



NEWS RELEASE

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FEA files federal lawsuit against SB 256

TALLAHASSEE — As was announced today at a virtual press conference, the Florida Education Association (FEA) and three affiliated unions have filed a federal lawsuit against Senate Bill (SB) 256, which was signed into law Tuesday by Gov. Ron DeSantis. The complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida, Gainesville Division.

We assert that the law is unconstitutional on its face. It violates educators' rights to freedom of speech and association under the First Amendment and equal protection of laws under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Further, the law diminishes our contract rights by impeding on valid binding active contracts with our universities and school districts that were bargained for and secured under collective bargaining agreements.

"We, as educators in Florida, exercise our constitutional rights, and for doing so we have faced political retribution by the governor of this great state," said FEA President Andrew Spar. "Gov. DeSantis has made it clear that he is targeting educators because we exercise our constitutional right to speak out against attempts by this governor and others to stymie the freedom to learn and to stifle freedom of thought."

In the complaint, FEA and its affiliates seek to enjoin the defendants from implementing and enforcing provisions of SB 256, as it imposes significant harms on certain disfavored unions in order to silence Gov. DeSantis' opponents.

To see the lawsuit as filed, go here: <https://feaweb.org/2023FEAlawsuit>

SB 256 bans payroll deductions for union dues, restricts the freedom of educators and other working people to join unions, forces local unions to undergo costly audits, and requires that an arbitrary 60-percent super majority of eligible employees pay dues in order for a union to exist.

Named as plaintiffs on the complaint against the law are the Alachua County Education Association, United Faculty of Florida-University of Florida, United Faculty of Florida and FEA. Named as defendants in their official capacities are Donald J. Rubottom, chair of the Florida Public Employees Relations Commission; Jeff Aaron, commissioner of the Florida Public Employees Relations Commission; and Michael Sasso, commissioner of the Florida Public Employees Relations Commission.

Speakers at today's press conference included FEA President Andrew Spar; Noel Candelaria, secretary-treasurer of the National Education Association; Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers; Carmen Ward, president of the Alachua County Education Association; and Paul Ortiz, president of United Faculty of Florida-University of Florida; along with attorneys Leon Dayan of Bredhoff & Kaiser and Kimberly Menchion, FEA general counsel/director of Legal Services.

For a recording of today's press conference, go here: <https://www.facebook.com/floridaeea>

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The Florida Education Association is the state's largest association of professional employees, with 150,000 members. FEA represents PreK-12 teachers, higher education faculty, educational staff professionals, students at our colleges and universities preparing to become teachers and retired education employees. Connect with FEA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and at <https://feaweb.org>.