

Legislative Update for Monday February 20, 2017

Members Gather at the Capitol

Dozens of NEA-New Mexico members from across the state gave up their Presidents' Day holiday to come to Santa Fe to spend the day lobbying legislators. Chanting "No More Cuts" the members gathered on the west side of the Capitol to hear from several legislative friends of public education. Earlier in the day NEA-New Mexico held a press conference to release the results of a survey of members regarding the effects of recent budget cuts. Senator Mimi Steward, speaking at the press conference, stated, "I hate that we cut the schools, and I won't do it anymore. It's no longer fun up here — it's just a downright fight." State Representative Christine Trujillo also addressed the conference, assuring the press that she will fight against any more cuts to public education funding.

Budget Activity

The House Democratic Majority advanced their revenue omnibus bill (CS/HB 202) today in the [House Taxation and Revenue Committee](#). The total revenue that would be raised is about \$212 million.

The major four elements of the legislation are:

- Internet tax (Local business fairness provision)
- Level the playing field on Health Care Taxes
- Motor Vehicle Excise tax from 3% to 4%
- A new \$90 heavy truck permit fee

The tax package passed the House Taxation and Revenue Committee via an 8-7 vote, all democrats supporting and all republicans opposing.

On the budget side, [HB 2 the general appropriations act](#) passed in House Appropriations and Finance Committee this morning. An additional \$38 million was added to the school equalization guarantee preventing additional cuts to education in the FY 18 budget.

The budget bill was approved on a 10-6 vote in the House Appropriations and Finance Committee on a straight party-line vote. Republicans continue to advocate

balancing the budget with spending cuts only, while Democrats insisted on a balanced approach of cuts and revenue increases.

[Take action! Follow this link to contact the chairs of the Finance Committees and your legislators with the message of no cuts to Public Schools](#)

U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich will hold an education Tele-Town hall for NEA-NM members Tuesday, February 21.

Please join Senator Heinrich for the Teacher Tele-Town hall for NEA-NM Members only on Tuesday the 21st from 6:00pm to 6:45pm. Members for whom we have current phone numbers will receive a call from the Senator at 6:00, so please follow the directions given at that time to participate.

Our Executive Director, Charles Bowyer will share NEA-NM the concerns about the DeVos/Trump agenda. Around 6:10 he will take the first call off the lines from our members. High school teacher Rep. Andres Romero will give a NM Legislative Update. Senator Heinrich will take more calls.

[Follow this link to identify and contact your legislator](#)