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Legislative Update Week 12
April 1st, 2023



The SCEA President, Sherry East, testifying in opposition of H. 3728 to the Senate Education Committee.

Things To Know from This Week

Paid Family Leave for School District Employees

Great news for educators this week in South Carolina!

Representative Neal A. Collins introduced bill H.3908, which would “provide paid parental leave upon the birth of a child or initial legal placement of a foster child for eligible school district employees.”

Last year, the legislature passed a bill providing paid leave to state employees. However, that bill classified educators as “district employees,” so teachers were not included. H.3908 seeks to remedy that by ensuring teachers and other district employees receive the same benefits as other state employees.

The House Ways and Means Committee gave H.3908 a favorable report as amended on Thursday. This bill will now move to the House floor for debate. The SCEA submitted written testimony in favor of this bill, which you can read [here](#).

Thank the committee at the link below:

[Thank the Ways and Means Committee!](#)

Gender Identity

The Senate Medical Affairs subcommittee heard testimony on [S.627](#) on Wednesday.

The bill seeks to ban gender affirming care for minors but includes a section that prevents employees of public schools from “knowingly withholding from a minor’s parent or legal guardian information that their gender is inconsistent with their sex.”

It also requires educators to inform parents/legal guardians if they “know or suspect that a student suffers from gender dysphoria or gender identity disorder.”

The SCEA fears this legislation will strip students of their privacy and prevent a safe environment for them to communicate with educators freely.

The SCEA submitted written testimony concerning this bill, which you can read [here](#).

Censorship

The Senate Education Subcommittee heard testimony on [H.3728: "South Carolina Transparency and Integrity in Education Act,"](#) on Wednesday.

The SCEA President Sherry East testified against this legislation, highlighting the potential risks it presents for educators and lack of protection provided for them in the bill.

H.3728 is a censorship bill that could limit discussions of race, gender, and other important issues in K-12 and higher education classrooms, making it difficult for many teachers to accurately teach their subjects and restricting educators' ability to respect, reflect, and protect all students in their classrooms.

Additionally, this bill creates a complaint form that parents, other students, and school employees can use to challenge lessons or curriculum components they believe violates this law.

The SCEA is concerned about how this will impact educator safety. Last week, the Palmetto Promise Institute—an anti-public education think tank—sent out a request form for “citizen sleuths” to investigate teachers they allege are not following current state law in their curriculum.

Furthermore, in Charleston County last week, a school board member allegedly threatened violence against a transgender teacher. The SCEA fears that legislation like H.3728 will encourage these kinds of safety threats and put South Carolina educators at risk.

Read the Post and Courier article [here](#).

If you feel unsafe in your classroom or feel that you are being unfairly targeted, please reach out to our Member Advocacy Center by emailing help@thescea.org or contacting Member Advocate Cherolynn Allen at (803) 551-4153.

Take action now to stand up for truth!

Senate Education Provisos

The Senate Education committee met on Thursday to discuss education-related budget provisos, which include funding for dyslexia screenings, a teacher recruitment pilot program, career readiness assessments, and 4k. They also passed a proviso banning TikTok and parent company ByteDance on school devices.

To view the list of adopted provisos, click [here](#).

Academic Choice in Education (ACE)

[S.285](#), would strengthen a program currently in place, by encouraging companies or institutions to fund scholarships for students to attend private schools. Donors would receive state tax credits with a \$10,000 limit.

The SCEA is against any legislation that will divert funding from public schools to private schools, which are not held to the same accountability and transparency standards as public schools.

S.285 was read on the House floor for the first time and referred to the Ways and Means committee.

[Click here to take action on vouchers!](#)

Education and Workforce Readiness

House bill [H.4060](#) directly addresses the education aspect of H.3726: Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act.

This bill received its first reading on the Senate floor on Thursday and was referred to the Education committee.

