



January 15, 2022

By Brian Hawkins, NEA-NH Government Relations Director

Packed First week of Hearings!

Already in the first week of public hearings at the legislature, there were 46 bills heard that were on the NEA-NH tracker list, dozens of which NEA-NH offered oral, written or registered a position on at the hearings. A huge thank you to all those members who signed in online, sent in written testimony and even came to the State House to testify!

Here were the biggest highlights from this past week's hearings and what you can do to follow up so that we successfully pass or defeat these pieces of legislation.

Banned Concepts Legislation Heard This week

HB 1313 – Extending Banned Concepts Law to Public Higher Education

HB 1313 would take the current banned concepts law that applies to K-12 schools and attempt to apply it to public post-secondary instruction and institutions. NEA-NH offered testimony that this bill makes little sense when the current law is under 2 federal lawsuits because of the chilling effect it has had on teaching in K-12 public schools. In addition, this legislation runs counter to the important tenants of academic freedom that have been encouraged, accepted and affirmed on our college campuses.

Status: No action has yet been taken by the committee on the bill.

Follow-up: Call or write members of the House Education Committee and urge them to OPPOSE this legislation.

SB 304 – Repeal and Replace Banned Concepts Law

This legislation would:

1. Repeal the banned concepts law passed through the state budget process that has chilled critical discourse in classrooms through its vagueness and high stakes consequences for educators. This law has led NEA-NH and others to file a lawsuit in federal court against this law, but the legislature should act now by repealing it and replacing it with language that encourages important conversations in classrooms that will help prepare our students to succeed in the future. 2)
2. Replaces the current law with language that protects educators from liabilities for “engaging in any form of instruction concerning the historical or current experiences of any group that is protected from discrimination.”

This was a very robust hearing with most people who showed up in support of this repeal and replace bill. President Megan Tuttle spoke at the hearing along with several other NEA-NH members who are currently struggling with how to teach under this law. You can hear Megan's and all the other testimony on the Legislature's YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxkEQ_oena8&t=8570s. The SB 304 hearing is around 1 hour and 10 minutes into the video from that afternoon.
Status: No action has yet been taken by the committee on the bill.
Follow-up: Call or write the Senate Judiciary Committee and urge them to vote in FAVOR of this bill.

Retirement Bills Heard This Week

NEA-NH testified in support of 2 pro-retirement bills this week:

HB 1535, relative to cost of living adjustments for retirees in the state retirement system

HB 1535 would establish an initial cost of living adjustment for state retirees in 2022 of 1.5% who have been retired for at least 60 months. It would then setup subsequent cost of living adjustments each year that would equal social security adjustments pending approval by the NH Retirement System Board of trustees.

Status: No action has been taken yet by the committee.

Follow-up: Call or write the House Executive Departments & Administration Committee and urge them to SUPPORT this bill

SB 434, relative to the reduction in the calculation of state retirement annuities at age 65.

SB 434 would matchup the 10% reduction that happens on Group I pensions at age 65 to the person's actual full social security age which now for most people is 67. This bill for that time period would mean an important adjustment for those 2 years for retired educators who are in the Group I pool of retirees.

Status: No action has been taken yet by the committee.

Follow-Up: Call or write the Senate Executive Departments & Administration Committee and urge them to SUPPORT this bill

Big Hearings Next Week on More Banned Concepts Laws and Adding Curriculum Inspection

This week will be another packed week of hearings, but the biggest ones impacting educators have to do with access to curriculum and doubling down in some fashion, on the banned concepts law.

"Teacher Loyalty" Bill

HB 1255, dubbed the "Teacher Loyalty" Bill, is a piece of legislation that takes a cold-war era law prohibiting the advocating of communism by teachers in schools and turns it into a bill that doubles down on the banned concepts law that NEA-NH is currently suing the state over. This legislation attempts to vaguely restrict the teaching of the history of slavery and racism in the United States and like the current law we are under, punish teachers through the NH educator's code of conduct. You can read the full text of the bill [here](#).

ACTION: Please Sign-in, testify, and/or contact the House Education Committee in OPPOSITION to this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

Public Hearing: 1/20/2022 at 11:15 a.m. Location: Legislative Office Building, Room 205-207, Time: 11:15 a.m

Curriculum Inspection/Objection Bills

There are a series of bills being heard in House Education and in the House Judiciary committees, whose intent is to micromanage and micro-inspect curriculum. These bills are fueled by the same authors of the "teacher loyalty" bill and the "banned concepts" law that seek to limit an honest and accurate accounting of historical and current experiences of discrimination.

