



Weekly Legislative Update

3.3.23

Dear {{FirstName or 'Supporter'}},

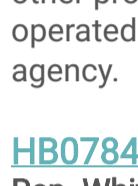
The week of February 27 proved to be another eventful one at Cordell Hull as various committees relevant to education engaged in important discussions around key bills and issues. To start the week, the [Joint Government Operations Subcommittee on Education, Health, and General Welfare](#) held a highly-anticipated sunset hearing regarding the Board of Trustees of Tennessee State University (TSU). The subcommittee, comprised of 12 legislators from both chambers and both sides of the aisle, ultimately [recommended to extend the university's board for one year](#) as TSU leadership navigates housing challenges and other institutional considerations put forth in last week's [Comptroller's report](#).

A host of significant bills were also debated and discussed in education committees this week, many with major implications for our state's most vulnerable students. Notably, [HB1214](#), a caption bill from the offices of the Speaker of the House and the Lt. Governor/Speaker of the Senate, spurred many questions among educational equity advocates as it potentially opens the door to residential boarding schools targeting "at-risk students" in grades 6-12. The at-risk category, as defined in not-yet-publicly posted amendment language, broadly encompasses the "economically disadvantaged," homeless, foster, runaway, or migrants students, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, students with disabilities, and students "at risk of state custody due to family dysfunction." The bill quietly passed out of the House K-12 Subcommittee on Tuesday, and is calendared for discussion before the full House Education Administration Committee on next Wednesday, March 8th. The Education Trust—Tennessee and many of our advocacy partners will be closely monitoring the bill and seeking clarity around many of the legislation's unclear and potentially problematic provisions.

[HB1269](#), which would harmfully allow school and LEA employees to address public school students by pronouns other than their personal preference, passed out of House Education Administration this past Wednesday on a voice vote, with three Democrats (Reps. Jones and Love of Nashville and Rep. McKenzie of Knoxville) and one Republican (Rep. Gillespie of Memphis) requesting to be recorded as voting "no." The bill, which is opposed by The Education Trust—Tennessee, GLSEN TN, and our partners in the TN Coalition for Truth in Our Classrooms, will now advance to the House Finance, Ways, and Means Committee for consideration.

Retention conversations continue next week, with a [dedicated calendar of related bills](#) in the House K-12 Education Subcommittee expected late Tuesday afternoon. We encourage you to check out our regularly updated [retention legislation tracker](#) and [Cost of Retention memo](#), and invite you to tune into our Virtual Retention Watch Party on Tuesday, March 7th, from 4:00 - 5:30pm CT, where we'll livestream the committee hearing, provide expert insights on the legislative process and committee members, and discuss the policy implications of the proposed bills. You can register for the watch party [here](#).

Next week, we'll be back at the Capitol and following movement on several legislative proposals, including bills that seek [to expand the Minority Teaching Fellowship Program](#), [would prohibit public colleges and universities from inquiring about an applicant's criminal history on an application](#), and [would require academic standards on the Civil Rights Movement for Tennessee high schoolers](#). To see all of the education-related legislation Ed Trust is actively tracking and other key information, please be sure to check out the "On Our Radar" section, our updated bill tracker, and the committee calendars each linked below.



Reggie Nash
Assistant Director, External Relations - Tennessee

