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Florida Education Association

Frontline Report

2026 Legislative Session

March 6, 2026

As we head into what should be (but almost certainly won't be) the last week of session, there are still a lot more questions than answers. One thing that is becoming increasingly clear is that legislators are turning their backs on working people.

SB 1296: What we know now

SB 1296 passed the Senate today on a vote of **20-14** with Senators Alexis Calatayud (R-Miami), Ileana Garcia (R-Miami), Ed Hooper (R-Palm Harbor), Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral), Jason Pizzo (NPA-Hollywood), and Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) joining with all the Democrats in voting no. SB 1296 will now be sent to the House where it is expected to be heard early next week. If the House passes the bill, it will then be ready to for Gov. DeSantis' signature.

There were multiple amendments to the bill this week that made substantive changes from the originally filed version. You can read the current version of the bill with the amended language [here](#).

Both changes outlined below slightly mitigate the harm of the original SB 1296, and they were only added because of the pressure senators felt from advocates like you. Thank you for your advocacy.

One of the substantive changes to the bill is related voting thresholds in union recertification elections. The chart below shows the original impact and the current impact with the amended language.

Original recertification voting requirements in SB 1296	Current recertification requirements in SB 1296 as amended on March 5
At least 50% + 1 of the employees in the bargaining unit must be a YES vote for recertification.	At least 50% of the employees in the bargaining unit must vote in the election. Of all votes that are cast, at least 50%+1 must be a YES vote for recertification.
For example: If a union has 100 members in the bargaining unit, 51 would need to vote yes in the recertification election. Anything shy of 51 yes votes would result in the union being decertified.	For example: If a union has 100 members in the bargaining unit, 50 would need to vote. At least 26 people would need to vote yes. If BOTH of those criteria are not met, the union would be decertified.

A second substantive change clarifies that release time for union members is permissible if agreed to in the collective bargaining agreement and if the union fully reimburses the public employer for compensation and benefits.

SB 1296: Where do we go from here?

The Greek poet Dinos Christianopoulos is perhaps best known for the couplet “They tried to bury us/They didn’t know we were seeds.” This famous line was written in 1978 after he was ostracized from the Greek literary community for his sexual orientation.

As we look ahead to the new reality that our unions face should SB 1296 become law, there can be no doubt the intent of this legislation is to bury us—to make the lives of educators harder by taking away their contract and all the rights it affords. But, we are seeds.

Of course, this is not the first time out-of-state billionaires have joined forces with Republican lawmakers in an attempt to bury us. [HB 7055](#) (2018) and [SB 256](#) (2023) also represented direct attacks on educators and their unions. In response to both of those bills, through hard work and organizing we overcame every obstacle that was put in our place. In fact, there are **more** local unions affiliated with FEA today than there were in 2018.

Through hard work, organizing, and one-on-one conversations in every worksite across this state, we will once again rise to the challenge and jump through the new hoops that SB 1296 puts in place.

At the same time, we must work to break this vicious cycle so that we can truly focus on thriving. We look forward to the days when all our energy during the legislative session can be spent expanding workers’ rights, increasing educator pay, and strengthening school communities. To make the transition from where we are to where we want to be requires that we be involved in politics and requires that we be involved in elections.

Whether the 2027 legislative session is yet another one where we legislators try to bury us or a session where they work with us to strengthen public education and empower educators is dependent on what public education advocates like you do between now and the 2026 elections in November.

Looking ahead

As we enter week nine, the two chambers remain far apart on a host of major issues. Very good legislation like [SB 320](#) which would have restored multi-year contracts seems to be all but dead as does very bad legislation like [HB 1119](#) which would have further expanded book banning.

When all is said and done, the 2026 legislative session could go down as one of the least productive in recent memory. That notwithstanding, there are two bills we have been watching closely all session that appear poised for final passage next week and then sent on to Gov. DeSantis for his signature.

- [SB 538](#) passed the Senate [last month](#) and will be on the House floor for final passage on Monday, March 9. This is the bill that creates a new category of employee in public schools. This quasi-administrative position consists of “any athletic director or coach or the director of an activity sponsor specified by the school district superintendent.” Because of their classification as administrative personnel, individuals in these positions will no longer be members of their current bargaining unit.
- [SB 896](#) will be on the special order calendar when the Senate meets on Tuesday, March 10. This is the bill that expands the “Guardian” programs to colleges and universities. The House version of this bill, HB 757, was [passed last month](#).

Budget Update

Again this week, the only budget update is that there is no update. In the three weeks since each chamber passed their respective budgets there has been no additional action on the budget. We are still awaiting the start of budget conferences. If you would like to refresh your memory and see the budget recap from when three weeks ago you [can find it recap here](#).

Thanks!

Hundreds of workers from around the state were in Tallahassee on Monday for a press conference and to speak truth to power when SB 1296 was heard in the Senate's Fiscal Policy Committee. Click on the image below to watch a recap of that powerful day.



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