies the experiences of Black people, other people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals. House Bill 3728 will censor and chill discussions of race, gender and other important issues in K-12 and higher education classrooms and restrict their ability to respect, reflect, and protect all students in their schools. The bill also includes a parental pledge that The SCEA believes is unenforceable.

The bill was amended several times by Representative [Kambrell H. Garvin \(Dis. 77\)](#) and Representative [Deon Tedder \(Dis. 109\)](#).

[H. 3278](#) was adopted and is scheduled to be heard by the Full House next week.

[Take Action Now on H.3278!](#)

The State Board of Education

The State Board of Education also proposed an amendment to R.43188: Displaying the flag.

The Amendment would require schools display the official motto of the United States, “In God We Trust”, and the official motto of South Carolina, “Dum spiro spero” and “Animis opibusque parati”, and their respective translations.

There will be a hearing held March 10 at 1 p.m. in the Rutledge Conference Center, 1429 Senate Street, in Columbia. This hearing will allow for public comment.

South Carolina’s new superintendent for K-12 public education, Ellen Weaver, is seeking \$25 million to launch a program that rewards teachers who raise student achievement in the state’s “highest-need” schools. Read more below:

[SC Education Superintendent Weaver seeks \\$25M for teachers’ bonus pay program](#)

Numbers to Know

- 2011: Year of South Carolina’s last execution by lethal injection
- 432: Number of electric vehicle charging stations in the state
- 35: Number of men on South Carolina’s condemned inmates list
- \$25,000,000: Amount proposed by State Superintendent of Education to launch a performance pay program to reward teachers who raise student achievement
- \$54,864.00: Median household income in South Carolina
- 185: Number of state police officers providing protection for former President Trump during visit to SC State House

Education Bills That Moved This Week

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

SB39: EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND (GROOMS L)

- *Current Status:* 2/2/2023 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
- *Position:* Oppose
- *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](#)

HJR3591: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT (SMITH, JR. G)

- *Current Status:* 2/2/2023 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Thayer
- *Position:* Monitoring
- *State Bill Page:* [HJR3591](#)
- *News Stories:*
 - 12/28/2022 - [Funding of religious schools, abortion access: SC legislation to watch for in 2023 session](#)

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

- *Current Status:* 2/2/2023 - SECOND READING STATEWIDE UNCONTESTED BILLS
- *State Bill Page:* [HB3728](#)
- *News Stories:*
 - 1/25/2023 - [S.C. committee advances limits to classroom teaching on race](#)

HB3509: INVESTMENTS, AUTHORIZED FOR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION (LONG S)

- *Current Status:* 2/1/2023 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Landing
- *Position:* Monitoring
- *State Bill Page:* [HB3509](#)

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

- *Current Status:* 2/2/2023 - SECOND READING STATEWIDE UNCONTESTED BILLS
- *Position:* Monitoring
- *State Bill Page:* [HJR3312](#)

HB3315: COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID AND EDUCATION ACT (KING J)

- *Current Status:* 1/31/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected
- *Position:* No Position
- *State Bill Page:* [HB3315](#)

SB285: PROVIDING ACADEMIC CHOICE IN EDUCATION (PACE) (DAVIS T)

- *Current Status:* 1/26/2023 - Senate Finance Budget: K-12 Education Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- *Position:* Opposed
- *State Bill Page:* [SB285](#)

SB134: SCHOOL BOARD MEETING (HEMBREE G)

- *Current Status:* 2/8/2023 - Senate Education, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- *Position:* Monitoring
- *State Bill Page:* [SB134](#)

In the News:

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 senator's allegations add rancor to high-profile state Supreme Court race

A Republican state senator from Charleston added drama to the S.C. Supreme Court election with allegations repeated this week that House Republicans effectively decided the race behind closed doors before it had even begun.

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

What's the price tag on private education? Here's what Midlands schools charge for tuition

Republicans in South Carolina, including Gov. Henry McMaster, are seeking to change the state constitution to allow public dollars to go to private and religious schools. It might clear the way for school vouchers, a way to help parents pay for a private education for their children.

The State

SC lawmaker has a case of the Charleston cruise blues

With the redevelopment of Union Pier Terminal still being negotiated by Charleston officials and the State Ports Authority, at least one legislator is lamenting the loss of full-time pleasure cruises from the downtown marine terminal.

The Post & Courier

SC Republican leaders ask the state Supreme Court to rehear its abortion ruling

A little more than three weeks after the S.C. Supreme Court struck down the state's six-week abortion ban, Republican leaders want a do-over.

The Post & Courier

More funding proposed for the Conservation Bank in quest to protect additional land in SC

Gov. Henry McMaster's executive budget proposes more than \$25 million be allocated in the next fiscal year to the state's Conservation Bank, an entity designed to protect and sustain wild land in South Carolina.

The Post & Courier

Trump makes splashy rollout of his SC team at State House amid questions about his support

In his first campaign trip since announcing a 2024 White House bid, former President Donald Trump began his effort to consolidate support in the state that holds the First in the South primary.

The State

SC Republicans appeal congressional redistricting case, ask US Supreme Court to review

South Carolina Republican lawmakers are taking the next step to salvage their new congressional maps, asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review a federal court ruling that concluded their political boundaries violated the rights of Black voters.

The Post & Courier

After SC Supreme Court ruling, new attempt to ban nearly all abortions advances in Legislature Republicans in the S.C. House of Representatives are again trying to make nearly all abortions illegal in the state, advancing their latest legislative attempt just three weeks after the state Supreme Court threw out a six-week ban as unconstitutional.

The Post & Courier

[SC Republicans appeal ruling that congressional map is unconstitutional racial gerrymander](#)

South Carolina Republicans have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review a federal court ruling that rendered unconstitutional the congressional map lawmakers passed last year.

The State

[Court demands more info in South Carolina death penalty case](#)

The South Carolina Supreme Court ordered a lower court to collect more information from the Department of Corrections regarding the state agency's attempts to acquire lethal injection drugs.

Associated Press

[SC governor renews push for abortion ban in State of State](#)

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster vowed Wednesday to press forward with efforts to further restrict abortion in the state.

Associated Press

[DHEC breakup bill resurfaces as critics push for better environmental protection](#)

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, criticized for failing to react quickly enough to environmental problems, is again on the chopping block as critics push for improvements in how South Carolina protects the landscape and oversees public health.

The State

[McMaster cites SC's economic strengths, criticizes abortion ruling in 6th State of State](#)

Gov. Henry McMaster used his sixth annual State of the State address to continue trumpeting South Carolina's thriving economy and ask legislators to keep investing record surpluses in ways that "build prosperity for generations to come" while also saving more for a potential downturn.

The Post & Courier

[Amid angst over SC Supreme Court, Statehouse lawmakers move to delay judicial elections one week](#)

The South Carolina Senate took the unusual step of voting to delay next week's state judicial elections as lawmakers across the political spectrum voiced frustrations over the race to replace retiring Supreme Court Justice Kaye Hearn.

The Post & Courier

[Reforming bail for accused criminals gets rolling. "Catch and release" a threat, advocates say](#)

Momentum is growing on both sides of the Statehouse aisle to reform the bail system, with reform advocates saying the current "catch and release" option keeps repeat offenders dangerous as they commit more crimes while out on bond.

The Post & Courier

[SC fails tobacco prevention analysis, lacks measures to protect kids from smoking](#)

South Carolina flunked the latest report card on its efforts to control tobacco use and prevent children from starting smoking or vaping, a national advocacy group said.

The Post & Courier

