



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

AFT-West Virginia, AFL-CIO



*Fighting for Public Education... From Statehouse to Schoolhouse*

## **This week at the Capitol: Continued attacks on public education and employees**

### **Hope Scholarships**

[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 a few weeks ago.

Revised 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 minimal anti-discrimination provisions for students
- Does not provide financial accountability provisions to ensure funding is used to meet student needs

**HB 2013 passed the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, and the Senate Finance Committee on Thursday. The bill now moves to the Senate floor. Members, we need you to act now! Use our online tool with a prewritten message to quickly write your senator and tell them to vote no on HB 2013.**

[Click here to write your senator now!](#)

### **Paycheck Deception**

[Committee Sub for HB 2009](#), a bill to attack and silence the voices of public employees, passed the House a few weeks ago. The bill was taken up on Wednesday by the Senate Judiciary Committee, where it was amended to make the bill even worse for workers.

The bill:

- Will prohibit the payroll deduction of union dues for public employees
- Is a direct interference of government into a private contract between employee and union
- Attempts to silence workers' collective voices by limiting the ability to invest in their professional voice and elections
- Will affect teachers, service personnel, firefighters, police and correctional officers and state employees

**HB 2009 is currently on first reading in the Senate. Tell your senator you oppose this government inference in your freedom and blatant attempt to silence your professional voice.**

[Click here to call your Senator and tell them to vote no on HB 2009.](#)

## **Status Update on Major Education Bills:**

### **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. It has been pending consideration by the House Education Committee for over a week.

The changes would be effective July 1, 2022, and states 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 both chambers and completed legislative action. The bill has been signed by the Governor and legislative action is complete.

## Other Education Bills

[HB 2362](#) requires the State Board of Education to implement trauma-informed practices in grades K-12 and provide the necessary training and support to implement the program. The bill passed the House Education Committee a few weeks ago and awaits action by the House Finance Committee. This is one of the few positive bills for education that is moving at this point and AFT-WV has offered our professional development trainers to implement these practices for free.

[HB 2791](#) relates to enrollment at the county vocational schools. The bill allows universal acceptance of non-public students to participate in vocational programs throughout all 55 counties. The bill was passed the House and is awaiting consideration by the Senate Education committee.

[Comm Sub for SB 375](#) relates to county boards of education policies for open enrollment, criteria for enrollment denial and adds a procedure for appeal if denied. The bill passed the Senate and is awaiting consideration by the House Education Committee.

## Bills Passed

### Charter School Expansion

[HB 2012](#) quickly passed the full house 66-32 a few weeks ago. Initially this bill:

- Changed limitations on amount of Charter Schools from 3 to 10
- Removed revocation provisions
- Created new authorizer as “West Virginia Professional Charter School Board”
- Created Virtual Charter Schools

Senator Romano was successful in getting an amendment to HB 2012 during a Senate Education Committee meeting last week. The amendment called for limiting charter schools back to three for the next 3 years, and limiting virtual charter schools to a total of 1500 students for 3 years. The amendment was narrowly approved by the committee, 7-6.

However, HB 2012 was later amended on the Senate floor back to its original provisions. The bill passed on Wednesday, the House concurred with the Senate version and the bill has completed legislative action. HB 2012 now awaits the Governor’s signature.

### Work Stoppages and Strikes

The Senate version of the strike bill, [Committee Sub for SB 11](#), passed with an amendment to take out the entire provision that stated if an originally scheduled instructional day or noninstructional day is canceled due to a concerted work stoppage or strike by the employees assigned to a school, the school for which the day was canceled may not participate in any extracurricular activities during any part of that same day. After the bill went to the House, this amendment was stripped and SB 11 passed the House on March 2 and the Senate concurred with the House’s amendments. The bill has completed legislative action and moves to the Governor’s desk for signature.

**Both bills above will have a devastating impact on public education and West Virginia’s children. Please contact Governor Justice at 304-558-2000 or 1-888-438-2731 and ask him to veto these bills.**

## Stay Informed during the Legislative Session

Take advantage of the many ways to stay informed from AFT-WV!



- Visit the AFT-WV website at [www.aftwv.org](http://www.aftwv.org)
- While you are on the website, sign up for email alerts from AFT-WV. Please use a personal, non-work email address.
- Scan the QR code on the left with your smartphone camera to use AFT-WV’s new app!
- Sign up for our AFT-WV text alerts. Text AFTWV to 69238 to receive breaking news, legislative alerts, and more!\*

*(\*AFT will not charge for these updates, but your carrier’s message and data rates may apply.)*

- “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!