






### The Rundown

 The Alabama Legislature convened Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, for the fourteenth day of the regular session. The legislature met two days this week in the chamber and spent Wednesday in committees.


 **SB202**, **The School Voucher Bill, also known as the PRICE Act, by Sen. Larry Stutts**, was in the Senate Education Policy Committee on Wednesday. AEA testified against the PRICE Act in committee, thoroughly outlining the dangers of the bill. Many committee members were receptive to the testimony. Chairman Chesteen asked for the bill to be referred to the Finance and Taxation Education Committee due to the large amount of money it would take from the Education Trust Fund (ETF). There was no vote in committee. AEA will once again testify against the PRICE Act when it reappears in its new committee.


 **HB363**, **The Charter School Bill by Rep. Terri Collins**, was in the House Education Policy Committee on Wednesday. AEA's legal and legislative teams previously worked many hours with the bill sponsor and other stakeholders but testified against the bill when it appeared in its original form in the committee meeting. The bill would change the appointment process for the Alabama Public Charter School Commission, authorize the commission to hire staff, require commissioners to receive annual training, provide additional guidelines for the authorizing and application review process, provide further for the operational and categorical funding of public charter schools in their first year of operation, and clarify the per pupil federal, state, and local funding of conversion public charter schools during their first year of operation. No vote was held, and our legislative and legal team is still drafting amendments to ensure Alabama's Charter Law stays strong and protects education funding.


 **HB333, The Year-Round School Bill by Rep. Danny Garrett**, would establish the Alabama Modified School Calendar Grant Program, allowing local boards of education to adopt a modified school calendar and offset the associated costs with grants awarded through the program. **This program is completely optional – school districts are not required to change their calendars.** HB333 received a favorable report from the House Education Policy Committee during its meeting on Wednesday and can now be taken up by the entire body of the House.

 We are anticipating the ETF Budget to drop next week. Stay tuned for a complete ETF breakdown in next week's Pulse.


### Moving This Week


 **HB34, by Rep. Tracy Estes**, would make it unlawful to discharge a firearm on school property. Currently, it is unlawful to discharge a firearm into an occupied or unoccupied school building. HB34 received a favorable report in the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday and can now be taken up by the entire body of the House.


 **HB334, by Rep. Danny Garrett**, would create the Students with Unique Needs (SUN) Education Scholarship Account Act and Program and allow parents to use funds in an education scholarship account to provide an individualized education program for their children. HB334 was in committee Wednesday for a public hearing, but was carried over to be voted on next Wednesday.


 **HB364, by Rep. Steve Hurst**, would require a public K-12 school or a local board of education to accept certain forms of payment for admission to certain school-sponsored events. HB364 received a favorable report from the House Education Policy meeting Wednesday and can now be taken up by the entire body of the House.


### Newly Introduced


 **SB247, by Sen. Will Barfoot**, would provide prohibitions on the promotion, endorsement, and affirmation of certain divisive concepts in certain public settings. AEA's legislative and legal team has flagged this bill to add amendments to ensure Alabama's educators are protected while executing their teaching duties in Alabama's classrooms.

 **SB257, "A Grocery Tax Bill" by Sen. Andrew Jones**, would define "food" and begin phasing out the state sales and use tax on food on September 1, 2023. It would also require certain growth targets in the ETF for future sales tax reductions on food and establish the sales and use tax rate on food for purposes of county and municipal sales and use taxes as the existing general or retail sales and use tax rate. Lastly, it would authorize a county and municipality to reduce the sales and use tax rate or exempt food from local sales and use taxes.

 **SB263**, by **Sen. Donnie Chesteen**, would amend the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013 by changing the terms failing school and nonfailing school to priority school and qualifying school, expand scholarships for eligible students attending nonfailing or qualifying schools, revise the poverty threshold for determining the qualifications of an eligible student, provide for the qualifying expenses of eligible students with unique needs, revise the method of determining the number of educational scholarship awards, increase the maximum cumulative amount of tax credits that may be issued each year, require a scholarship granting organization to maintain a reserve balance and to verify the qualifications of an eligible student with unique needs, and authorize the Department of Revenue to bar qualifying schools or educational service providers from participating in the program under certain circumstances. AEA has worked with Sen. Chesteen to ensure the changes being made are not detrimental to the ETF and will continue to be engaged as the bill progresses through the legislature.

 **HB396**, by **Rep. Arnold Mooney**, would define food and exempt sales of food from state sales and use taxes; to establish the local sales tax rate on food for purposes of county and municipal sales and use taxes as the existing general or retail local sales tax rate; and to allow a local governing body to reduce the local sales tax rate or exempt food from local sales and use taxes.

 Thus far, 680 bills have been introduced by the Legislature. AEA staff continues to read each bill and monitors them daily to ensure they will positively affect public education.

 The Alabama Legislature will reconvene on Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, for the sixteenth day of the Regular Legislative Session. Your next Pulse will arrive Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>.

While you're busy serving our state's students, we've got your back in the Alabama Legislature.