

Florida Education Association

Frontline Report

2026 Legislative Session

February 27, 2026

There are two weeks left in legislative session, and we'll let Sen. Ed Hooper who chairs the powerful Appropriations Committee in the Senate [say it best](#): "This may be the year that the least number of bills pass as possible."

Many of the bills that are moving right now are those that would make almost every aspect of life more difficult for Florida's working families. This week legislators passed bills that would make it

- Harder to come together in union and fight for a better life,
- Harder to support marginalized students,
- Harder to feel safe on college and university campuses, and
- Harder to vote.

Attacks on working people

HB 995 is the house version of the anti-worker bill (SB 1296) that would create two classes of public employees in Florida. Those who work in "public safety" would be a favored class while all other public employees would be disfavored. These bills exist to make it harder for workers in the state to have a voice in their profession, to advocate for fair pay and to fight for their benefits.

Dozens of working-class Floridians showed up in committee to express their opposition to this bill. To watch FEA members tell the committee that they don't need legislation to make their lives harder, click the image below.

SB 1296 is currently scheduled to have its last committee stop on Monday, March 2. Senators have been facing a lot of pressure to stand up for working people and oppose this bad bill. We hope that you'll keep that pressure up by [emailing senators](#) and asking them to oppose HB 1296. Even better would be if you can take a few minutes and [call the members of the Senate Fiscal Policy committee and demand they vote no!](#)



Attacks on students of color, girls and other historically marginalized groups

With its attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion [HB 1071](#) could end relationships school districts have with organizations like [100 Black Men of South Florida](#) that provides mentorship to racial and ethnic minorities and the wildly popular [Girls for Science](#) in central Florida.

As with HB 995, HB 1071 is really about legislators choosing winners and losers. In this case voucher schools that can still embrace diversity, equity and inclusion are winners. Public schools that can't are losers. And, when public schools lose, communities lose.

A parent who wants their child's school to be able to partner with great organizations like those mentioned above (and so many more) shouldn't have to enroll in a private school, but that is the impact (and the intent) of HB 1071.

In debate on HB 1071 multiple members questioned how we can trust the same FLDOE that approved a middle school social studies standard relating to the "benefits" of enslavement to ensure that instructional materials in health classes are accurate and unbiased.

One element of the bill that generated very little discussion when HB 1071 was being debated would greatly weaken collective bargaining rights. The bill expands the definition of "educational emergency" which allows school districts to make unilateral decisions regarding "salary incentives."

HB 1071 passed the House on a largely party-line vote of [82-31](#).

The Senate companion, SB 7036, passed its final committee this week on a [unanimous vote](#) and is ready for vote on the Senate floor. The two bills, though, are markedly different from one another. SB 7036 for example, does not have the anti-DEI measures. With the two versions of the bills being so different, it remains to be seen if there is enough time for the chambers to come to agreement on a final package.

Attacks on student safety

Firearms are not currently allowed in dorms on Florida's college and university campuses. [SB 896](#) would change that. Much of the policy in the bill is a good, thoughtful response to last April's mass shooting at Florida State University. The bill does implement some commonsense safety policies.

However, by expanding firearms on campus, the bill goes too far. Three faculty members at FSU spoke to the committee and testified as to why they oppose this provision of the bill. They say it even better than we can, so we urge you to listen to their testimony by clicking on the image below.



Attacks on the right to vote

In our weekly Frontline newsletters, we typically stay focused on legislation that is explicitly related to education. From time to time, however, there are bills that are so egregious that you need to know about them even if they aren't directly tied to education policy. [HB 991](#) is one such bill. It passed the House earlier this week on a [nearly party-line vote of 83-31](#).

HB 991 is voter suppression plain and simple.

Some of the provisions of the bill like requiring someone to have their birth certificate in order to be registered to vote might seem innocent enough but they ignore our state and our nation's legacy of institutional racism and Jim Crow. There are still plenty of Floridians alive today who were born in segregated hospitals and who have never had a birth certificate.

Aside from segregation, there are plenty of reasons someone born in the United State might not have a birth certificate. Similar legislation in Kansas has [been ruled unconstitutional](#). Ralph Ortiz was one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit that led to the Kansas law being stuck down. Ortiz was a military veteran who himself was born on a military base in Illinois. The base he was born on subsequently closed and he was unable to track down his birth certificate and denied the right to

vote. Ortiz initially supported the law; it never occurred to him he would be impacted. Undoubtedly, there are many Floridians who would find themselves in a similar situation of being completely caught off guard that they suddenly lost their right to vote.

You can [read more about HB 991 and how it would disenfranchise Floridians here](#).

Budget update

In the two weeks since each chamber passed their respective budgets there has been additional action on the budget. We are still awaiting the start of budget conferences. If you missed last week's Frontline or would just like to review the budget for whatever reason, you can [find the recap here](#).

Thanks!

Again this week we were happy to welcome FEA members from across the state to the Capitol to meet with lawmakers and testify in committee. Thank you to the following locals who sent members up this week: Brevard Federation of Teachers, Charlotte FEA, Escambia Education Association, Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association, Teachers Association of Lee County, Orange County Classroom Teachers Association, United School Employees of Pasco, Polk Education Association and St. Johns Education Association.

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