



LEGISLATIVE POSITION MEMO

Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
Jerry T. Jordan, President

June 14, 2022

To: Members of the General Assembly

From: Jerry T. Jordan, President

Re: Updated Legislative Memo

Opposition to Bills [SB1277](#), [SB1278](#), [SB1191](#), [HB972](#), [SB996](#), [HB2169](#), [Co Sponsorship Memo](#) on Arming Teachers

Opposition to Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation

The PFT is vehemently opposed to anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation in any form. There are several pieces of legislation currently under consideration that are reprehensible attacks on our LGBTQIA+ youth, and the PFT urges the legislature to reject these and to speak out forcefully against these disgraceful attacks on our young people.

SB1277 (Book Banning Bill) & SB1278 (Don't Say Gay Bill): OPPOSED

These bills are part of a bigoted national campaign to silence educators and shame LGBTQIA+ youth. These 'Don't Say Gay' and banned books bills are dangerous and oppressive.

As AFT President Randi Weingarten said in the wake of the passage of the Florida bill, "This bill—and all the ones like it—single out certain kids and families for derision and denigration. It is just wrong. Its intent is to divide our communities and make political hay, but it hurts children, hurts families and makes it hard for teachers to do their jobs. Make no mistake, this bill will have devastating real-world consequences—especially for LGBTQIA+ youth who already experience higher rates of bullying and suicide. And for teachers and school staff who work tirelessly to support and care for their students, this bill is just another gross political attack on their professionalism."

President Weingarten's assessment is spot-on, and we cannot allow these bills to become law in Pennsylvania.

SB1191 & HB972 (Anti-Trans Legislation): OPPOSED

This anti-trans legislation is a reprehensible, hateful effort to prohibit our trans youth from participating in sports, and in doing so will likely have long lasting consequences for trans youth that go well beyond the playing field or court.

In these bills, lawmakers are seeking to send a very clear message to LGBTQIA+ young people that they are unwelcome in society. LGBTQIA+ youth need and deserve to be seen for who they are: human beings. This union will always stand up for our young people, and we will vigorously fight any and all anti-LGBTQIA legislation.

SB996 (Parental 'Bill of Rights'): OPPOSED

This bill is part of a national trend of disempowering educators and school communities and weakening public education. Furthermore, across the nation, these bills make teaching honest history and teaching facts prohibited. It serves as a way of reinforcing racist systems and systems of anti-LGBTQIA+ bigotry. Our young people are not political pawns and deserve to be educated with a full and robust education that unpacks the systems of oppression that have impacted far too many in this country for far too long.

HB2169 (Voucher Expansion): OPPOSED

No matter the form, vouchers harm public schools. Whether in the form of EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit) expansion, ESA (Education Savings Accounts) creation, or any other mechanism, vouchers siphon money from traditional public schools without any fiscal, operational, administrative, or academic performance accountability or transparency.

Schools receiving EITC funding, despite being paid with taxpayer money, may (and do) refuse to enroll, or restrict enrollment of, students for virtually any reason, including religious affiliation, disability, discipline, or academic history. Instead of working to identify ways that the legislature can live up to its constitutional obligation to fully and fairly fund public education, EITC and any form of vouchers sets the stage for another corporate giveaway and an inequitable distribution of resources. *Read more on our [opposition to vouchers here](#).*

Cosponsor Memorandum RE: Arming Teachers: OPPOSED

It is impossible to overstate just how catastrophically dangerous this proposal is. It flies in the face of commonsense and it serves to foment fear rather than actually enact commonsense gun reform. We know that any reduction in gun violence must come in a multipronged approach– and we know that means true investment in our communities. It means meaningful, sustainable funding for public education. More resources–resources that in wealthier, whiter school districts are considered non-negotiable. *Read more on our calls for commonsense gun reform and investment in public education [here](#) and [here](#).*

Read our legislative [platform here](#).