

# Legislative Update, February 13, 2018

## Budget Approved by Senate

The [General Appropriations Act, House Bill 2](#) passed the Senate on 40-2 vote this afternoon. It will increase state spending by about \$249 million over current levels – or roughly 4.1 percent. The House version was amended by the [the Senate Finance Committee](#). One of the amendments added \$10 million to partially replace school district cash balances taken in last year's solvency legislation. Most public employees have not received a pay raise since 2014; the budget by the will provide about \$90 million in total compensation increases. That includes a 2 percent salary increase for rank-and-file state workers and even larger pay bumps for State Police, corrections officers and judicial branch employees. Teachers would get a 2.5 percent pay raise, and starting teacher pay would go from \$34,000 to \$36,000 a year. Minimum pay levels for more experienced teachers would be raised as in Senate Bill 119 (see below). Other school employees would get a 2% raise. another amendment requires taht the Governor's merit pay plan be bargained in districts with collective bargaining. The budget plan also calls for more than 10 percent of state spending — or nearly \$643 million — to be set aside in cash reserves. As it sits now, in addition to the funding for public education, the budget fully funds Medicaid—the health insurance program for low-income kids, seniors, and those with disabilities —and child care assistance.

Tomorrow the [House Education Committee](#) will hear [Senate Bill 119](#) sponsored by [Senator Mimi Stewart](#) and co-sponsored by Senators [Gay Kernan](#) and [Bill Soules](#). This measure will increase the minimum for each licensure tier for teachers as follows: tier 1: \$36,000; tier 2: \$44,000; and tier 3: \$54,000. Call all [committee](#) members to support this important change.