HB 1015 – relative to school district policies regarding objectionable materials

This legislation would rewrite the current law that allows a parent to object to course material being used and the school district or teacher to give a minimum 2-week advance notice of sex education curriculum course material being used.

The new version that HB 1015 presents, expands the 2 weeks notice for ANY curriculum course

material being delivered. In addition, the legislation states that the student “shall be granted an agreed upon alternative to a portion of a course or program lesson that violates the student’s convictions.” You can read the full language of the bill [here](#), but can probably see just how broad the objection language is that these sponsors are proposing. We have seen similar types of language being shopped in other states.

This legislation would put a tremendous amount of additional work on educators by expanding the notice of the current law to ALL curriculum.

ACTION: Please Sign-in, testify, and/or contact the House Education Committee in OPPOSITION to this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

Public Hearing:

1/20/2022 at 9:00 a.m. Location: Legislative Office Building, Room 205-207, Time: 9:00 a.m.

HB 1147, relative to governmental records available upon request

This bill would establish the right to inspect and make copies of school curricula, reading lists, and student survey dates and questions. Since this bill utilizes the state’s right to know law, this would allow any member of the public to inspect these items, not just the parents whose children attend that particular school.

ACTION: Please Sign-in, testify, and/or contact the House JUDICIARY Committee in OPPOSITION to this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

Public Hearing:

1/20/2022 at 9:00 a.m. Location: Legislative Office Building Time: 9:00 a.m.

HB 1434, relative to the availability of school curriculum materials

HB 1434 would require that curriculum course materials taught to pupils in public schools and public academies be available to the public: “curriculum course materials lists shall be posted and readily accessible on the school administrative unit’s website. In addition, a physical copy of all such curriculum course materials shall be made available for public review at the location of the school administrative unit.” This is yet another bill in a line of legislation that would allow anyone into a school to view such documents, not just parents or guardians of the student attending the school.

ACTION: Please Sign-in, testify, and/or contact the House Education Committee in OPPOSITION to this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

1/20/2022 at 2:30 p.m. Location: Legislative Office Building Time: 2:30 p.m.

HB 1603, defining certain school information as governmental records under the right to know law

This bill provides for the inclusion of certain records of schools and school administrative units under the right-to-know law, RSA 91-A. The bill would add among other items required to be made available: curriculum (including curriculum for all educator/staff training regardless of the source), receipts, expenditures, and supporting documentation, complaints (undefined) and responses to complaints with only student identifying information redacted, among others.

ACTION: Please Sign-in, testify, and/or contact the House JUDICIARY Committee in OPPOSITION to this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

Public Hearing:

1/20/2022 at 11:15 a.m. Location: Legislative Office Building Time: 11:15 a.m.

Improving Student Health and Wellness

There are some positive bills out there that we are highlighting as well in the area of student health and wellness. Two of them are coming up next week:

HB 1058, relative to the time allowed for public school students to eat lunch

This bill would require that schools provide lunch periods that are at least 30 minutes in duration with no less than 20 minutes of that time being seated time to eat their lunch. This bill follows CDC

recommendations for students. In addition, a recent study shows that students with 20 minutes of seated lunch time were associated with significantly more consumption of their food and less waste of fruits and vegetables as compared with those students who have only 10 minutes.

ACTION: Please Sign-in, testify, and/or contact the House Education Committee in **SUPPORT** of this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

Public Hearing:

1/18/2022 at 9:30 a.m. **Location: Legislative Office Building Time: 9:30 a.m.**

HB 1564, requiring school districts to provide breakfast for students

This bill requires school districts to provide breakfast to students through the National School Breakfast Program or through a program of its own. The Department of Education states there are approximately 30 NH public schools currently not offering a breakfast program. School breakfast is a critical support for struggling families trying to stretch limited resources and provides children a significant portion of the nutrition they need to learn and be healthy.

ACTION: Please Sign-in, testify, and/or contact the House Education Committee in **SUPPORT** of this piece of legislation:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/remotetestimony/default.aspx>

Public Hearing:

1/18/2022 at 9:30 a.m. **Location: Legislative Office Building Time: 10:30 a.m.**

Questions?

If you have questions on any of these bills or ones not mentioned here, please feel free to contact Brian Hawkins, NEA-NH Director of Government Relations at bhawkins@nhnea.org.
