

# Public Policy Notes

## Southern Early Childhood Association

### We're All in Session in 2015

All of the SECA states have legislatures that are in session in 2015. Some are still in session and some states have completed (or will shortly complete) their work.

Following is a list of dates that your state legislature convened and adjourned or is estimated to adjourn.

#### Alabama

March 3, 2015-May 11, 2015 (est)

#### Arkansas

January 12, 2015-April 22, 2015

#### Florida

March 3, 2015-May 1, 2015 (est)

#### Georgia (adjourned)

January 12, 2015-April 3, 2015

#### Kentucky (adjourned)

January 6, 2015-March 25, 2015

#### Louisiana

April 27, 2015-June 11, 2015 (est)

#### Mississippi (adjourned)

January 1, 2015-April 2, 2015



The Georgia Legislature celebrates the end of the 2015 session. Photo retrieved from <http://www.myajc.com/gallery/news/state-regional-govt-politics/sine-die-2015-georgia-legislature/gCRxm/#all>, 4/8/15

#### North Carolina

January 14, 2015-June 30, 2015 (est)

#### Oklahoma

February 2, 2015-May 29, 2015 (est)

#### South Carolina

January 13, 2015-June 4, 2015 (est)

#### Tennessee

January 13, 2015-April 17, 2015 (est)

#### Texas

January 13, 2015-June 1, 2015 (est)

#### Virginia (adjourned)

January 14, 2015-February 28, 2015  
(Reconvened session will be April 15, 2015)

#### West Virginia

(adjourned)  
January 14, 2015-March 14, 2015

We'll highlight information on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter about bills and laws in those states whose legislatures have adjourned. In future newsletters, we'll follow the other states.

#### April 2015

#### Public Policy Notes

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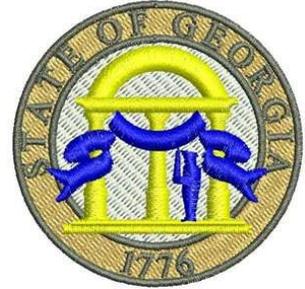
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#### I Want to Know More!

If you wish to locate **information on your state legislature**, **click on your state's name in the article** and it will take you to the state's website. For the articles on pages 2-3, **click on the bill numbers** and you'll access a summary of the legislation. For information on **how to track a bill**, see the article on page 3.

## 2015: The Georgia Legislative Session



### Some Acts/Bills to Note

**HB 1** Called Haleigh's Act, this bill received national attention. It legalized the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes.

**HB 91** This bill eliminated the Georgia High School Graduation Test.

**HB 198** This bill requires that all certificated school personnel have annual suicide prevention training.

**HB 401** This bill contained a variety of amendments to the Georgia Code concerning criminal background checks and child care licensing. It included a new definition of family child care and new nomenclature for both child care and family child care. They are now referenced as child care **learning** centers and family child care **learning** homes in Georgia code. It also included provisions for early learning "support cen-

ters" that are identified as agencies that provide temporary staffing for early learning programs.

**SB 156** This bill allows the State Charter Schools Commission to create a non-profit foundation to support its work.

## 2015: The Kentucky Legislative Session



### Some Acts/Bills to Note

**SB 54** This act gives priority access to drug treatment programs for pregnant women.

**SB 75** This act adds [krabbe disease](#) testing to the mandatory newborn screening.

**SB 119** This act requires local school boards to adopt mandatory

child abuse training for staff.

**HB 234** This act establishes a schedule for the implementation of a Quality Rating System and adds reporting requirements for the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

**HB 315** This act amends the child restraint requirements for children in motor vehicles, requiring children under the age of 9 be placed in

booster seats.

**HB 429** This act establishes the Kentucky Child Care Advisory Council. It is to be comprised of providers, parents and others and is charged with providing recommendations on state child care licensing requirements.

## 2015: The Mississippi Legislative Session



### Some Acts/Bills to Note

**HB 464** This bill authorizes Mississippi to join the Compact for Education and become a member of the Education Commission of the States.

**HB 469** Creates the New Start School program that allows state intervention in failing districts.

**HB 646** Creates the Task Force on the Future of Gifted Education.

**HB 885** Requires insurance coverage for treatment of autism.

**SB 2161** Creates the Mississippi Commission on College & Career Readiness that is charged with determining a replacement for the Common Core standards.

**SB 2191** Creates the Districts of Innovation program that will recognize and designate exemplary school districts.

**SB 2558** Creates a method to transi-

tion state managed school districts back to local control.

