



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

AFT-West Virginia, AFL-CIO



Standing 55 Strong...From Statehouse to Schoolhouse

February 8, 2019

SLOW & STEADY: HOUSE EDUCATION TAKES ITS TIME WITH SB 451

Latest Developments on the Omnibus Bill

On Monday, SB 541 was on third reading and passed the full Senate in a 18-16 vote, with all Democrats and Republicans Mann and Hamilton voting against the bill. On Tuesday, after the House received the bill, Delegate Isaac Sponaugle attempted a procedural move to try to kill the bill. The attempt failed and the bill was referenced to the House Education and Finance committees.

The House Education Committee took up the bill on Wednesday, and started discussing the bill and asking questions. The time spent by the House deliberating and methodically working through the provisions is a stark contrast to the Senate's process.

During Thursday evening's committee meeting, AFT-WV and WVEA representatives, a special needs parent and others had the opportunity to speak. The bill was charter schools provision amended as follows:

- Removes the Charter School Commission and made the County BOEs the authorizer.
- It is now a pilot project and limited to one elementary school in Kanawha County and one in Cabell County.
- The schools must be low-performing Title I schools.
- The amendment states the schools can't limit enrollment and must accept all students in the attendance zone.

The House Education Committee met again on Friday and discussed the bill during the morning meeting. The committee met again at 2:30 PM. At that time, House Education Vice-Chair Mark Dean stated that the committee would continue until midnight, if necessary. Additionally, a meeting has already been scheduled for Saturday at 8 AM. Speculation is that there are 40+ amendments to be considered in committee.

The bill is literally changing by the hour at this point. Please take advantage of AFT-WV's electronic communication tools to get the most current information.

*Knowledge is
power!*

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during the
legislative session!**

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Local presidents to meet this weekend

- County presidents of AFT-WV, WVSSPA and WVEA conducted votes in each county this week and the local president will report the county totals tomorrow at the joint local presidents meeting in Flatwoods.
- The vote will authorize the state leadership of the AFT-WV, WVSSPA and WVEA to call a statewide work action should circumstances surrounding the Omnibus Education Bill merit such a work stoppage and to determine the appropriate time for that action to take place.
- At the conclusion of meeting business, the leaders of all three organizations will discuss the results publicly. Watch for the livestream on AFT-WV's Facebook page.



Public Hearing on SB 451



House Speaker Roger Hanshaw (R-Clay) requested a public hearing in the House on Senate Bill 451. Initially, the public hearing on SB 451 was been announced for 8:00 am Monday, Feb. 11th in House Chambers.

After hearing concerns that educators and students could not attend the 8:00 AM hearing, the House approved a motion to conduct a second public hearing at 5:30 PM.

AFT-WV leaders will be speaking at the public hearing. Additionally, many members have contacted the union and indicated they plan to speak at the public hearing. AFT-WV encourages members to attend the public hearing and voice their concerns about SB 541.

Meanwhile....

These are strategic activities that our locals and members must continue. Community support and systems to support our children in the event of a work stoppage must be in place. Please facilitate these in your locals:

- Call your elected officials and demand a meeting with all education employees in their district.
- Request County BOE & County Commissions to pass resolutions to support education employees
- Reach out to parents, religious leaders, food banks/pantries, and possible child care providers to build a community support system similar to last year.
- Please look to our sites for information (website, action network emails, social media sites, text alerts, emails from leaders, etc.) Please take advantage of all communication tools available to allow AFT-WV to rapidly disseminate information or instructions as needed.