

*Monday, February 17, 2014*

## **Budget Battle Shifts to Senate Finance**

It appears that the budget battle has shifted to the Senate. The Senate Finance Committee is attempting to craft its own version of a General Appropriations Act behind closed doors! We know that the committee is meeting in executive session much of this weekend. Some on the committee want to compromise with the Governor on merit pay. You probably heard the Governor respond to our rally by saying that "her team" was working on teacher pay compromises, including an across the board salary increase—the first time she has mentioned any across the board increases. Keep up the pressure. Now the pressure needs to shift to the Senate Finance Committee.

A Senate Finance Committee substitute bill for Senate Bill 313, the Senate version of the General Appropriations Act could be reported out of the committee and reach the floor of the Senate Tuesday or Wednesday.

Ask all committee members to support maximum funding "above the line" through the School Equalization Guarantee and meaningful salary increases, with no merit pay components. Ask them to resist the Governor and her Republican followers attempts to reduce funding to school districts (and local control)!

## **Bill to Raise Minimum Salaries Trashed by Republicans May Return to House Floor, Call Representatives Now!**

H 67a PHASED MINIMUM TEACHER SALARY INCREASES, introduced by Rep. Stewart would have amended the School Personnel Act to phase in, over a five-year period, increases in the statutory minimum salaries of teachers by \$2000 per year. Representative Nate Gentry led a Republican floor fight to amend the bill to remove salary increases for level two and level three teachers. Unfortunately, he succeeded when all Republicans and Democrats Sandra Jeff and Carl Trujillo joined him in supporting the amendment! Representative Stewart asked that the bill be removed from the day's agenda, which it was. Let the Democrats who supported know how important this legislation is. Tell Republicans and Democrats Sandra Jeff and Carl Trujillo that all teachers need and increase in starting salaries. The funding to pay for the increases is in the stalled budget bill.

HB 391 was crafted from a generic bill in the House Education Committee Saturday Morning. The measure, also sponsored by committee chair Representative Mimi Stewart received a do-pass recommendation from Democratic members of the committee, a quorum, when all Republican members boycotted the committee meeting. Urge all house members to support both the bill and the House Education Committee report on the bill. Republicans could try to overturn the committee report on the floor of the House. Call your Representative immediately and ask them to support HB 391.

## **Resolution to Have Elected State School Board Appoint a State Superintendent of Public Instruction Heads to Senate Floor**

Senate Joint Resolution 2-BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, CA, Sen. Padilla, which proposes an amendment to the Constitution of New Mexico to create an elected State Board of Education to make education policy and to appoint a qualified Superintendent of Public Instruction to direct the operation of the Public Education Department. This measure received a do-pass recommendation in the Senate Education Committee Wednesday Morning.

The measure received do-pass recommendation from the Judiciary Committee, and is headed to the Senate Floor. Urge all Senators to support this constitutional amendment to return control of public education to the voters.

## **Measure to Reduce Class Size in Committee Tomorrow**

HJR 6 LIMIT CLASS SIZES, CA, Rep. Garcia Richard/Sen. Keller — proposes an amendment to the Constitution of New Mexico to provide for the sufficient education of public school students by enacting a graduated plan to ensure that, by school year 2020-2021, class sizes not exceed certain prescribed limits by grade level, classes in music, band, elective, and extracurricular courses excepted. This measure is scheduled to be in the House Voters and Elections Committee tomorrow morning. Ask committee member to support this symbolic measure to express support for smaller class sizes.

## **Some Other Legislation We Are Supporting**

SJR 13 ANNUALLY INCREASING MINIMUM WAGE, CA, Sen. Martinez — proposes an amendment to the Constitution of New Mexico to establish a state minimum wage that increases annually at the rate of inflation. [Identical to HJR 9] This measure has passed the Senate Rules Committee and is headed to Senate Judiciary. Ask committee members to support this important fairness legislation to let voters decide to increase the minimum wage.