**SB 2695** Creates the Education Scholarship Accounts program for children with special needs. (For more information on these programs, access the March 2015 issue of *Public Policy Notes*, p. 3.)

[Click here](#) for a list of all bills introduced in 2015.

## 2015: The Virginia Legislative Session

### Some Acts/Bills to Note

[HB 1320](#) Prohibits the Board of Education from requiring teachers seeking licensure renewal to satisfy any renewal requirements by completing coursework and earning credit at an institution of higher education. The Board of Education can require professional development credits for renewal.

[HB 1570](#) Requires national criminal history/fingerprint background

checks in child care centers and child care homes.

[HB 1714](#) Permits the Board of Education to require each student to take a Standards of Learning assessment in science after the student receives instruction in the grade six science, life science, and physical science Standards of Learning and before the student completes grade eight. The current requirement is testing in

grade eight.

[HB 1752](#) & [SB 724](#)

Prohibits the Board of Education from replacing the Standards of Learning with Common Core Standards without the consent of the General Assembly.

[Click here](#) for a complete list of all bills passed in the 2015 session.



## 2015: The West Virginia Legislative Session

### Some Acts/Bills to Note

[SB 19](#) This bill specified minimum early childhood program instruction days. The bill was vetoed by the Governor.

[SB 27](#) Revised sanctions pertaining to participation in the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) program.

[SB 286](#) This bill made changes to

the requirements for mandatory childhood immunizations.

[HB 2025](#) Prohibits certain sex offenders from loitering within one thousand feet of a school or child care facility.

[HB 2527](#) Creates a Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children.

[HB 2902](#) Created the West

Virginia ABLÉ program, an education

savings account for children with disabilities. (For more information on this program, see the March 2015 issue of *Public Policy Notes*, p. 3.)

[Click here](#) to see a list of all bills passed in the 2015 session.



## Tracking Legislation in the States

CQ Roll Call has published a guide, [How to Track State Legislation: A Guide to Understanding the Process](#), that provides insights into how to track and find legislation at the state level.

It includes the following chapters.

- ◆ Understand the System
- ◆ Every State is Different
- ◆ How Bills Move
- ◆ The Committee Process

- ◆ How to Start Tracking
- ◆ After Final Passage

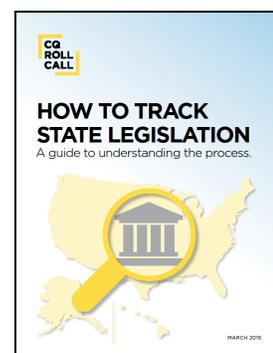
The guide is a simple explanation of how the system works and where you can go to find resources to help you begin your work at the state level.

Although this guide is available for free as a download, you must register in order to receive the download. CQ Roll Call also

provides new fee based services called *State*

*Track* and *CQ State Report*.

For those of us who participate on a limited level, there are many other free resources available, such as your state advocacy groups and your legislative websites.



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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](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php)

*to receive notice of its availability each month.*

## Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center Goes to Kentucky

On March 19th, "Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack joined Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear and University of Kentucky-Lexington officials to announce the establishment of the **USDA Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center** at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

The Center will use cutting-edge solutions in child nutrition to reduce child food insecurity in states with the highest number of persistently poor rural counties. Currently, about 85 percent of all persistently poor counties in the United States are in rural areas, and children are one of the most vulnerable groups living in rural areas.

With USDA's investment of \$2.5 million, the Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center will administer and evaluate a series of sub-grants targeted to as many as 30 rural areas with high poverty rates in up to 15 states. The communities will use the funds to better coordinate existing child nutrition programs and create solutions to target child food insecurity. The University of Kentucky will partner with Altarum Institute and the Southern Rural Development Center to develop the center." *Source: USDA News Release # 0069.15, [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).*

"One out of four kids in rural America are food-insecure," U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said during a phone interview. "The purpose of this center is to establish best practices, to establish strategies that will



Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, UKA Dean Nancy Cox and Gov. Steve Beshear announce the new center at UK. PHOTO: Steve Patton, UK Agricultural Communications, Retrieved from [www.news.ca.uky.edu](http://www.news.ca.uky.edu), 4/9/15

work to address these unique challenges and create greater awareness on the part of policy makers." *Source: [www.kentucky.com](http://www.kentucky.com)*

The initial partnership will encompass 4 years.