

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Just Ask Us! Starting with the Candidates



This month, SECA released a series of resources to state affiliate public policy chairs that are designed to support advocacy efforts prior to the 2014 mid-term elections.

We chose to release the initial materials for the **Just Ask Us!** campaign this month because the timing couldn't be better. Most of our states have completed primaries and the final candidates for office are determined for the fall election. Candidates are actively seeking support and may be more inclined to meet with organizations and groups. Acting now could provide the follow-

ing benefits:

- 1) The state association can position itself as the “go to expert” in the field of early childhood education for existing and potential office holders.
- 2) The state association can gain **visibility**, both statewide and locally, helping to enhance member retention and recruitment.
- 3) The state association can be viewed as a **resource for members** in helping them to determine which candidate best represents their positions and goals for

early childhood education.

All of these goals are achievable; however, there are constraints on the activities for non-profit organizations and advocates must use caution.

You are expressly prohibited from endorsing a candidate, so you must be careful about how you design your advocacy efforts.

To help guide you through the legal requirements for advocacy with candidates, SECA developed this resource, *Campaign 2014: Educating the Candidates*.

The guide is available on the SECA website and contains information about what you can and cannot do.

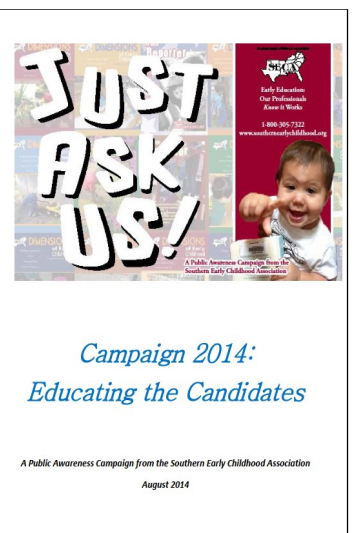
Go to page 2 of this newsletter to find out who is designated as the advocacy contact in your state.

August 2014

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*Campaign 2014:
Educating the Candidates*

A Public Awareness Campaign from the Southern Early Childhood Association
August 2014

Your State Advocacy Contacts

If you'd like to become involved in helping your state affiliate to "get the word out", please get in touch with your state affiliate public policy contact. He or she can coordinate any efforts in your state and make sure that all of the advocates are "on the same page".

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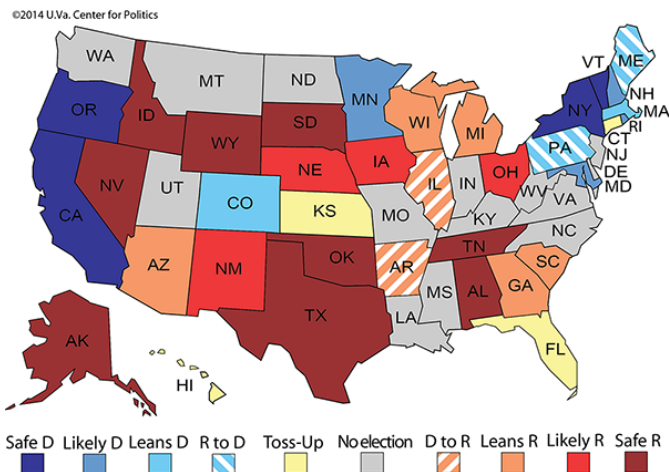
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Let's be a strong voice on behalf of children in the South!

Update on 2014 Gubernatorial Elections



Source: Sabato's Crystal Ball,
<http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/2014governor>. Retrieved 8/19/2014.

According to Larry Sabato, "political guru" of the University of Virginia Center for Politics, there may be some changes in the party that occupies the Governor's office in SECA states.

As of August 8th, these were the predictions from the Center.

Safe Republican: Alabama, Texas, Oklahoma and Tennessee

Leaning Republican: Georgia and South Carolina

From Democrat to Republican: Arkansas

Toss-up: Florida



Safe Incumbents: Bentley/AL, Fallin/OK, Haslam/TN



Incumbents Likely to Win: Haley/SC and Deal/GA

Arkansas may change from Democrat to Republican. **Florida**, with incumbent Rick Scott and former Governor Charlie Crist, is anybody's guess!

