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PRESS RELEASE

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Members of state's largest educator association offer feedback on Senate's teacher pay bill

Texas classroom educators say SB 26 is "maybe sort of" a pay raise, but only for some teachers

Senate Education K-16 Committee Chair Brandon Creighton (R–Conroe) passed Senate Bill (SB) 26, the Senate's teacher pay bill, out of committee Thursday on a 11–0 vote. In the less than 48-hour period in which ATPE had time to collect educator input on SB 26, which was only publicly released Tuesday, we have received clear feedback from Texas educators, who see this for what it is, a "pay raise" at only the 30,000-foot level. Our members said:

- "They will put out in the news that it's a teacher pay raise, which, maybe sort of, but not for us all and not clearly mentioned! Sending this bill to committee and adding it to the agenda in 48 hours, not giving lawmakers time to actually read it and stakeholders time to get to Austin, seems shady, like they do not really want to hear from us." —*Kristin Shelton, Austin-area prekindergarten teacher*
- "The last time I looked, there are only about 33% of LEAs invested in the Teacher Incentive Allotment. Adding more money to those that participate sounds great, but we are already leaving so many teachers out of the opportunity to earn a distinction and get the enhanced pay. My friend has the same job as I do and the same amount of experience that I do, but she earns \$22,000 a year more than me, all because her district chose to invest in the TIA process. My school district has chosen to now start the TIA process. They are rolling it out in small steps: the first year, nine schools, K-2 only. The next year, they added a few more schools and a few more grades. I have no idea how long it is going to take for me to get a chance to participate. I have mixed feelings about pay raises, incentives, or stipends that leave so many teachers out of the equation." —*Stephanie Stoebe, Austin-area fourth grade teacher and Region 13 ATPE director*
- "I worry what the bill would do to my school's budget in a couple of years. We are in a deficit budget this year already. There is a very low turnover rate in my district, and we have a large number of seasoned teachers, so a large portion would be receiving the \$10,000 increase. When the funding for this stopped, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible for my district to continue paying this larger amount." —*Teresa Millard, Woden prekindergarten teacher and ATPE state treasurer*

ATPE agrees that teacher compensation is an urgent matter, but we are disappointed in the Senate's rushing SB 26 through the process without more input from the educators who are at the heart of the bill. That teachers feel trepidation about the permanence of the promoted pay increase is an issue that can be easily addressed if the senators will stop for a moment and work with us to improve the bill language. Either way, we hope to work closely with both chambers on pay raise proposals that don't undo the statutory protections currently present in state law for pay increases, that acknowledge the contributions of all public school employees, and that ensure districts have access to the funding needed to actually continue to provide the pay raises designed by the Legislature.

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About the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)

Founded in 1980, ATPE is the leading educators' association in Texas with nearly 80,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, and future, retired, and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for Texas' more than five million public school students. | atpe.org