

DKG Under the Gold Dome

A Weekly Publication to Keep You Informed

TO: All GSO Sisters
FROM: Laura Croom,
Chair, GSO Educational Law & Policy Committee
RE: Legislation Update
DATE: February 5, 2022



We'll Take It As a Win!!!

There was a major boost for the critical teacher shortage this week as the House of Representatives passed HB 385 by a vote of 169-0 on Tuesday. As you will all recall, this is a part of Governor Kemp's "Teacher Pipeline Package." The bill permits retired teachers in critical fields to return to work full-time and receive full pay. There are some limitations to the bill. First, teachers must be retired for one calendar year before they can take advantage of the bill. Secondly, teachers must have at least 30 years of actual service (which may include sick leave). Thirdly, each local RESA will determine three critical needs areas in which retired teachers may return. The provision does not include administrators. The bill now moves to the Senate, and it is hopeful that this will pass and then provide some relief to our children who deserve quality teachers in critical fields.

Back to Business

The General Assembly and the Education Committees of the House returned to business as usual this week. The House Education Committee announced on Tuesday afternoon, February 1, that the Innovations Subcommittee was scheduled to meet on Wednesday afternoon, and on the agenda was HB 999, Rep. Wes Cantrell's latest voucher/private school scholarship bill. The first announcement stated that it would receive a hearing only. Then the notice changed again later that afternoon a little before 4 p.m., and the "hearing only" piece was deleted. When the committee members arrived at the meeting, they heard testimony from the public, which overwhelmingly was opposed to the bill. However, a voice vote of **DO PASS** was taken, passing the bill to the full committee. Immediately following the Innovations Subcommittee concluded, the full Education Committee met to reconsider HB 60, Rep. Wes Cantrell's voucher/private school scholarship bill that did not make it to the floor of the House last year. Under the logic that the bill had already passed out of the House Education Committee in the 2021 Session, the chair declared that, even though the bill had been altered since last year, additional testimony from the public would not be permitted. The whistle blew, and a vote was taken, giving the bill a **DO PASS**. There was no reported vote on the bill. We will continue to watch and see if the House Rules Committee will vote to let it go to the Speaker for a floor vote in the near future. Feel free to

contact your representative about your views and opinions of the bill. We want everyone to speak up and share their opinions with our representatives. As they say, dogs don't chase parked cars.

Transgender Bill

Senate Bill 435 was introduced by Senator Marty Harbin this week. The bill would prohibit any person identified as male on their birth certificate from participating in girls' athletics. This is not the first bill of such nature. Remember that the Governor spoke to "fairness in athletics" in his State of the State Address in early January. Like the "divisive concepts" bills mentioned above, these bills are being dropped in response to a national conversation (crisis, perhaps) that has fervor from all sides. Even the Olympics and the NCAA are having to hold this conversation, and it will be interesting to see how it falls.

Parental Rights Bills

Governor Kemp has promised a Parental Bill of Rights and it has arrived in two bills: HB 1178 authored by Representative Josh Bonner and many members of the House Education Committee and SB 449 from Senator Clint Dixon. They are identical. Also of note is another Parents Bill of Rights: HB 1158 (Carson), which is more prescriptive than the Governor's bill. More on Carson's bill: It includes forcing systems to provide review/ records of all teacher "supplementary" materials. Contrary to primary instructional materials (like curriculum adoptions by the system), supplementary materials are every single little book, STEM kit, news article, web resource, music sample, video sample, worksheet, etc., that a teacher takes initiative and finds on her own. This is extremely concerning. Teachers already carry so many burdens. It is feared that this bill will have very negative consequences and add to the fire of distrust that the media keeps pouring gasoline on. Fortunately, the Governor's bill avoids this issue of supplementary materials. Thankfully, the Governor received our input before these bills were dropped. Much of what is in both bills is found in the PPRA (Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment), a federal mandate that has been in place since 1978.

New Bills (Bill lookup: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/>)

- **HB 60** (Cantrell): Education voucher for private school scholarship. Revived from 2021. Given a DO PASS by House Education on February 2, 2022.
- **HB 1158** (Carson): A Parent Bill of Rights bill (not Governor Kemp's version). This bill relates to general provisions regarding parent and child relationship generally, so as to provide for the protection of the fundamental right of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and healthcare of their minor children from undue infringement by a state or local government entity or any agent or officer thereof; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for construction; to provide for parental access to such policies; to direct the Department of Education to develop guidelines and model policies to assist school and school system implementation; to provide for definitions; to provide for an effective date and applicability; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.
- **HB 1178** (Bonner, Jan Jones, Dubnik, et.al.): This is the Governor's Parent Bill of Rights Bill. This bill relates to review of removal of students in elementary and secondary education, so as to provide for the protection of the fundamental right of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their minor children from undue infringement by a state or local government entity, local board of education, or any officer, employee, or agent thereof; to provide for appeals; to provide for construction; to prohibit certain waivers; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.
- **HR 650** (Gambill): Resolution for study committee on literacy instruction.
- **SB 397** (Goodman): Updates GED terminology with HSE (High School Equivalency) terminology.
- **SB 435** (Harbin): Prohibits transgender participation in girls' athletics.

- **SB 449** (Dixon): This is the duplicate of HB 1178, the Governor's Parents Bill of Rights legislation.
- **SB 452** (McNeill): Requires schools to administer a national college entrance exam to all 11th graders that elect to participate. PASSED CHAMBER.
- **HB 385**: Return to work for retired teachers. The bill passed Subcommittee/Committee on February 1, 2022, with a vote of 169-0.
- **HB 60** (Cantrell): Voucher bill for private school tuition. The bill passed out of Education Committee and Rules in 2021 and passed out of Education Committee on voice vote, February 1, 2022.
- **HB 999** (Cantrell): Voucher bill for private school scholarship. The bill passed out of the Education Subcommittee (Academic Innovations) on voice vote on February 1, 2022.
- **HB 885** (Belton): Permits military students to remain in a school if parents are transferred or retires. The bill passed out of Education Committee by voice vote on February 1, 2022.

Next Week

The General Assembly will be in session for Legislative Days 12-15 next week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesday will be a Committee Day.