Competency-Based Education

[Representative Neal A. Collins](#) first introduced [H.3295](#) last December. This bill creates an exemption process for schools that implement competency-based education practices and provides guidelines for competency-based education strategies. This bill also clarifies the code around school year start dates to make it easier for districts that have moved to year-round school calendar.

The bill received its first reading on the Senate floor on Thursday and was referred to the Education committee.

The SCEA would like to hear from members on the year-round school calendar concept. Send your feedback on this bill to seast@thescea.org.

[Visit The SCEA Action Center!](#)

Numbers to Know

23: Number of states that exempt feminine hygiene products from sales tax

58: Number of children who have been given up under the safe haven law since 2009 in SC

7,000: Number of reports related to online financial sextortion of minors in 2022

11%: Percentage of high school students using E-cigarettes

1: Number of U.S. presidents to be indicted on criminal charges

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[To follow all education bills that moved this week click here.](#)

HB3908: PAID FAMILY LEAVE (COLLINS N)

- Current Status: 3/30/2023 - Committee report House Ways and Means: Favorable with amendment
- News Stories: 3/30/2023 - [Will SC teachers get paid parental leave like state employees? Here's what's proposed](#)

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

- Current Status: 3/29/2023 - Concurred in Senate amendment and enrolled

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

- Current Status: 3/28/2023 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
- News Stories: 2/22/2023 - [Bill helping parents pay for private tuition through tax credits advances in SC Senate](#)

Bills That Saw No Movement, but We Continue to Monitor

[H.3591](#) would create a ballot referendum to repeal a state constitutional amendment that prohibits the use of public tax dollars to fund private and religious schools. This would allow the legislature to pour public funds into schools that can discriminate against children, while public schools and the students attending them suffer.

This bill saw no movement this week and remains in the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

Upcoming Meetings of Interest

Below are meetings scheduled for next week on bills of interest to you. You can click on the date link to view the agenda and the bill number to see the legislation.

[Mon 4/3 12:00 PM in Gressette Room 308](#)
[S 126](#) (Charter School Accountability Act)

Tue 4/4 in Blatt Room 433
[S 39](#) (Educational Scholarship Trust Fund)

[Tue 4/11 9:30 AM in Gressette Room 207](#)
[H 3728](#) (Transparency and Integrity in Education Act)

Introductions of Interest

Below are bills that were introduced in the House and Senate this week that may be of interest to you. We have provided a brief description as well as a link to the full text of each bill. Please review and let us know if you have any comments or concerns.

H. 4215: Spartanburg School District 5, Reapportionment

Hyde

- Representative Max Hyde (R-Spartanburg) introduced a bill that would reapportion the election districts of Spartanburg County School District 5 in which Board of Trustees are elected.
 - 1. Election District 1 for Spartanburg County School District 5 must be represented by a single trustee to be elected in the 2023 school district elections.
 - 2. Election District 2 for Spartanburg County School District 5 must be represented by two trustees who are elected by the registered voters who reside within Election District 2. One of these trustees must be elected in the 2023 school district elections, and the second trustee must be elected in the 2025 school district elections.
 - 3. Election District 3 for Spartanburg County School District 5 must be represented by six trustees who are elected by the registered voters who reside in Election District 3. Four additional trustees must be elected in the 2025 school district elections.
- The bill was referred to the Spartanburg Delegation.

H. 4216: Spartanburg School District 7, Reapportionment

Hyde

- Representative Max Hyde (R-Spartanburg) introduced a bill that would reapportion the election districts of Spartanburg County School District 7 in which Board of Trustees are elected.
 - Beginning with the school district elections in 2023, the nine members of the Spartanburg County School District Board of Trustees must be elected.
- The bill was referred to the Spartanburg Delegation.

H. 4226: Paid Parental Leave

Pendarvis

- Representative Marvin Pendarvis (D-Charleston) introduced a bill that would require eligible employers to provide four weeks of paid parental leave at 100% of the employees salary and an additional two weeks paid leave at 50% of the employees salary after the birth of a child.
- The bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

