

House Continues to Forward the Bad and Kill the Good!

The New Mexico House is back at work killing good legislation and passing bad, usually on a straight party-line vote in committee or on the floor of the House. We have to work to salvage anything we can in the Senate.

[HB 181](#), which allows unqualified unlicensed part-time teachers who has "a minimum of three years' experience in each area of subject matter expertise" to be hired to teach passed the House and is referred to the [Senate Education Committee](#) and the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#). The House vote is at [this link](#); an identical bill [SB 228](#) failed to get out of the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) February 23..

On Tuesday, February 24, the [House Education Committee](#) killed [HB 176](#), which would have House Bill 176 provided that an assessment that is not mandated pursuant to federal accountability standards or a waiver to federal accountability standards shall be administered in a public school only if the assessment is approved by a local school board or a governing body of a charter school. [Senate Bill 217](#) is similar in that it allows a parent to submit a request for a waiver for their child from taking any standards-based assessment that is not factored into the students' grade point average, effective for the entire school year. Under the bill, waivers will not affect the student's ability to participate in any activity sanctioned by the school, the student's ability to graduate from high school, receive a legislative lottery tuition scholarship, or student promotion and retention decisions. The absence of assessment shall also not affect school personnel decisions or school ratings. This measure, sponsored by NEA member [Senator Bill Soules](#), received a do-pass recommendation in the [Senate Education Committee](#) and is awaiting a hearing in the [Senate Public Affairs Committee](#)

Teacher Evaluation

Tomorrow morning the [House Education Committee](#) will hear for the third time a teacher evaluation bill, [House Bill 144](#), that places much of the current evaluation rule in statute. When the bill returns to committee, a substitute will be offered that removes even more local control from the measure. The original bill allowed superintendents to make the final recommendation regarding competency for licensure renewal. The new version will give that power back to the Public Education Department and allow superintendents to appeal licensure denials. Let members of the committee that we oppose this measure because it takes away local control and relies too heavily on student standardized testing. It still requires that 40% of a teacher's evaluation be based on student standardized test scores.

Budget

[House Bill 2, the General Appropriations Act](#), passed the House last night. Democrats tried unsuccessfully to amend the budget and increase funding for public schools and deny funding for the Governor's merit pay plan. They fell short on party-line votes. The final vote on the budget is at [this link](#). Most democrats opposed the budget bill on the final vote, but a few voted for the package. 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 along the lines recommended by House Democrats and move the \$8.25 million above the line into the funding formula to provide at least a token salary increase to all employees, instead of merit pay for a few!

Right to Work

As this is written, the House is preparing to debate right to work. The version of Right to Work legislation that will be voted on by the House is [House Bill 75](#). This will be debated this afternoon or evening when the House comes back into session. To watch House debate on your computer [follow this link](#).

[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."

To learn the truth about Right to Work legislation, [follow this link](#).

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.