From the 2014 State Legislative Sessions

In **Louisiana**, **HCR 61** requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop and recommend a statewide funding model to support quality early childhood care and education. **Act 134** adds child care expenses incurred during a parent's job training or education to the basic child support obligation. **Act 34** extends the Montessori program model into the high school age. **Act 787** enacts the Improving Access to Child Care for Homeless Louisiana Families Act. **Act 868** transfers the duties of center- and home-based child care licensing, oversight and administration, including administration of the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE). **Act 717** establishes a local early learning enrollment coordination system. **Act 498** allows early childhood programs to act as public procurement units and engage in cooperative purchasing. **Act 780** allows school districts to receive public or private donations as scholarships for children enrolled in the LA 4 Early Childhood Program. **Act** requires the State Department of Education to allocate state funds to allow every eligible four-year-old to attend the LA 4 Early Childhood Program.

In **Florida**, the state laboratory may now release the results of newborn hearing and metabolic screening. **Georgia** adopted a resolution that recognizes October 6-10, 2014, as Georgia Pre-K Week. A resolution in **Kentucky** honors

the Blueprint for Kentucky's Children and declares January 16, 2014, as Children's Advocacy Day in the Commonwealth.

Act 536 in **Mississippi** authorizes the Mississippi Department of Education to establish and implement a statewide, mandatory Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

North Carolina Act 2014-49 revises and clarifies the special education scholarships for children with disabilities and exempts certain schools that do not receive NC Pre-K or child care subsidy funding from child care licensure requirements. **Act 33** in **Oklahoma** sunsets the tax credit for eligible child care provider expenses in January 2017.

In **South Carolina**, **Act 284** implements a comprehensive, pre-K through 12th grades reading proficiency plan. **Act 287** reauthorizes the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness through 2016. **Act 155** makes changes regarding data collection of aggregated, developmental assessment data. **Act 295** requires child care programs to obtain parental permission to administer medication to children and requires the Department of Social Services to make unannounced inspections and investigations of center- and home-based child care facilities.

Tennessee Act 85 changes the date that four-year-olds are allowed to enroll in pre-K. **Act 513** extends the Child Care Advisory Council to June 2019. **Act 968** enacts the Tennessee Community Schools Act. **Act 972**

prioritizes children of killed or missing U.S. military personnel for state preschool or child care center enrollment. **Act 681** prohibits the destruction of undeliverable books from the Imagination Library program.

Virginia SJR 54 requests a statewide study for a tiered-reimbursement subsidy program for child-care providers. **Act 128** convenes a work group to review laws and regulations governing criminal history background checks for child care providers. **Act 129** prohibits child care centers from allowing employees or volunteers to start working until their criminal history records have been received. **Act 379** establishes a work group to make recommendations to implement national fingerprint-based criminal history background checks for all child care providers. **Act 771** allows local governments to approve zoning permits for home-based child care facilities. In **West Virginia**, **Act 109** allows DHHR to promulgate legislative rules for child care licensing. **Act 47** requires that students in pre-K through 8th grades are included in the WV 21st Century Strategic Technology Learning Plan. **Act 50** requires the State Board of Education to promulgate rules to develop a comprehensive, systemic approach to close the reading achievement gap by third grade by ensuring quality early learning experiences.

For complete information on failed and enacted bills, go to <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/child-care-and-early-education-legislation-databas.aspx>

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Southern Early Childhood Association



"A Voice for Southern Children"

How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information

that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at

http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php

to receive notice of its availability each month.

School's Starting: Immunization Requirements for Children

All 50 states have immunization requirements for both schools and child care, but states vary on what leeway parents have to opt-out of these requirements.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are 16 diseases that can be prevented with vaccinations. Many parents are concerned about the potential side effects of these immunizations and choose to opt-out for religious, medical, or personal reasons. Following is a list of exemptions allowed in the SECA states.

Exemptions by State

Alabama/Medical & Religious

Arkansas/Medical, Religious & Personal

Florida/Medical & Religious

Georgia/ Medical & Religious

Kentucky/Medical & Religious

Louisiana/Medical & Personal

Mississippi/Medical

Oklahoma/Medical, Religious & Personal

South Carolina/Medical & Religious

Tennessee/Medical & Religious

Texas/Medical, Religious & Personal

Virginia/Medical & Religious

West Virginia/Medical

Source: State Information, Immunization

Action Coalition,

<http://www.immunize.org/>. Retrieved 8/19/2014.

If you'd like to provide information to parents, the CDC has a web page that is devoted to explaining immunizations and why they are important.

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/p/parents/record-reqs/childcare-school.html>

The **Association of State & Territorial Health Officials** includes information on state legislative activity in regard to immunizations. Go to:

<http://www.astho.org/Programs/Immunization/State-Immunization-Legis>