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Legislative Update Week 18 (CORRECTED)
May 13th, 2023



The SCEA members John Huggins, Lisa Lucas, Jean Reed, Stephanie Dukes, and MaryRita Watson with The SCEA President Sherry East and Representative Rosalyn Henderson-Myers at the SCDP Blue Palmetto Dinner last month.

Things To Know

Paid Family Leave for School District Employees

H.3908 will now advance to the Governor's desk for approval.

Once signed by Gov. McMaster, this bill will provide six weeks of paid parental leave upon the birth of a child or initial legal placement of a foster child for eligible school district employees. This would make South Carolina the first state in the southeast to mandate this for educators.

This measure ensures that teachers and other district employees receive the same benefits as other state employees, who were awarded paid parental leave last year.

Specifically, the bill would provide:

- Six weeks paid leave to an employee that gives birth or is "primarily responsible for furnishing the care and nature" of an adopted child.
- Two weeks paid leave for a parent that did "not give birth or at the start of a foster placement.

Under this bill, employees would NOT have to exhaust their sick/personal leave before becoming eligible for paid parental leave. Educators who are out on paid parental leave would have those days count toward the 152 days of work required during a school year to be eligible for an additional year of experience on their certificate (and any corresponding step increase in salary).

We believe this bill is an important first step, but we will continue to urge the legislature to fully fund this measure. Currently it is an unfunded mandate, which means school districts will be responsible for providing the funds to provide paid parental leave.

Censorship

The Senate gave third reading to [H.3728, "Transparency and Integrity in Education Act,"](#) which passed by a 27-10 vote. The bill will return to the House, where they will either concur with the changes made by the Senate or further amend the measure.

This measure is a censorship bill that could limit discussions of race, gender, and other important issues in K-12 and higher education classrooms. It could also make it difficult for educators to accurately teach their subject areas and restrict their ability to respect, reflect, and protect all students.

The current version of the bill prohibits parents from suing a school district for alleged teaching violations.

Supporters claim the purpose of the bill is to encourage transparent and factual school lessons on complex history; however, this bill is part of a national agenda to inject political censorship into classrooms.

Ten Senators opposed this measure:

1. Sen. Karl Allen

2. Sen. Darrell Jackson
3. Sen. Mia McLeod
4. Sen. Vernon Stephens
5. Sen. Mike Fanning
6. Sen. Kevin Johnson
7. Sen. Ronnie Sabb
8. Sen. Brad Hutto
9. Sen. Margie Bright Matthews
10. Sen. John Scott

We encourage you to contact them and thank them for voting to protect the freedom to learn.

[CLICK HERE TO THANK THE SENATORS OPPOSING CENSORSHIP!](#)

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Seat Appointments

The Full [Senate Education Committee](#) considered Palmetto Promise Executive Director Oran P. Smith, former State Superintendent of Education Mick Zais, and Greenville College President Dr. Gene C. Fant for appointments to the Commission on Higher Education on Tuesday.

All three appointments were given a favorable report by the committee.

If you have concerns about these appointments, please [contact the Committee](#).

Comptroller General

[Gov. Henry McMaster appointed](#) Brian Gaines to be the next Comptroller General. Gaines was a director for the South Carolina Department of Administration's Executive Budget Office.

Former Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom resigned earlier this year, after revealing that his office had over-reported their finances by \$3.5 billion over the last decade.

Things to Watch for Next Week

Budget

The conference committee will review the budget H.4300, Appropriations Bill and H.4301, Contingency Reserve Fund on Tuesday, May 16 at 2:00pm in Room 105 of the Gressette Building. The committee is comprised of three Senators and three Representatives.

Senate conferees are Sen. Harvey Peeler, Sen. Nikki Setzler and Sen. Thomas Alexander.

Representative conferees are Rep. Bruce Bannister, Rep. Bill Herbkersman and Rep. David Weeks.

Sine Die Resolution

This week marks the end of the regular legislative session. Usually, the legislature will have approved a measure called a Sine Die resolution. This resolution outlines which topics the legislature is allowed to return and address in a special session.

This year, however, the legislature has not approved a Sine Die resolution. As a result, the Governor can call the legislature back to work on any number of issues. Gov. McMaster has stated that he will call the legislature back next week (May 16-18) and will likely call them back the week after as well.

Since this is the last week of legislative session, this edition of Members Matter will be our last regularly scheduled legislative newsletter for the year. We will send out periodic editions with updates to education-related policy from the upcoming special sessions as those updates occur.

Stay current on education news by visiting The SCEA's Action Center.

[Visit The SCEA Action Center!](#)

Numbers to Know

1,286: Number of Covid-19 cases in the past week throughout SC

7: Number of states with bans against Critical Race Theory

335: Number of drunk driving fatalities in 2022

8: Number of candidates running in the 2024 presidential election

22: Number of bills that have been signed into law thus far in session

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[To Follow All Education Bills That Moved This Week Click Here.](#)

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

- Current Status: 5/10/2023 - Act No. 9

HB4300: FY2023-2024 APPROPRIATIONS (BANNISTER B)

- Current Status: 5/10/2023 - House insists upon amendment and conference committee appointed Reps. Bannister, Herbkersman, Weeks

HB3908: PAID FAMILY LEAVE (COLLINS N)

- Current Status: 5/10/2023 - Roll call [Yeas-114 Nays-0](#)
- News Stories: 5/11/2023 - [SC teachers, school employees paid parental leave bill passes](#)
- 5/9/2023 - [This week in South Carolina politics: Here's what to know as legislative session nears end](#)

HB3728: TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY IN EDUCATION ACT (FELDER

R)

- Current Status: 5/10/2023 - Roll call [Ayes-27 Nays-10](#)
- News Stories: 5/9/2023 - [This week in South Carolina politics: Here's what to know as legislative session nears end](#)
- 4/13/2023 - [SC bill requiring "fact-based" school lessons on race has bipartisan support after changes](#)

HB3360: CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY AND TARGETED VIOLENCE
(POPE T)

- Current Status: 5/9/2023 - Committee report Senate Judiciary: Favorable

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.

H. 4467	LIFE Scholarships	Erickson
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Representative Shannon Erickson (R-Beaufort), Representative Heather Crawford (R-Horry), Representative Carla Schuessler (R-Horry) and others introduced a bill that would include college accounting majors when accepting LIFE scholarship stipends. The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

H. 4468	Education Scholarship Trust Fund	Erickson
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Representative Shannon Erickson (R-Beaufort), Representative Heather Crawford (R-Horry), Representative Carla Schuessler (R-Horry) and others introduced a "skeleton bill" for future actions on Education Scholarship Trust Funds. We are sending to you so that it remains in our tracking system and on your radar although no language is actually included at this time. We will keep you apprised of all developments on this legislation.