

PTA News from the Capitol March 1, 2017

We are less than a week away from the start of the Legislative Session. The following is a synopsis of what happened in Tallahassee last week:

HB78- Recess Bill - the bill passed unanimously through the Senate Education Committee. The next committee of reference is the Appropriations Subcommittee on Pre-K-12 Education. Florida PTA participated in a press conference along with Senator Flores and Representative Plasencia discussing the importance of recess for elementary students.

HB 7027 - began as a committee bill and is a memorial urging the Federal Government to establish block grants for Title 1 and IDEA funding. The block grant would give control to the state on how to disperse these funds. It passed through committee. This bill is just a memorial and does not change any statutory language.

SB 376 - Charter School Funding - Authorizing school boards to levy specified amounts for charter schools; providing that charter school capital outlay funding consists of shared local capital outlay and state funding as provided in the General Appropriations Act; prohibiting a charter school from being eligible for a funding allocation under certain circumstances. This bill will require school districts to share local capital outlay dollars with charter schools. Currently, charter schools receive \$75 million PECO dollars for their capital needs. It passed through the Education Committee.

SB604 - Education Funding - Revising the amount each school board may levy for certain purposes; revising the purposes for which a school district may levy additional millage by specified means to include fixed capital outlay. Senator Farmer filed an amendment which would allow school districts to levy up to a 2.25 millage rate. The amendment was adopted but the bill was temporarily postponed to amend this language into SB376.

SB1334 - Universal background checks - this bill will close the gun show loop hole and require that any person purchasing a gun from a private seller be subjected to a background check and the 3-day mandatory waiting period. This a Florida PTA priority and we will be participating in a press conference next week asking Florida Legislature for their support of this bill.

Federal bills:

We have received a few emails regarding **H.R. 610**, also called the "[Choices in Education Act of 2017](#)", which would repeal every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and replace it with block grants for states to use for a voucher system. The bill also repeals a rule issued by the Department of Agriculture which would roll back school nutrition standards in schools if passed.

National PTA is monitoring the bill and will issue a statement if the bill moves forward.