

Legislative Update #8

Yesterday the [New Mexico Senate](#) confirmed Hanna Skandera as Secretary of the Public Education Department. All republicans voted for the confirmation and most democrats voted against it. Five democrats voted with the republicans and one democrat recused himself.

[Senator Ivey-Soto](#) recused himself for conflict of interest. The democrats who voted with the republicans are:

[Senator Pete Campos](#), [Senator John Arthur Smith](#), [Senator Phil Griego](#), [Senator Mary Kay Papen](#), and [Senator Benny Shendo](#).

Joint NEA-NM and AFT NM Rally: Hundreds of Educators and Working Families Descend on Roundhouse to Support a Pro-Education Message

Hundreds of educators, parents, community members and fellow union members marched on the New Mexico Capitol in Santa Fe today for the "Voices United For Our Students" day of activities. Participants gathered at the Santa Fe Rail yard then marched to the Roundhouse to hear from labor leaders and legislators who support working families.

Several bills under consideration by New Mexico legislators have caused a groundswell of opposition and were the subject of speakers' comments. A mandatory flunking bill, so called "right-to-work" legislation, and funding for increased testing of public school children were topic of discussion during the rally.

"AFSCME is proud to stand alongside our brothers and sisters in the AFT and the NEA, and Equality New Mexico" Connie Derr, Executive Director of AFSCME Council 18 told the crowd of activists. "Your struggles are our struggles. Our struggles are your struggles. We will fight together for better jobs--with fair evaluation systems; we will fight for workers' rights, for stronger communities, and for a return to respect for those who make the state of New Mexico run."

NEA-New Mexico President Betty Patterson addressed the crowd at the Rail yard and then introduced NEA Executive Committee Member Maury Kauffman at the Capitol Rally. Kauffman spoke of unity with three million NEA members around the country. NEA-NM members [Senator Bill Soules](#) and [Representative Stephanie Garcia Richard](#) along with [Senator Howie Morales](#) also addressed the crowd.

Following the rally, activists entered the state capitol building to lobby legislators and urge them to oppose anti-worker legislation, the failed student testing model being pushed by out-of-state corporations, and a punitive teacher evaluation system designed to target good teachers forcing them out of the profession.

Bad Legislation Continues to Move in the House of Representatives.

Contact your [Senators](#) to ask them to stand firm against the bad ideas coming from the House.

For example House Education Committee moved a teacher evaluation bill, [HB 144](#), out of committee. That bill continues to place too much emphasis on standardized testing of students as a part of teacher evaluation and we oppose it. They also moved a tuition tax credit bill, [HB 333](#), forward on a straight party line vote. Please let your House member know we oppose these bills. However, their passage in the House is likely inevitable. Start letting Senators know now, that we oppose these bad ideas.

Why Do we Oppose Right to Work? [Follow this link](#) to hear [Representative Sheryl Williams Stapleton](#) give her reasons for opposing so-called Right to Work and other anti-worker and anti-public school legislation in the House of Representatives.

The version of Right to Work legislation that will be voted on by the House is [House Bill 75](#).

HB75 is unfair, unnecessary, and would hurt New Mexico's middle class.

HB75 and all "Right to Work" proposals are part of the corporate special interest agenda to silence the professional voices of teachers, nurses, fire fighters, and police officers. This proposal would erode our ability as workers to fight for better schools, better nurse-to-patient staffing ratios, safe working conditions, and everything else we can advocate for through collective bargaining.

Legislation like this is being promoted all over the country by a well-coordinated network of out-of-state billionaires, super PACs, and corporate special interest groups that want to keep more profits for themselves. These are the same groups that are destroying the middle class: down-sizing, shipping jobs overseas, and hiding profits offshore to avoid paying the same taxes families and small businesses have to pay.

"Right to Work" is a power grab by CEOs and their allies to make our jobs part time, send our jobs to low-wage countries, gut our health and safety protections, and pay us less. The average worker makes about \$5,000 less each year in states with these laws, according to data from the U.S. Census on State Median Household Income.

Quite simply, these laws are a distraction that divide New Mexicans against each other. New Mexico's leaders should instead be focusing on the things that are important like continuing to improve the economy, creating jobs and equipping our schools with the necessary tools to prepare our children for 21st century jobs.

I hope you will join me in taking action against HB75 and all legislation that hurts New Mexico's working families. For more information, please visit www.RTWExposed.org.