



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

AFT-West Virginia, AFL-CIO



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

## **This week at the Capitol: Attacks continue on employee rights**

### **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 amended in the Senate and passed. It will go back to the House.

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

**Tell your delegate you oppose this government inference in your freedom and blatant attempt to silence your professional voice. Your paycheck is YOUR business!**

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

[You can also click here to send an email to your Delegate.](#)

### **Grievance Procedure**

[SB 566](#) would undermine the public employees grievance procedure by allowing a state superintendent's interpretation of law or policy to supersede the judgement of administrative law judges. It is another attempt by the majority to chip away at the employment rights of education employees in WV and tilt the scales even further in favor of the employer.

This bill passed the Senate on Thursday and will move to the House for consideration.

### **Concealed Carry by Teachers**

[HB 2364](#) would permit teachers in K-12 schools to be authorized to carry concealed firearms as a designated school protection officer. The bill has passed House Education and awaits action by the House Judiciary Committee. AFT-WV believes teachers should not bear this liability and that this role is one best left to trained police officers and school resource officers. There are also concerns that the Board of Risk Management and union liability policies may or may not be applicable for wrongful death suits or accidents stemming from employees carrying firearms.

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

[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.

[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 awaits consideration by the House Education Committee.

## **Bills Passed**

### **Hope Scholarships**

[HB 2013](#) creates Hope Scholarships, which are basically education savings accounts or ESAs. This bill has passed both the House and Senate and awaits the Governor's signature.

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
- Shall be operational by July 2022
- Approximately \$4600/yr based on previous year state aid formula per pupil average
- Contains minimal anti-discrimination provisions for students
- Does not provide financial accountability provisions to ensure funding is used to meet student needs

### **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 was signed by the Governor last Friday.

### **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.

### **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 has become law.

## **Stay Informed during the Legislative Session**

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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!