



Week 4: January 30-February 1, 2024



FLOTUS Dr. Jill Biden speaks to a crowd with The SCEA members and educators behind her.

Dr. Jill Biden Rally and Becky Pringle Visit

Last Friday, we had the privilege of hosting fellow educator and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden for a Get Out the Vote Rally in Columbia. Dr. Biden thanked educators in South Carolina for helping elect her husband and spoke about the things that President Biden has done to help educators, such as safely reopening schools, expanding student loan forgiveness through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, and passing the bipartisan gun safety law.

Prior to the rally, NEA President Becky Pringle and The SCEA President Sherry East met with members of The Student SCEA to discuss the future of education and current challenges facing aspiring educators, including program closures, how to handle anti-public-education elected officials, and ways to increase mentorship between students and current educators.



Members of The Student SCEA with NEA President Becky Pringle and The SCEA President Sherry East.

The rally was standing room only - with over 150 people in attendance - and there were about a dozen people at The Student SCEA luncheon. Thank you to everyone who attended these events!



Elections and Voter Registration Information

There are two Presidential Primaries happening this month: The first is the Democratic Presidential Primary that is **today**. **Polls are open until 7pm, so you still have time to vote if you have not done so.**

The second is the Republican Presidential Primary on Saturday, February 24.

Click the link below to find you polling place and other election information.

[Click Here for Important Election Information](#)

H.3309: Safe Seizure Schools Act

The House began debate on [H.3309](#), the “Seizure Safe Schools Act” last week but did not take a vote until this week. This bill would require public schools to create seizure response plans that include training for educators so that they know how to recognize signs and symptoms of seizures, an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for situations when a student has a seizure, and allow parents to give

permission for students with epilepsy to self-administer medication as necessary.

H.3309 was passed on Wednesday in a 114-0 vote. It will now go to the Senate.

S.905: Read to Succeed

The Senate Education Subcommittee held another hearing on [S.905](#), which would eliminate Read to Succeed requirements for educators who are not directly involved in teaching early literacy. It also directs educators to use the “Science of Reading” approach to teach literacy and reading, requires that third graders who cannot demonstrate reading proficiency be held back, and extends summer reading camps so they start earlier than third grade.

The subcommittee voted to send the bill to the full committee by giving it a favorable report. The full committee will discuss this bill at their next meeting.

Please send feedback on this bill to President Sherry East, seast@thescea.org.

H.5022: Universal Free Meals at Public Schools

[H.5022](#), filed this past Thursday, would allow schools that participate in the school breakfast program to provide breakfast and lunch to all students without charge. This is a companion bill to S.148, which was filed last year but did not leave committee.

[Research has shown](#) that providing universal school meals improves academic performance, in addition to significantly curbing child hunger. NEA has [long advocated](#) for universal school meal programs.

H.5022 is currently in the House Ways and Means Committee. They have not scheduled a hearing on the bill, so we are asking members to contact the Committee and ask them to support this bill. You can send your email at the link below.

[Click Here to Email the Committee](#)

H.3728: Transparency and Integrity in Education Act

[H.3728](#) is a censorship bill that was passed at the end of last year. Supporters claim this bill’s intention is to encourage transparent and fact-based school lessons on complex topics; however, this bill is part of a national agenda to inject political censorship into classrooms.

Other states with similar legislation have illustrated how the impact of this measure goes far beyond the stated intent and we anticipate that could happen in South Carolina as well.

This bill was passed by both the South Carolina House and the Senate; but each chamber passed a slightly different version of the bill. It is currently awaiting a hearing in a conference committee. The House version of this bill would allow any parent or guardian, from anywhere in the country, to file a lawsuit against a district or educator without ever having a conversation with the accused educator or their administration.

The SCEA is concerned that this bill—especially if the provision described above is included—will further drive educators out of the classroom and chill important discussions of race, gender, and other important issues.

The conference committee has not yet taken action on 3728, so we are asking members to share stories of how they have been impacted by censorship policies. If you have not been impacted yet but fear that you will be, please share those concerns as well. We plan to share these stories with elected officials to try and stop this harmful legislation.

[Click Here to Share Your Story](#)

H.4700: Social Media Regulation Act

[H.4700](#) is a bill that would prohibit certain minors from being social media account holders and would provide parents/guardians certain information surrounding a minor's account. The House brought this bill to the floor on Wednesday, where it passed with a 105-1 vote.

During the floor discussion, the House amended the bill to direct the Department of Education to develop a model program to educate students in grades 6-12 about online safety while using social media. The amendment directs the program to contain information on the following topics:

- social, emotional, and physical effects of social media;
- the negative effects on mental health;
- the distribution of disinformation and misinformation on social media;
- how social media influences and manipulates thoughts & behaviors;
- how to maintain personal security, identify cyberbullying, and how to report such behaviors to authorities.

