



# OEA Legislative Watch

April 19, 2011

## Ohio Legislature Adjourns for Spring Break April 18-29: Budget Substitute Bill Expected April 28

The House Finance Committee will be working over the legislative Spring Break to develop a substitute bill for House Bill 153 (R-Amstutz), the state biennium budget bill. The substitute bill is expected to contain fiscal and policy changes based on the Finance Committee's consideration of testimony and other advocacy related to Governor Kasich's executive budget proposal. Further amendments to the substitute bill are expected to be offered by Democrats, as well as Republicans. The Finance Committee is expected to vote on the budget bill on May 3, with a full House vote expected on May 5. The bill will then be sent to the Ohio Senate. A final budget bill must be passed by June 30, 2011.

The OEA testified three times on House Bill 153, once in the Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee and twice before the full Finance Committee. The OEA's advocacy has centered around a number of concerns, including education funding, collective bargaining rights, employee rights, charter schools, vouchers, retirement, healthcare and privatization.

**Call your State Representative at (888) 907-7309 to voice your opposition to the public education funding cuts.**

## OEA Testifies in Opposition to School Transportation Outsourcing Bill

The OEA testified before the Senate Education Committee in opposition to Senate Bill 116 (R-Seitz and R-Cates) on April 12, 2011. This legislation would permit non-Civil Service school boards (generally non-city school districts, with some exceptions) to outsource school district transportation services for reasons of economy and efficiency. The OEA believes that transporting children to school is a critical part of K-12 education, not a peripheral service that should be detached from other public school functions. Further, outsourcing this important public education service can undermine student safety, reduce accountability for taxpayer dollars and can often result in increased costs.

The provisions in Senate Bill 116 were originally passed into law in 2005 but were later removed by the Ohio Education Opportunity Act in 2009.

Do you know that the political process affects virtually everything in your school day?

Take action —  
Become an OEA  
Member Lobbyist

Questions?

Contact your  
Governmental  
Services Team

**Ron Rapp**  
Director  
rapp@ohea.org

**Melissa Clark**  
Lobbyist  
clarkm@ohea.org

**Robert Davis**  
Lobbyist  
davisr@ohea.org

**Matthew Dotson**  
Lobbyist  
dotsonm@ohea.org

**Pete Hackeman**  
UniServ Political  
Advocacy Consultant  
hackemanp@ohea.org

**Russ Harris**  
Education Research  
Development  
Consultant  
harrisr@ohea.org

### OEA Testifies Against Statewide Vouchers

The Ohio Education Association was joined by seven other education groups in testifying in opposition to a bill that would create two new statewide voucher programs. House Bill 136, sponsored by Representative Matt Huffman (R-Lima), would create the “PACT” Scholarship program to provide private school vouchers for K-12 students statewide. This would replace the Ed Choice and Cleveland scholarship programs. The only eligibility requirements would be based on household income and there would be no cap on the number of vouchers. HB 136 would also create a statewide special education voucher program.

The PACT scholarship would provide a voucher of up to \$4,626 to any student eligible to attend public school in Ohio as long as their family met broad household income guidelines. This would be true in every district regardless of how well those schools perform. Below is a chart with the income eligibility and corresponding voucher amount for a family of four:

<b>Household Income (family of four)</b>	<b>Voucher Amount</b>
<b>\$61,189</b>	<b>\$4,626</b>
<b>\$71,388</b>	<b>\$4,048</b>
<b>\$81,586</b>	<b>\$3,470</b>
<b>\$91,784</b>	<b>\$2,891</b>
<b>\$101,982</b>	<b>\$2,313</b>

Additionally, the bill would allow students who already attend private school to accept a voucher in the coming years. Those who have already made the decision to attend private school would have that decision subsidized by the taxpayers. If only a fraction of Ohio’s current private school students accepted vouchers, it would cost hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

The special education voucher program proposed in HB 136 would also be a statewide program available to up to 5% of students with an IEP — roughly 13,000 students. Parents who accept a voucher would have to waive their due process rights under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA).

OEA is strongly opposed to taxpayer-funded voucher programs that drain resources from public schools. To expand vouchers statewide at the same time the budget calls for decreasing funding to nearly every school district is unconscionable.

OEA was joined in opposition testimony by the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT); the Ohio Parent Teacher Association (PTA); the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA); the Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO); the Buckeye Association of School

Administrators (BASA); the Ohio School Psychologists Association, and the *Alliance for High Quality Education*.