



TENNESSEE TEACHER BILL OF RIGHTS Summary & Background

Brief History: Professional Educators of Tennessee, working with numerous classroom teachers and members built a list of rights and protections they wanted written into Tennessee Code. State Senator Mark Green took the list on a statewide listening tour, as he contemplated running for Governor. He confirmed that these were items educators were discussing. He filed subsequent legislation, which was one of the first bills filed in the Tennessee General Assembly. State Representative Jay Reedy, the husband of a classroom teacher, immediately joined forces with Senator Green to champion the legislation in the Tennessee House of Representatives. State Senator Jim Tracy, a longtime supporter of public education, immediately signed on to the Bill. The Bill became known as the Teacher Bill of Rights, but really applies to all educators. It was Senate Bill 14 in the Senate and House Bill 174 in the 110th Tennessee General Assembly.

What it does: *Teachers, Principals and School Personnel - As introduced, creates a list of rights and protections afforded to educators. - Amends TCA Title 49.*

Sponsors:

- **SB 0014** Tracy, Green, Hensley, Jackson, Roberts, Yager
- **HB 0174** by *Reedy, Rudd, Terry, Ramsey, Hardaway, Moody, Goins, Kumar, Ragan

The Legislation:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 5, Part 2, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

- (a) For purposes of this section, "educator" means any teacher, principal, supervisor, or other individual required by law to hold a valid license of qualification for employment in the public schools of this state.
- (b) An educator has the right to:
 - (1) Be treated with civility and respect;
 - (2) Have his or her professional judgment and discretion respected;
 - (3) Report any errant, offensive, or abusive content or behavior of students to school officials or appropriate agencies;
 - (4) Provide students with a classroom and school in which the educators, students, the property of the educator and students, and peers will be safe;
 - (5) Defend themselves and their students from physical violence or physical harm pursuant to § 49-6-4008;
 - (6) Share information regarding a student's educational experience, health, or safety with the student's parent or legal guardian unless otherwise prohibited by state law or the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), codified in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g;
 - (7) Review all instructional material or curriculum prior to those materials being utilized for instruction of students; and
 - (8) Not be required to use their personal money to appropriately equip a classroom.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring

Conclusion:

This is a framework, much like the Tennessee Code of Ethics, that can be built upon in the future. It lays a solid foundation for Tennessee Educators. It passed the Tennessee General Assembly unanimously, 88-0 in the Tennessee House and 30-0 in the Tennessee Senate. Professional Educators of Tennessee was honored to work on this monumental legislation with the members of the Tennessee General Assembly.