

## HB 199 passes unanimously

Written by gallupsun  
Saturday, 27 January 2024 12:12

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Dear Editor,

Great news to start your weekend – House Bill 199 passed unanimously this morning in the House Education Committee!

HB 199 does three things:

1. Raise EA/IA minimum salaries to \$30,000 annually
2. Place a \$15/hour wage into law for non-full time/hourly staff (previously this has only been in the budget, not in law).
3. Ensure all full-time school employees would receive \$30,000 annually.

Our union has been working diligently to support higher minimum salaries for educators across the spectrum in the Legislature, and this is only of many wage-related bills we have worked to have introduced in the last three years.

Here are a few more bills coming up early next week:

**Jan. 29**

**House Education Committee**

**STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS ACT House Bill 71 (Chandler/Hochman-Vigil/Roybal Caballero):** House Bill 71, the Student Loan Bill of Rights Act, will receive its first committee on Jan. 31. Sponsored by Reps. Christine Chandler, Day Hochman-Vigil, and Patricia Roybal Caballero, this legislation seeks to regulate and license student debt servicers doing business in New Mexico.

The legislation also provides redress mechanisms for when borrowers are defrauded by lenders through deceptive practices or procedures by establishing a New Mexico ombud as an in-state advocate for defrauded borrowers.

AFT New Mexico strongly supports HB71 and will speak in favor of this legislation while in committee. AFT NM has been long-time partners with the Student Borrowers Protection Center on this legislation.

**Senate Rules Committee**

We expect these bills to be rescheduled either Jan. 29 or 31:

**Senate Joint Resolution 2 (Correa Hemphill/Steinborn/Moores):BOARD OF REGENTS NOMINATING COMMITTEES, CA:** This legislation would require nominees for regents at any of New Mexico's public higher education institutions to be vetted by a nominating committee prior to being submitted to the Governor for final selection from among the pool of applicants vetted by the committee. This process is like the process that judicial nominees follow when

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appointed to judicial vacancies.

AFT New Mexico supports SJR 2 because we want to have the best qualified regents for New Mexico's higher education institutions, and we also want to reduce the potential for regent positions to be treated as political giveaways for political allies/donors. If passed by the Legislature, SJR 2 would go to New Mexico voters for approval.

**Senate Joint Resolution 5 (Gonzales) PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREE HEALTH CARE FUND, CA:** SJR 5 would ask New Mexico voters through a constitutional amendment to permanently protect the Retiree Healthcare Authority, in a way that is like the Educational Retirement Board and the Public Employee Retirement Authority.

AFT New Mexico supports SJR 5 because we believe that access to Retiree Healthcare is a promise that the State has made to nearly 100,000 public employees, 67% of which are educators. Educators contribute into this fund throughout their career, and we expect that promise to be available to all educators upon their retirement. If passed by the Legislature, SJR 5 would go to New Mexico voters for approval.

Sincerely,

Whitney Holland President, NM American Federation of Teachers

