



Legislative Edition The VOICE

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FL Legislative Session Update #1



The 2018 Florida Legislative Session began on January 9th and with it came the anxiety of public school educators and advocates across the state as we wait and watch what the Governor, the House and the Senate leadership has in store for us this year. Last year's HB 7069 still has us reeling, so with the open animosity of House Speaker Richard Corcoran and pro-charter Senate President Joe Negron coupled with "I'll Stand For Anything While I'm Running for US Senate" Governor Rick Scott we are in for a wild ride.

FEA is helping us monitor over 200 proposed bills that could impact educators.

The following are some we are watching to come up early in Committee and then for vote. Please keep abreast of the issues that impact your job, your children's healthcare, and your future (including retirement).

HB 25

This politically motivated stinker has come up before and never taken hold. However, this time around it has a Senate companion and looks to be sure to come up for a floor vote in the near future. HB 25 seeks to strip Florida public sector unions (well, not ALL public sector, really just the powerful teacher's union) of its political power and voice by decertifying those locals with less than 50% membership density. Florida is already a "right to work" state, but guarantees the right to organize a union in the state's Constitution. Workers have to choose to join. Now, Rep. Plaken and his cronies are telling Florida's educators that even if they've chosen to join and have a negotiated contract in their district, if the membership in that organization drops below 50% the union will cease to be the bargaining agent and the contract will be nullified until the union reorganizes and resigns enough members through PERC (Public Employee Relations Commission) and renegotiates the contract.

Sounds like a roller coaster right? Well, that's the intent. If they keep the FEA and its locals running to constantly jump through administrative hoops, then they won't have time to be the only true advocate in Tallahassee for children and public education. A calculated plan. While St. Lucie CTA/CU is in no danger of decertification, and doesn't ever expect to be, the overall statewide impact on all educators could be drastic. Even non-union members should be shuddering at the thought of not having a contract. (cont. on P.2)

How to Contact Your State Legislators and the Governor

If you don't know who your state representative or Senator is, take a few minutes to use the link below to get the list. Just enter your address.

<http://feaactioncenter.org/act/contact-your-lawmakers/>

When you write or call their offices, identify yourself as their constituent and tell *your story*. They need to hear from real people about what is really going on. Be polite, be respectful, and tell them clearly how you want them to vote. They WORK FOR YOU!

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The fact is, our members' working conditions are our students learning conditions. Our voice is a critical check and balance in a system that already favors the rich, well-connected profiteers. When we put out the call, please **MAKE THE CALL!**

HB 1 "Hope Scholarship for the Bullied"

Ironically, this bill is being touted by one of the biggest bullies in Florida, House Speaker Richard Corcoran. The concept is to allow students who claim to have been bullied to go to a private school or other school on a scholarship to get away from their bully. The bill is simply a thinly disguised tactic to transfer public money to private schools where bullying also exists, by the way. The bill does nothing to solve the bullying problem, help the bullied child become less of a target or even offer counseling to the child who is bullying (research shows that children who bully tend to have mitigating factors of their own such as ADHD, poor self-esteem, childhood trauma, etc.). Public money funneled to private entities with NO oversight is a foolish proposition that steals money from the majority of students. Want to really combat bullying? How about a three-fold increase in funding for wrap-around services for children and their families in the form of counseling, and proven programs to combat the issues? But since Speaker Corcoran's friends and family can't make money on that, it's not being considered.

What should you do? Sign up for action alerts or visit to take action NOW: www.feaaactioncenter.org/act/

Join TIGER-PAC to help fund education-friendly candidates and advocacy. Email barbara.ziegler@floridaea.org for an application.



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