This bill now heads to the state Senate. Please send any feedback on this bill to President Sherry East, seast@thescea.org.

H.4655: Physical Education and Activity

[H.4655](#) would change the existing requirements for PE and physical activity for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. This bill would increase the minimum required time for physical education (PE) to ninety minutes per week for elementary school students and sixty hours per year for middle school students.

Additionally, this bill would require schools to provide a minimum of 20 minutes of daily unstructured recess to students in kindergarten through eighth grade and provide a plan for indoor recess periods during inclement weather.

This bill is currently in the House Education & Public Works Committee. Please send feedback on this bill to President Sherry East, seast@thescea.org.

State Board of Education Regulation 43-170

Last fall, the State Board of Education (SBE) released a proposed change to the regulations regarding selection of instructional materials.

As a reminder, this proposed regulation establishes two main guidelines for instructional materials:

- Age and developmentally appropriate: materials must be "suitable to particular age groups...based on developing cognitive, and behavioral capacity typical for the age group." The proposal also states that a material is not age appropriate if it contains visual depictions or descriptions of "sexual conduct" as defined in state statute or if it is considered "indecent" or "obscene" under the broadcast guidelines for the Federal Communications Commission.
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- Educationally suitable: the material must be aligned with the "instructional program of the school and district," which means it must be connected to the standards laid out in the Profile of a South Carolina Graduate.

As it currently stands, this regulation would ban classic works of literature such as Romeo and Juliet, The Odyssey, The Scarlet Letter, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and others.

A public hearing will be held on this regulation at 1 p.m. on Feb. 13 at the Rutledge Conference Center in Columbia.

Women in Leadership Events

South Carolina Women in Leadership (WIL), one of The SCEA's coalition partners, has two networking events coming up—one in the Midlands on February 12 and one in the Lowcountry on February 26. These are a great opportunity to network with others who are interested in increasing the number of women in elected office.

You can find more details for the Midlands event [here](#). Details for the Lowcountry event are [here](#).

The SCEA Lobby Day 2024

The SCEA's annual Lobby Day will be held on Wednesday, February 28. Join fellow active, aspiring, and retired members to advocate for our students, our schools, and our profession at the South Carolina Statehouse!

Lobby Day brings members from across the state together at the state capitol to discuss legislative priorities with elected officials. You won't want to miss this opportunity to make your voice heard!

Click the link below for additional information and registration.

[Click Here to Join Us for Lobby Day](#)

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[HB3309: SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT](#) (Gilliam, L)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT" BY ADDING SECTION 59-63-97 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEIZURE ACTION PLANS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCH PLANS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

- 1/30/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: M.M.Smith
- 1/30/2024 - Read second time
- 1/30/2024 - Roll call Yeas-114 Nays-0

[HB3430: SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS](#) (Collins, N)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 1-11-720, RELATING TO ENTITIES WHOSE EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR STATE HEALTH AND DENTAL INSURANCE PLANS, SO AS TO INCLUDE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS.

- 1/30/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Schuessler

[HB4636: PAID MILITARY LEAVE](#) (Pace, J)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 8-7-90, RELATING TO LEAVES OF ABSENCE FOR PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES IN NATIONAL GUARD OR RESERVE MILITARY FORCES, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN STATE EMPLOYEES RECEIVE THIRTY DAYS OF PAID MILITARY LEAVE EACH YEAR.

- 1/30/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Cromer, Ott, Hyde, Burns

[HB4646: FIRST RESPONDERS COMMUNICATION ACT](#) (Smith, M)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "FIRST RESPONDERS COMMUNICATION ACT" BY ADDING SECTION 8-15-90 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE MAY NOT BE PROHIBITED FROM COMMUNICATING WITH AN ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIAL FOR ANY JOB-RELATED PURPOSE.

- 1/30/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Hardee

[HB4700: SOUTH CAROLINA SOCIAL MEDIA REGULATION ACT](#) (Newton, W)
A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING ARTICLE 9 TO CHAPTER 5, TITLE 39 SO AS TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS; TO PROVIDE THAT A SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY MAY NOT PERMIT CERTAIN MINORS TO BE ACCOUNT HOLDERS; TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES; TO PROVIDE THAT A SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY SHALL PROVIDE CERTAIN PARENTS OR GUARDIANS WITH CERTAIN INFORMATION; TO PROVIDE THAT A SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANY SHALL RESTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESS TO MINORS DURING CERTAIN HOURS; TO PROVIDE FOR CONSUMER COMPLAINTS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE CONSUMER SERVICES DIVISION HAS AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER AND ENFORCE CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS; TO PROVIDE FOR AN ANNUAL REPORT; TO PROVIDE FOR A CAUSE OF ACTION; AND TO PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN WAIVERS AND LIMITATIONS ARE VOID.

