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Florida Education Association

# *Frontline Report*

*2025 Legislative Session*

*March 28, 2025*

As we are near the midpoint of session (which is officially next Wednesday, April 2), we saw our first glimpse of the budget this week. And, with the help of advocates like you, we saw a very bad bill voted down in committee! There are five weeks left this session for us to continue to advocate for higher wages, respect on the job, the freedom to teach, and the right to join a union without political interference.

## **Initial Budget Proposals**

Both chambers released their [initial education budget proposals](#) this week. While there are some significant differences between the Senate and House proposals what they have in common is more important.

Demand a better budget from your legislators!

These budget proposals keep Florida's per-student funding in the bottom ten in the nation and will do nothing to move Florida's teachers up from #50 in the nation in average pay. Add to that a [proposal to cut revenue by \\$5 billion](#) in the midst of Florida's massive teacher shortage, fueled by low pay, and we must not stay silent.

Another similarity between the two budgets is they have the state decreasing their share of education funding putting more of a burden onto counties. In the 2019-20 budget, which was the first budget under Gov. DeSantis, state funding accounted for 57% of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). In the proposed budgets released this week the percentage of state funding is 54% in both chambers.

All Floridians deserve better than these budget proposals. It won't be long until a final budget is adopted. So, we must [act now and contact legislators](#) to demand they do better by Florida's families!

## **Guns on Camps Bill Voted Down**

For a few years now, it has been routine for legislators to file a bill to allow firearms on college and university campuses. Each year a coalition of groups including FEA has worked to make sure these bills don't become law. We're pleased to report that we were successful in stopping this legislation again this year!

[SB 814](#), sponsored by Randy Fine (R-Melbourne) was voted down in committee on a [vote of 4-3](#). Sen. Ilena Garcia (R-Miami) joined all the Democrats on the committee in voting no.

Teresa M. Hodge, president of the United Faculty of Florida did a masterful job of [explaining to the committee members](#) why the faculty members she represents are opposed to firearms on campus.

## **Restoring Sanity and Local Control**

Thursday afternoon, SB 166 passed the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on a [unanimous vote](#) and is now poised to be taken up by the full Senate. This bill fulfills several priorities of FEA members by allowing teachers to earn multiyear contracts, reducing the overreliance on high-stakes testing and creating a 10-year teaching certificate. These commonsense measures allow important decisions to be made locally instead of at the state level like they currently are.

Earlier in the day on Thursday, the Senate [unanimously passed](#) SB 296, the bill that repeals the statewide start time requirements that were scheduled to begin next school year.

## Update on Anti-Union Attacks

In even better news, SB 1382, an anti-union bill designed to silence the voices of educators and other public employees was not heard in committee for the second consecutive week. Fine will have to resign from the Florida Senate next week due to his campaign for federal office. As a result, it's possible that SB 1382 and every other bill he has filed that does not have a co-sponsor may not be seen again. We will make sure to keep you posted!

A similar bill in the House, HB 1387, passed its first committee on a [10-7 vote](#) with three Republicans joining all the Democrats on the committee to oppose this bill. The strong bipartisan opposition to this bill in its first hearing is a direct result of advocates like you who've reached out to lawmakers and told them to stop attacking workers and their unions. Your advocacy is paying off. We want to give a special thanks to two of our local presidents for testifying against this bill in committee: [Chris Pagel](#) from Nassau Teachers Association and [Kevin Daly](#) from Teachers Association of Lee County.

We'll continue to monitor all the anti-union legislation this session and let you know how you can take action if another one of these bills is heard in committee.

## A Common Thread

The terrible budget proposal in the House and the anti-union bill, HB 1387 are part of a larger effort to silence the voices of all working people in Florida. The sponsor of HB 1387, Rep. Jenna Persons-Mulicka (R-Fort Myers) is the chair of the House PreK-12 Budget Committee. It should come as no surprise that the same individual who attacks your right to have a union also proposed a starvation budget for public schools.

It is important to understand, however, that Persons-Mulicka's attacks are not just on public education and unions, but on the very idea that any working person in the state should have a voice in how they are governed. She is also the sponsor of HB 1205, a bill that would make it [nearly impossible for citizen-led amendments to Florida's Constitution to be placed on the ballot](#).

Citizen-led amendments empower everyday citizens to pass policies that improve our lives and strengthen our communities, especially when politicians choose to side with their billionaire and corporate elite donors. But now, out-of-touch politicians like Persons-Mulicka are rewriting the rules to further keep the power in their hands rather

than letting the people have a say through their vote.

But, wait. There's more. She is also the sponsor of HB 1381--a bill that places even more restrictions on voting under the guise of cracking down on voter fraud. Fortunately, neither this bill nor its Senate companion, SB 1414, have been heard in a single committee so far this session.

As we continue to advocate for public education, we must remember the importance of standing in solidarity with all working people. The attacks on public education and our unions are part of a much larger effort to make it harder for working people to have their voices heard and to give more power to the wealthy few.

Viewed as a whole, the budget proposal, the anti-union bill and the bills to silence the voices of voters are not distinct attacks. Instead, they are all part of one large, coordinated attack on our democracy and on your freedoms.

## Looking Ahead

There are two bills being heard in committee on Monday that we want to bring to your attention.

1. SB 140 is a bill that benefits charter school corporations over the needs of students, educators and public school communities. It will be heard in the Senate Community Affairs Committee at 4:00 p.m. on Monday. [Click here](#) to write the members of the committee and ask them to oppose this bill.
2. SB 1692 is yet another book banning bill. This bill goes beyond previous attempts and threatens funding for school districts who don't engage in state-sanctioned book banning. It will be heard in the Senate PreK-12 Education committee also at 4:00 p.m. on Monday. [Click here](#) to write the members of the committee and ask them to oppose this bill.

## Thanks!

This week was FEA's Super Week where local presidents and FEA's Governance Board converge on Tallahassee to meet with lawmakers. We are thankful for all those who came up this week and made their voices heard!



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