



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

AFT-West Virginia, AFL-CIO



2/19/21

Fighting for Public Education... From Statehouse to Schoolhouse

AFT-WV hosts Legislative Action Meeting via Zoom



AFT-WV President Fred Albert and special guest AFT President Randi Weingarten welcomed AFT-WV members from across the state as they met virtually on Thursday, February 18th via Zoom. Members were provided with an update on the numerous attacks on public education from the legislative supermajority,

offered opportunities to sign up to act on these legislative attacks, and given the first opportunity to download and use the AFT-WV app to stay informed. If you want the AFT-WV app, scan the QR code on page 2 of this update to automatically download to your smartphone.

Major Education Bills Advancing This Week: Charter School Expansion

[HB 2012](#) quickly advanced from the House Education Committee and passed the full house 66-32. This bill:

- Changes limitations on amount of Charter Schools from 3 to 10
- Takes away revocation provisions
- Creates new authorizer as “West Virginia Professional Charter School Board”
- Creates Virtual Charter Schools
- Passed the full House; currently pending consideration by the Senate Education Committee

Hope Scholarships (Education Savings Accounts)

[HB 2013](#) creates Hope Scholarships, which are basically education savings accounts or ESAs. This bill quickly moved through committee and passed the House 60-39 on Thursday. **However, on Friday morning the House moved to reconsider and recommitted to House Finance.** AFT-WV post any updates as they become available.

Specifics of the bill include:

- 100% of state aid formula on base granted per student annually
- Can be used for private schools and/ or related educational expenses by definition
- Creates a new Board- “Hope Scholarship Board”
- Shall be operational by July 2022
- Approximately \$4600/yr based on previous year state aid formula per pupil average
- Must apply annually
- Contains no anti-discrimination provisions for students

Work Stoppages and Strikes

While strikes by public employees are already prohibited, the House and Senate decided to take up the matter again, with each putting forth their own version of a bill.

The Senate version, [Committee Sub for SB 11](#), is on 3rd reading on the Senate floor.

The House version, [HB 2536](#), is on 2nd reading on House calendar.

Paycheck Deception

[Committee Sub for HB 2009](#), a bill to attack and silence the voices of workers, passed the House of Friday.

- Relates to limitations on the use of wages and agency shop fees by employers and labor organizations for political activities
- Attacks on payroll deduction and unions
- Forces annual reauthorization for deductions regardless of member's wishes
- Is a direct interference of government into private contract between employee and union
- Attempts to silence workers' collective voices by limiting the ability to invest in elections

Changes in Master's Degree Pay

[Committee Sub for SB 15](#) changes the salary increase provisions in state code for a master's degree and passed the Senate on a 24-9 vote.

The changes would be effective July 1, 2022, and state that classroom teachers receiving a master's degree on or after that date cannot qualify for "M.A." and may only qualify for an in-field master's degree. The salary increase for holding an in-field master's degree is contingent upon a classroom teacher's assignment teaching in that MA field for at least one half of the total classes assigned.

Alternative Certification

[Eng. Committee Sub for SB 14](#) weakens the standards for alternative certification for teachers. The bill has passed Senate on a 25-9 vote and now moves to the House for consideration.

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- "Like" us at [Facebook.com/AFTWV](https://www.facebook.com/AFTWV) and follow us on Twitter [@AFTWV](https://twitter.com/AFTWV)
- Make sure your cell phone number is updated with us! During the 2019 strike, AFT-WV deployed a new technology that enables us to instantly have a text conversation with all members with a valid mobile number on file. If you haven't recently updated your contact information, please email or call the office with your new number.
- Many AFT local presidents and staff representatives use the Remind app to communicate with their local members. Ask your local president or staff rep if your county uses Remind and get signed up!