SJR 8 PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, CA, Sen. Keller/Rep. MH Garcia — proposes an amendment to the Constitution of New Mexico to establish duties and functions of the Public Education Commission by granting the commission: the sole authority to render a final decision approving or denying an application for the establishment or renewal of a charter for or revoking a charter of a state-chartered charter school; and the sole authority to affirm or revoke the charter of a locally chartered charter school or applicant upon

review of a local school board's decision to grant a new charter or renew an existing charter. This measure is awaiting a hearing in the Senate Education Committee.

S 34 NO STANDARDS-BASED TESTS FACTORED INTO GPA, Sen. Keller/Rep. Stewart — adds new material to the Public School Code to provide for a waiver of any standards-based assessment that is not factored into the student's grade point average.

S 54 PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING ADEQUACY, Sen. Soules — appropriates \$362 million from the General Fund to the Public Education Department for distribution through the State Equalization Guarantee for expenditure in FY 15 to provide adequate funding for public education in New Mexico based upon the funding increase recommended in the 2008 independent comprehensive study of the New Mexico public school funding formula as adjusted for inflation. This legislation is a symbolic gesture to remind the legislature of the findings of the Funding Formula Task Force Report created in June 2009. The task force stated that public education was under funded by \$362 million. This measure awaits hearing in the Senate Education Committee.

S 197 SCHOOL TEACHER EVALUATION MORATORIUM, Sen. Sapien — provides a one-year moratorium on the teacher and school leader evaluation system created by the Public Education Department. This measure has not yet been found to be germane to this legislative session and remains in the Senate Committees' Committee

H 67a PHASED MINIMUM TEACHER SALARY INCREASES, Rep. Stewart — amends the School Personnel Act to phase in, over a five-year period, increases in the statutory minimum salaries of teachers and principals. [Related to H 148, H 276, H 289, S 104, and S 105]

H 280 RETURN TO STATUTORY SCHOOL CLASS LOADS, Rep. Stewart — creates a new section of the School Personnel Act to return to statutory individual class and teaching loads over a three-year period; and appropriates \$6.0 million from the General Fund to the State Equalization Guarantee distribution for expenditure in FY 15 to support the first year of the three-year phase-in. This bill has passed the House Education Committee and awaits a hearing in the House Appropriations and Finance Committee. It is funded in the current version of House Bill 2 stalled in the House because of the tie vote.

HJR 3, CA, Representative Jim Trujillo This amendment will keep distribution to public schools from the permanent fund at the current level of 5.5%. The funding level dropped to 5.5% last year from 5.8% and, unless the amendment passes, will drop to 5.0% in 2016. For details about the measure follow this link. This measure is currently tabled in House Voters and Elections Committee. Ask members to send this important legislation on to its next committee.

HJR 4 CREATE ELECTED BOARD OF EDUCATION, CA, Rep. Miera/Sen. Keller — proposes an amendment to the Constitution of New Mexico to create a nonpartisan, elected State Board of Education to make education policy and to appoint a qualified Superintendent of Public Instruction to direct the operation of the Public Education Department. [Identical to SJR 2] This measure is awaiting its first hearing in the House Voters and Elections Committee

HJR 6 LIMIT CLASS SIZES, CA, Rep. Garcia Richard/Sen. Keller — proposes an amendment to the Constitution of New Mexico to provide for the sufficient education of public school students by enacting a graduated plan to ensure that, by school year 2020-2021, class sizes not exceed certain prescribed limits by grade level, classes in music, band, elective, and extracurricular courses excepted.

HJR 9 ANNUALLY INCREASING MINIMUM WAGE, CA, Rep. MP García — proposes an amendment to the Constitution of New Mexico to establish a state minimum wage that will increase annually at the rate of inflation. [Identical to SJR 13] This measure is awaiting its first hearing in the House Voters and Elections Committee. Ask committee members to support this important fairness legislation to let voters decide to increase the minimum wage.

## Education Employees and Supporters March on the Capitol to Take Back Public Education.

NEA Executive Committee Member and former NEA president for Tennessee Earl Wiman told thousands of Educators and supporters in the Capitol Rotunda on Saturday, "We are in a war for the very soul of the students we teach. It must be a fight true to our moral values." NEA-New President Betty Patterson and other NEA and AFT leaders also addressed the crowd along with supportive legislators.