



# Weekly Legislative Update

3.24.23

Dear {{FirstName or 'Supporter'}},

This week, third and fourth-grade retention again drew significant attention during legislative committees. The House Education Administration committee passed [Chair Mark White's](#) (R - Memphis) bill, [HB0437](#), to the Government Operations Committee as [amended](#). This proposed legislation would put fewer third graders at risk of being held back this year and has become the clear frontrunner amendment. The other [proposed amendments](#) have been taken off notice, delayed, or failed for lack of a second.

[HB0068/SB0249](#), another important retention-related bill, passed unanimously in the House this week, two weeks after passing unanimously in the Senate. Put forth by House Majority Leader [William Lamberth](#) (R - Portland), this bill extends temporary pandemic summer camps to annually and expands definitions for students prioritized for participation. The bill was sent to the House and Senate Speakers for signatures. Additionally, [HB0670](#), from [Representative Scott Cepicky](#) (R - Culleoka) was deferred to 2024, meaning it will not move forward or impact Tennessee's kindergarteners this year.

Other bills that failed this week include [HB0127](#), brought by [Representative Greg Martin](#) (R - Hamilton County), which would have allowed school resource officers to use mechanical restraints on students receiving special education services. It failed in the House K-12 Subcommittee.

In higher education news, the House Higher Education Subcommittee extensively discussed [HB0116](#), a bill that would have expanded eligibility for the TN HOPE Scholarship, to include students enrolled at certain private institutions, specifically Western Governors University who operate an online, competency-based model. Ultimately, the bill failed. However, several bills advanced this week, including [HB0348](#), brought by [Representative Justin Lafferty](#) (R - Knoxville). This proposed legislation would extend eligibility for the TN Promise Scholarship from the term directly after a student graduates high school to 16 months after graduation. [HB0369](#), brought by [Representative Harold Love](#) (D - Nashville), also advanced. This bill would ban higher education institutions from inquiring about an applicant's criminal history on their application for admission. A bill establishing the Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship from [Chair Mark White](#) (R - Memphis) also moved forward. This bill ([HB0432](#)) would strengthen the teacher pipeline by providing last-dollar scholarships to students who are enrolled in approved teaching programs and agree to teach in a targeted Tennessee school for at least four years after graduation.

The House K-12 Subcommittee passed several bills to the House Administration Committee, including multiple related to classroom censorship. [Representative John Ragan](#) (R - Oak Ridge) successfully passed [HB1377](#), which would [allow any school district resident to file a complaint](#) about perceived violations of the Prohibited Concepts Law. It would also create a process for complainants and those accused of violating the law to appeal the local decision to the TN Department of Education. [Representative Jason Zachary](#) (R - Knoxville) successfully passed [HB0158](#), prohibiting any school district, public postsecondary institution, or state agency from requiring employees to participate in implicit bias training.

To see all of the education-related bills Ed Trust is actively tracking and other important information on movement at the Tennessee General Assembly, please be sure to check out the "On Our Radar" section, our updated bill tracker, and the committee calendars each linked below.

In partnership,



**Reggie Nash**  
Assistant Director, External Relations for Tennessee



## On Our Radar

[HB0322 / SB0274](#)  
Rep. Lamberth / Sen. Johnson

As introduced, requires the threat assessment team of each LEA to coordinate with state agencies providing services and technical assistance to local teams.

[HB0369 / SB0323](#)  
Rep. Love / Sen. Akbari

As introduced, prohibits a public institution of higher education that accepts applications for admission from inquiring about an applicant's criminal history on the application.

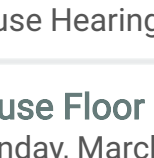
[HB0889 / SB1064](#)  
Rep. Warner / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, requires a school official or teacher who observes or otherwise has knowledge of an assault and battery or vandalism endangering life, health, or safety committed by a student on school property to report the action immediately to the school principal and the director of schools, instead of reporting only to the school principal.

[HB1376 / SB0817](#)  
Rep. Ragan / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, enacts the "Tennessee Higher Education Freedom of Expression and Transparency Act."

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



## What's Happening

### House Government Operations Committee

Monday, March 27th, 1:30pm CT  
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Floor Session

Monday, March 27th, 5:00pm CT  
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

### House Education Instruction Committee - Final Calendar

Tuesday, March 28th, 9:00am CT  
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

### Senate State and Local Government Committee

Tuesday, March 28th, 10:30am CT  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Criminal Justice Subcommittee

Tuesday, March 28th, 12:00pm CT  
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House K - 12 Subcommittee - Final Calendar

Tuesday, March 28th, 12:00pm CT  
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Public Service Subcommittee

Tuesday, March 28th, 12:00pm CT  
House Hearing Room IV | [Committee Homepage](#)

### Senate Judiciary Committee

Tuesday, March 28th, 1:30pm CT  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House K - 12 Subcommittee - Final Calendar

Tuesday, March 28th, 12:00pm CT  
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Public Service Subcommittee

Tuesday, March 28th, 12:00pm CT  
House Hearing Room IV | [Committee Homepage](#)

### Senate Judiciary Committee

Tuesday, March 28th, 1:30pm CT  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Health Subcommittee

Tuesday, March 28th, 1:30pm CT  
House Hearing Room IV | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Finance Ways & Means Committee

Tuesday, March 28th, 3:00pm CT  
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### Senate Judiciary Committee

Wednesday, March 29th, 10:00am CT  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Finance Ways & Means Subcommittee

Wednesday, March 29th, 10:30am CT  
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House State Government Committee

Wednesday, March 29th, 10:30am CT  
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### Senate Education Committee

Wednesday, March 29th, 1:00pm CT  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Education Administration Committee

Wednesday, March 29th, 1:30pm CT  
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### Senate State and Local Government Committee

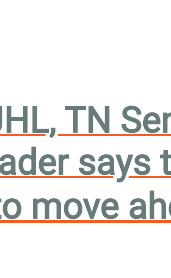
Wednesday, March 29th, 3:00pm CT  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

### House Floor Session

Thursday, March 30th, 9:00am CT  
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



## Noteworthy

### Resource: Tennessee Education Advocacy Hub

The Education Trust – Tennessee launched an advocacy hub to help stakeholders effectively advocate for education justice in the state. Check out our tools [here!](#)

### Article: WJHL, TN Senate majority leader says there are 'no plans' to move ahead TCCY bill

Check out [this article](#) about recent updates on [SB0282](#), which was most recently deferred to 2024 and will not move forward in the Tennessee General Assembly this spring. [Read more](#) for information on the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) and additional context from [Senate Majority Leader Jack Johnson](#).

### Article: Chalkbeat TN, Tennessee bill to loosen class size limits dies in House committee

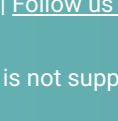
Check out [this article](#) to read more about legislation on class sizes that died this week in the House K-12 Subcommittee after spirited debate. Research and opinions on this proposal that aimed to loosen class size limits are mixed. [Read more.](#)

### Article: Censorship is About Power, Not Power

Check out [this conversation](#) between Ed Trust's Ameshia Cross, Assistant Director of Higher Education Communications, and Florida's Senator Shevrin Jones about the debate about critical race theory and what advocates can do. To learn more about censorship in Tennessee, check out our resources, check out our [TN Coalition or Truth in Our Classrooms](#).

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Check Out Our Policy Agenda](#)



The Education Trust

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