- 1/30/2024 - Member(s) request name removed as sponsor: O'Neal
- 1/30/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: M.M.Smith, Davis, McGinnis, Gagnon, B.Newton, Schuessler, Elliott, Forrest

[SB245: BOOSTER CLUBS](#) (Kimbrell, J)
A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59-17-170 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WITH CERTAIN CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS IS PROHIBITED FROM SERVING AS THE TREASURER OF A BOOSTER CLUB, TO PROVIDE THAT EACH BOOSTER CLUB WITHIN A SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL ANNUALLY REGISTER WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD, TO PROVIDE THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD MUST RUN A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK TO DETERMINE IF THE TREASURER OF A BOOSTER CLUB IS PROHIBITED FROM SERVING IN THAT ROLE DUE TO A CRIMINAL CONVICTION, AND TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMS.

- 1/30/2024 - Debate adjourned

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.

[Tue 2/6 in Blatt Room 427 ** HYBRID](#)
[H 4333 \(Mobile Optometry Units\)](#)

[Wed 2/7 9:00 AM in Gressette Room 207](#)
[H 3295 \(Education: Competency-based Education\)](#); [H 3309 \(Seizure Safe Schools Act\)](#); [S 584 \(Assisting Children\)](#); [S 729 \(ROTC Credits\)](#)

Introductions of Interest

H. 4971: SCRS and PORS Earnings Limitation
Williams

Representative Robert Williams (D-Darlington) and others introduced legislation to remove the \$10,000 earnings limitation on employees who return to covered employment under the South Carolina Retirement System and the Police Officers Retirement System for those who retired before January 2, 2025. This bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

H. 4982: Free School Meals

Moore

Representatives JA Moore (D-Charleston), Annie McDaniel (D-Fairfield), Pat Henegan (D-Marlboro), Robert Williams (D-Darlington), Roger Kirby (D-Florence), Lonnie Hosey (D-Barnwell), and Bill Clyburn (D-Aiken) introduced legislation to provide that eligible schools will provide breakfast and lunch without charge to all students. Eligible schools that offer school breakfast and school lunch to all students without charge would receive additional funding in the general appropriations act to support their school meals operations.

The bill would require all schools to provide at least 30 minute lunch periods to all students between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

This bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

H. 4986: SC Service Corps Act

Moore

Representatives JA Moore (D-Charleston) and Annie McDaniel (D-Fairfield) introduced legislation that establishes the South Carolina Service Corps as a division of the Department of Employment and Workforce. Service opportunities of the Corps include:

- 1) green jobs in service of activities or industries that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality;
 - (2) health services, by applicants with the necessary qualifications, to provide medical, dental, psychological, or other related services as considered appropriate by the South Carolina Service Corps administration;
 - (3) services that benefit the developmental and educational needs of early childhood; and
 - (4) services that provide exposure to, and participation in, the arts or humanities.
- This bill was referred to the House Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee.

H. 4994: Water Testing in Childcare Facilities and Schools

Moore

Representatives JA Moore (D-Charleston), Pat Henegan (D-Marlboro), Annie McDaniel (D-Fairfield) and Lonnie Hosey (D-Barnwell) introduced legislation to require every childcare learning center and school to test their drinking water outlets for lead contamination and remediate any lead contamination identified no later than June 30, 2025.

This bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

H. 4997: School Bond Elections

Newton

Representative Brandon Newton (R-Lancaster) introduced legislation to require school bond elections be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

This bill was referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

H. 5014: Lexington County School District Property Tax Relief Act Extension

Caskey

Representatives Micah Caskey (R-Lexington), Nathan Ballentine (R-Richland),

Paula Calhoon (R-Lexington), Cal Forrest (R-Saluda), Jay Kilmartin (R-Lexington), RJ May (R-Lexington), Donald Ryan McCabe (R-Lexington), Russell Ott (D-Calhoun), Bill Taylor (R-Aiken), Joe White (R-Newberry), and Chris Wooten (R-Lexington) introduced legislation to extend the 1% sales tax imposed by the Lexington County School District Property Tax Relief Act for an additional seven years.

This bill was referred to the Lexington Delegation.

H.5022: Free School Meals

Erickson

Representative Shannon Erickson (R-Beaufort) and others introduced legislation to provide that eligible schools will provide breakfast and lunch without charge to all students. Eligible schools that offer school breakfast and school lunch to all students without charge would receive additional funding in the general appropriations act to support their school meals operations.

The bill would require all schools to provide at least 30 minute lunch periods to all students between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

This bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

