

Third Grade "flunking" Bill Dies in Senate Committee

[Senate Bill 66](#), sponsored by [Senator Gay Kernan](#), which would have enacted the Governor's Third Grade Retention Ideas, was tabled in the [Senate Public Affairs Committee \(SPAC\)](#) on Thursday February 19. If this bill became law, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, third grade students who are not proficient in reading would not be promoted if they cannot demonstrate grade-level proficiency by the beginning of the next school year unless they meet one of four enumerated exceptions.

Research shows that retention is not an effective educational strategy for struggling students. Thank the Senators who helped defeat this measure. (All five [SPAC](#) Democrats)

Click on the Senator's name, then select the contact tab to send an email or get an address or phone number.

Democrats on Senate Public Affairs Committee

Vice Chair

Sen. [Gerald Ortiz y Pino](#) (DEM-NM-12th) Sen. [Bill O'Neill](#) (DEM-NM-13th)

Sen. [Jacob Candelaria](#) (DEM-NM-26th)

Sen. [Daniel Ivey-Soto](#) (DEM-NM-15th)

Sen. [Mimi Stewart](#) (DEM-NM-17th)

The house version, [House Bill 41](#), is still alive and about to be referred to committees in the Senate. Assuming it is also referred to [SPAC](#), it should meet the same fate as [Senate Bill 66](#). [House Bill 41](#) passed with all Republicans voting for it and all Democrats, except [Representative Donna Irwin](#), voting against it. The vote is at [this link](#). It is not too early to tell [Senators](#) to oppose this bad idea.

Budget

[House Bill 2, the General Appropriations Act](#), received a do pass recommendation in the [House Appropriations and Finance Committee \(HAFC\)](#) committee Friday morning, February 20. The budget is essentially flat with a .9% increase in the public school funding formula funds. The only real increases from last year are to pay for fixed costs and a new base salary for level one teachers of \$34,000. The only other salary increases are a continuation of last year's merit pay pilot at \$8.25 million below the line, meaning it will not pass through the school funding formula; it will be doled out by the Public Education Department, based on applications by districts. It is not too early to ask the [Senate Finance Committee](#) to increase funding to public schools and move the \$8.25 million above the line into the funding formula to provide at least a .5% salary increase to all employees, instead of merit pay for a few!

Right to Work

Right to Work (RTW) legislation is waiting to be debated on the House Floor. Why Do we Oppose RTW? [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](#); this will likely early next week. [House Majority Leader Nate Gentry](#), ingenuously tacked a minimum wage provision on the RTW bill. He seemed to think Democrats would be bullied into voting for RTW rather than voting against a minimum wage increase. However, his maneuver seems to have backfired, and he now has Republicans who don't want to make their big business backers angry by voting for a minimum wage increase!

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

[House Bill 75](#) 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.

Tell [all legislators](#), "I hope you will join me in taking action against [House Bill 75](#) and all legislation that hurts New Mexico's working families."

[Follow this link for help in writing a letter to the Editor.](#)

For more information, please visit www.RTWExposed.org.