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Florida Education Association

Frontline Report

2025 Legislative Session

April 4, 2025

With five weeks down and four weeks left to go, it is becoming increasingly clear that there are two sets of competing priorities. Working people in Florida want strong public schools and the freedom to live comfortably with just one job. In response to the demands of people like you, we've seen legislation to help accomplish these goals.

On the other hand, we've also seen legislation that continues to prioritize corporate schools over public schools, and we've seen budget proposals that will keep Florida's educators at the bottom of the nation in average pay.

When the [handkerchief falls](#) on May 2 and session is over, let's make sure that we've done everything in our power to make sure it's the priorities of the people that get addressed.

Your Priorities: Stability and Job Security

Everyone who works for a living deserves a sense of job security. Educators need to know that they can advocate for what is best for themselves and their students without fear of their principal simply not renewing their contract. The unfortunate reality is that nearly two-thirds of all teachers in Florida are on an annual contract. Many of those teachers live in fear this time of year not knowing whether or not they'll have a teaching job in the Fall.

Providing job security through multiyear contracts has long been one of FEA's priorities. SB 166 sponsored by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) would allow districts to once again award multiyear contracts, something they have not been legally permitted to do for almost 15 years now. Because of the efforts of advocates like you, SB 166 [unanimously passed](#) the Senate this week. We now must work to ensure it passes in the House as well. To help in those efforts, please sign [this petition](#) demanding the House take up this vital legislation.

Sign the SB 166 petition today!

Their Priorities: Creating Instability

Even as SB 166 passed the Senate, we saw legislation move this week that continues the decades-long pattern of undermining public education in favor of corporate charter and voucher schools.

SB 140 is a bill premised on the notion that municipalities throughout Florida will be able to attract corporations and high-paying jobs if they simply have more charter schools. The bill's sponsor Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Pensacola) offers no evidence to support this claim. In the real world, a higher percentage of charter schools received a grade of D or F in the most recent school grades than did neighborhood public schools. If attracting high-paying jobs is the goal, the solution is to fully-fund and support public schools so that every child has the resources they need to thrive, not continue siphoning money to charter school corporations. Unfortunately, this bill which seeks to divide communities passed on a [7-1 vote](#) this week.

HB 1539 triples down on prior "Don't Say Gay" legislation by requiring schools to ban even more books from school and classroom libraries without regard to the literary or scientific merit of the book. It passed committee on a [13-4 vote](#). Fortunately, it's Senate companion SB 1692 seems to be stalled after being temporarily postponed in committee this week.

HB 549/SB 1058 represent a different way of censoring curriculum. These bills require all instructional materials and library media center collections to purchase books that only use the term "Gulf of America." The ramification of this is that works of literature or historical books using the term "Gulf of Mexico" will either need to be updated (something many publishers will simply refuse to do) or they will be unavailable for future purchases. There is also concern over whether or not newly adopted geography and history books will be allowed to detail the process through which the Gulf was renamed or if students will be expected to learn the name Gulf of America devoid of any historical context. HB 549 passed the House on a vote of [78-29](#) this week and SB 1058 will be voted on in the Senate this upcoming Wednesday.

For all three of the bills that restrict the curriculum, their supporters claim the legislation is needed to "protect" children and to ensure they are learning "true history." But, those claims don't hold up to even the slightest level of scrutiny.

You see, none of these regulations apply to the 13% of Florida students who use a publicly-funded voucher to attend a private school. If the bill sponsors truly believed what they were doing was good and necessary, they'd apply it to 100% of students with a publicly-funded education. Instead, the intent of these bills is to create division and sow distrust in public education.

Your Priorities: Fair, Professional Pay

In addition to job security, everyone deserves a living wage. In order for every educator in Florida to have a living wage, we've called on the legislature to increase per student funding by \$1,000.

Increased funding alone is not enough. We also need the laws that regulate teacher pay and have led to state-mandated salary compression to be repealed.

HB 439 is a step in the right direction in fixing that issue. The bill, which [passed its first committee unanimously](#) this week, requires school districts to address “salary compression for instructional personnel with more than 2 years of experience.”

Their Priorities: Slashing Funding and Exploiting Child Labor

You likely have already heard that the House and Senate are looking at drastically cutting the weighted funding for AP, IB, AICE, Dual Enrollment and Career and Professional Education. If not, you can [read more about it here](#). If these proposed cuts go through, it will mean a **devastating loss of services for students**. As much as we’d love for you to finish reading Frontline right now, we’d love it even more if you stopped reading to [place a call to your legislators and demand a better budget](#).

Call your Representative and demand a budget that supports students and educators

Aside from cutting funding for vital programs, the proposed budgets also keep Florida’s educators among the lowest paid in the nation. We know that most Floridians support higher pay for their teachers; they overwhelmingly voice that support every election cycle by voting for funding referendums to support teacher pay.

Instead, we’ve seen dangerous proposals from the house to cut taxes by as much as \$5 billion. A state that pays its teachers #50 in the nation simply cannot afford that kind of tax cut. Instead, that \$5 billion should be invested in our students and teachers today so we can be sure Florida prospers long into the future.

One thing that has slipped under the radar for many people is what is not included in the House’s budget cuts. Many parents and educators rely on the school sales tax holiday to buy clothes and supplies for the new year. The current proposals do not include the sales tax holidays so many of us have become reliant on.

As if the cuts to education were not enough of a direct attack on Florida’s children, legislators are also looking at rolling back child labor laws. In committee meetings, legislators have testified that these rollbacks are needed so that children can work to help support their families.

Let’s be very clear on that argument: Children should be focusing on school—not being exploited by billionaires as a scapegoat for their bad business practices. **If lawmakers truly want to support Florida’s workforce, they should advocate for better wages and benefits—not laws forcing kids to pick up the slack.**

Our friends and partners at the Florida AFL-CIO have made it really easy for you to send a postcard to legislators to tell them to vote no on eliminating child labor protections. Here's what the [postcard will look like](#).

Send your personalized postcard today

With four weeks left in session, our mission is clear: we must continue pushing for the priorities that help Florida's educators, parents, students, and school communities. When we stand united and demand better from our legislators, we can make sure our priorities prevail!

Thanks!

Again this week, we were very excited to welcome FEA members from around the state to Tallahassee to meet with lawmakers and stand up for your priorities. Thank you to the following local unions for sending members to the capital this week: Brevard Federation of Teachers, FEA-Retired, Marion Education Association, Orange County Classroom Teachers Association, Palm Beach County Classroom Teachers Association and the Teachers Association of Lee County.

Questions? Call PPA at 850-224-2078.

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