

Legislative Update #12

Budget

[House Bill 2, the General Appropriations Act](#), is now in the [Senate Finance Committee](#). Democrats in the House 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.

House Democrats introduced the New Mexico's Future proposal to amend the General Appropriations Act. The New Mexico's Future proposal secured needed funding for our public schools, higher education, economic development, children, seniors, and veterans. The budget proposed by House Republicans lacks over \$35 million of needed funding for essential departments and services. Every Democrat present voted in favor of the amendment, which was blocked by Republicans. House Democrats also introduced an amendment to preserve Native American cultures and provide more opportunity for Native American students to have a quality education by investing \$4.375 million in key programs. House Republicans also blocked this amendment.

The final budget as passed by the House 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 \$9 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 \$9 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!

The [Senate Finance Committee](#) is accepting proposed amendments to [House Bill 2](#) through tomorrow, then the committee will decide on its version of the Budget. That amended budget could be on the Senate Floor as early as next week. NEA-New Mexico is working with [Senator Howie Morales](#) to craft an amendment to move the merit pay funds and some other money above the line to produce a token .8% salary increase for school employees. Stay tuned for details.

Right to Work

House Republicans passed [House Bill 75](#), a deceptive anti-worker bill that will cut paychecks for all workers. House Republicans had previously amended the legislation to include a meager minimum wage increase, and last night amended the bill on the floor with language that would repeal the minimum wage if other parts of the legislation are struck down in court. The House GOP is continuing to focus on distractions, rather than talk about real job creation. Numerous House Democrats spoke eloquently tonight against this deceptive proposal.

Teacher Evaluation

This morning the [House Education Committee](#) heard [House Bill 144](#) for the third time; this measure places much of the current evaluation rule in statute. When the bill returned to committee, a substitute was approved that removed 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. The vote on this measure. A NO vote supported NEA-New Mexico's position:

Name	Party	VOTE
Nora Espinoza , Chair	R	YES
Monica Youngblood , Vice-chair	R	YES
Dennis J. Roch , Deputy chair	R	YES
Alonzo Baldonado	R	YES
Jim Dines	R	YES
Stephanie Garcia Richard	D	ABSENT
Jimmie C. Hall	R	YES
D. Wonda Johnson	D	NO
William "Bill" R. Rehm	R	YES
G. Andres Romero	D	NO
Tomás E. Salazar	D	NO

Sheryl Williams Stapleton

D

NO

Christine Trujillo

D

NO

Thank those members who supported our position against this ill-conceived evaluation system!