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Florida Education Association

# Frontline Report

**2026 Legislative Session**

**February 6, 2026**

As of today, session is 42% completed—assuming it ends when it is scheduled to on March 13. Those of you who are fans of *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* will know that 42 is the answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe and everything.

But, as we rapidly approach the midpoint of session there are a lot more questions than answers.

## Fighting Forward

Today concludes FEA's annual Super Week. Local presidents from around the state and FEA's Governance Board were in Tallahassee to lobby lawmakers and to send a clear, unified message that we demand they strengthen our public schools. In case you missed it, you can catch [FEA's press conference laying out those demands here](#).



Because of the great work that FEA members and public education advocates are doing, we saw positive legislation win [unanimous approval](#) in a Senate committee again this week. [SB 1216](#), a bill that addresses salary compression for educators sailed through the Senate PreK-12 Appropriations Committee. It has one committee stop left before it is ready for a vote on the Senate floor.

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## Fighting Back

As we continue to fight forward to strengthen our public schools, we also are fighting back on continued attacks on educators and their unions.

More than [50 people were in the audience](#) when the House State Administration Budget Committee heard [HB 995](#) late Thursday afternoon. This is the anti-worker, anti-freedom bill that is designed to make it even more difficult for workers to come together and raise their collective voice in the fight for more respect, better working conditions and higher pay. Only four of the people in the audience supported the bill—and each of them was appearing on behalf of billionaire-backed organizations.

Not surprisingly, the bill passed along a [party-line vote](#). If we are to believe those who supported the bill, they did so because they want educators and other public employees to get larger raises—and that the only thing keeping workers from getting larger raises is their union. Truly, the arguments advanced in the committee were an insult to the intelligence of all those who traveled from around the state to voice their opposition to the bill.

If you would like to watch the video of the bill being heard in committee, [you can do so here](#). Discussion of the bill starts at 04:10 into the video and continues for more than an hour until the vote take place at 1:10:25 into the video.

It's worth noting that the sponsor of HB 995 is also the chair of the PreK-12 budget committee. If Rep. Jenna Persons-Mulicka were truly interested in educators being paid what they are worth, that would be reflected in the budget. When she releases a proposed budget (hopefully next week), it will undoubtedly be a budget that keeps Florida's teachers at #50 in the nation for average teacher pay. We will continue to point out when lawmakers like Rep. Persons-Mulicka say one thing but vote for and do another.

The Senate version of the anti-worker, anti-freedom bill was not heard in committee as was originally planned. [SB 1296](#) was on the agenda when the Senate Government Oversight and Accountability Committee met at the start of the week, but the bill was temporarily postponed.

However, a proposed committee substitute for SB 1296 is expected to be considered when the committee meets on Wednesday, February 11. As of the writing of this email, the text of the proposed committee substitute is not available.

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## More than one way to skin a cat (or undermine collective bargaining)

HB 995/SB 1296 are not the only anti-union pieces of legislation we are watching. There are a slate of other bills moving in the senate that take direct aim at local unions' ability to engage in collective bargaining.

Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) is at the forefront of those efforts. His [SB 538](#) would have originally allowed the school board to use their "sole discretion" to "determine and approve the compensation of any person employed as an athletic coach." That would have been bad enough on its own. But the bill was [made substantially worse this week when it was amended](#) to include any "sponsor of an extracurricular activity."

If this bill were to become law, school districts would be able to cut backroom deals and determine salary outside of collective bargaining for tens of thousands of teachers starting next school year. Instead of a system that treats all employees fairly, this sets up a system where employees can be paid based on how well liked they are by their administration. Heck, the school board could even condition that additional compensation on whether or not you drop your union membership. After all, compensation is now at the school board's "sole discretion."

You want the \$5,000 recurring bonus now being offered to coach the chess club—you better prove you aren't a union member first. The amendment that made this change as well as the bill itself [passed unanimously](#) and was praised by Senate Minority leader and recipient of the 2025 FEA Champion of Education Award Lori Berman (D-Boynton Beach), despite significant concerns raised by labor and education advocates.

Under current laws schools that are in "educational emergencies" already are allowed to "provide salary incentives" that "are not subject to collective bargaining requirements."

SB 7036 greatly expands the definition of "educational emergency" to include hundreds of additional schools, including many schools that were given an A or B in the last round of school grades. SB 7036 passed on a [vote of 5-2](#). If this bill were to become law, school districts around the state would claim "educational emergencies" and use that as an excuse to determine salary and compensation outside of the collective bargaining process.

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## Keeping guns off college and university campuses

[HB 757](#) would expand the "guardian" program in place on Florida's PreK-12 campuses to our colleges and universities. The bill [passed its second committee stop unanimously](#) this week.

Emily Stewart, an assistant professor at Florida State University who was on campus during the mass shooting there last April, gave passionate testimony in opposition to the bill. We hope you'll

take the time to listen to her words as she explains why bringing more guns onto campus is not the right solution.



[\*\*SB 896\*\*](#), the Senate companion to HB 757, has not yet been heard in a Senate committee.

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## State control over curriculum

HB 1119, the book banning bill that allows material to be removed from schools without consideration of its literary or artistic merit will be heard on the House floor next week. Please [send a quick email to your representative](#) asking them to OPPOSE this book banning bill.

For some legislators it's not enough just to remove books that they personally object to; there is now a measure underway to allow the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) to produce its own textbooks.

[Current law](#) prevents the FLDOE from “enter(ing) into the business of producing or publishing instructional materials for general use in classrooms.” This is a sensible policy that helps to keep instructional materials free of state propaganda and helps to ensure honesty, accuracy and objectivity in Florida’s classrooms.

[\*\*SB 7036\*\*](#) (yes the same bill that expands the definition of “education emergencies”) removes the prohibition. Given that Florida has banned the teaching of Advanced Placement African American History and has a middle school standard that speaks to the “benefits” of enslavement, it is gravely concerning that the FLDOE could be in a position of producing textbooks and instructional materials. For such a significant change in policy to happen, you would anticipate that the senator behind the measure would be able to articulate a good reason for the change. Instead of defending

the policy in his own bill, Sen. Simon referred to it as a “weak point” as you can hear in the exchange below.



Though there was bipartisan consensus the bill contains some terrible policy changes, it [passed on a party-line vote](#). Currently, the House does not have any similar language about allowing the FLDOE to become a textbook publisher. We will be monitoring this issue very closely and will provide you with updates on it.

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## Budget update

When Senate appropriations committees released their agendas for this week, the agendas indicated the committees would release their draft budgets when they met on Wednesday, February 4. However, early that morning Senate Appropriations Chair Ed Hooper announced that the rollout would now take place on Thursday, February 12. In his announcement, Sen. Hooper said it was important for the Senate to stick to the “tradition” of rolling out budget proposals the same week as the House.

One tradition both chambers broke this week was releasing budgets no later than the fourth week of the legislative session. Each session going back to 2020, both chambers have released their budget proposals no later than week four. In fact, initial budget proposals were released as early as week three multiple times over the past six years.

As you’ll recall, last session was extended for an additional 45 days because the two chambers could not come to agreement on how large of tax breaks they should give to the ultra-wealthy and what budget areas they would continue to underfund in order to give new tax breaks to their billionaire backers. It looks like we might be in for more of the same this year.

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## Thanks

We appreciate all of our local presidents and governance board members who gave of their time to come up to Tallahassee for Super Week. The countless meetings you had with lawmakers are making a difference as we continue to fight forward and to fight back!

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## How You Can Take Action Today

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