

**Subject:** Test - Committee Week & Special Session Update  
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**From:** FEA Frontline  
**To:** Flynt, Luke

# Florida Education Association

# *Frontline Report*

*2025 Legislative Session*

*February 14, 2025*

## Week in Review

Another committee week has come and gone. So far, this interim committee week period has been largely dominated by special sessions leaving much of the work that normally happens during interim committee weeks undone.

Read on to learn more about in-state tuition stripped from thousands of deserving college students, standardized testing, voucher funding, and continued attacks on LGBTQ+ Floridians.

## Special Session on Immigration

Two weeks ago, there was a lot of drama in Tallahassee as the governor and legislators were in a battle over Florida's immigration policy matching up with federal edicts. This week, Gov. DeSantis and legislative leadership reached a deal and passed new legislation which has already been signed into law.

The new law, [SB 2C](#), strips the possibility of in-state tuition from children who cannot prove they have legal status to live in the United States. We encourage you to read this [article from the Miami Herald](#) that interviews impacted students so you can hear first-hand how the legislation will impact them.

As the article mentions, there were a handful of republicans in the Senate who joined with all the democrats in supporting an [amendment](#) that would have allowed students currently enrolled and

receiving in-state tuition to continue receiving in-state tuition until they graduated. The amendment failed in a vote of [14-22](#).

In both chambers final passage of the bill took place strictly along party lines with a vote of [27-10](#) in the Senate and [85-30](#) in the House.

Meanwhile, in the House, an amendment that would have required the newly created state Immigration Taskforce to develop policies around immigration enforcement in schools was voted down. As Rep. Tant (D-Tallahassee) pointed out this amendment is necessary because communities are currently living in fear over the uncertainty of how immigration policies will be carried out. A statewide policy that affirms ICE raids won't occur at our schools would have gone a long way to lessening the current state of fear and apprehension and making sure that every child can feel safe and welcome at school. Because the vote for the amendment was taken by voice instead of a roll call vote, there is no vote tally we can share.

See FEA's full statement on the [passage of SB 2C here](#).

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## Testing

The same bill that transitioned standardized testing in Florida from the FSA to FAST also required a study to be done to determine what improvements, if any, could be made to reduce the amount of testing. The study has been completed and the FLDOE offered their [overview of the study](#) to the [Senate PreK-12 Education Committee](#) meeting earlier this week.

One of the things that jumped out to us was a finding on [slide 24](#) indicating that FAST testing cannot be reduced any further and that FAST testing has already reduced the length of assessments compared to FSA.

There was bipartisan pushback from the members of the committee who asked tough questions of the DOE staff about the amount of time that is wasted with students being tested.

We are especially appreciative of Sen. Berman (D-Boynton Beach) for asking to see a copy of the study so she can review it for herself instead of simply relying in FLDOE's interpretation of the study results. FEA has also requested a copy of the study; we'll share it with you one we receive it.

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## Voucher Funding

In [last week's Frontline](#), we wrote about superintendents who testified about vouchers draining funds from public schools. One of the specific concerns raised is that FLDOE's inability to accurately track students results in school districts lose funding for students who receive vouchers

even though those students are actually enrolled in and attending public schools.

This week, the [House PreK-12 Budget Committee](#) heard from Florida's voucher funding organizations about how they receive funds from the FLDOE. During questioning, republican members of the committee seemed to be absolutely shocked when they received a lesson in how capitalism works. They wanted to know why private schools jacked up the price of tuition after the passage of universal vouchers. The Orlando Sentinel recently wrote a [great article](#) explaining exactly why this happened.

While much of the focus on universal vouchers is on private schools, the market for homeschool vouchers is growing rapidly as well. Parents who opt for one of these vouchers can use the voucher to pay for private tutoring. Another surprising moment for lawmakers during the committee hearing was when the voucher organizations reported that no background checks are required for these private tutors.

There is clearly a need for much greater oversight and transparency on voucher funding, and we'll keep advocating for those desperately needed changes.

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## Legislation Update

Typically by this point, major legislation has been heard in committee in advance of the regular session. That has not been the case this year. Between an historic snowstorm and two weeks of special sessions, very few bills have been heard in committee.

One of the bills that did get a hearing is SB 100, sponsored by Randy Fine (R-Melbourne). Before we get into what this bill would do, first a little backstory. This genesis of this bill goes back a few years. Once Don't Say Gay became law, multiple organizations sued to get clarity on what was—and was not—allowed under the law. This lawsuit resulted in a [settlement agreement](#) where the state of Florida acknowledged that the display of a rainbow flag or sticker in a public school classroom is perfectly acceptable.

SB 100 would make it illegal for a Pride flag to be displayed on a school campus or in any government building. During questioning on the bill Sen. Fine was unable to answer basic questions such as would every display of a rainbow on a school campus be a criminal act under his bill. Because the bill is so broad when it comes to restricting speech, it comes as no surprise that the legislative analysis of the bill goes into [great detail](#) as to why the bill is almost certainly unconstitutional.

We hope legislators will come to their senses and refuse to pass another bill they know is unconstitutional, but we're not just relying on hope. We'll continue monitoring this bill and keep you updated on ways you can help make sure it doesn't become law.

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## Looking ahead

The week of Feb. 17 will be the final interim committee week. Legislators will then have one week off to be back home in their districts before the 60-day legislative session formally begins on March 4.

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