

November 2024 EEA Legislative Report

First of all, thank you to those of you who voted last week in the interest of public education. For those of us who have been operating under a siege mentality for the entirety of our careers, embracing our anger in defense of students is nothing new. To those of you for whom it is, gird your loins.

The Situation: Results of last week's election have created a worst case scenario where political forces aligned decidedly against public education have taken firm control of all three branches of government at both the state and federal level ([*as of this writing control of the House was as yet undetermined, but leaning Republican](#)).

For us in Ohio this situation is not new. With Governor DeWine leading the parade, Republicans maintained a supermajority in the General Assembly, [though Democrats did manage to flip two seats in both the House and the Senate](#). However, Republicans strengthened their hold on Ohio's Supreme Court to a [6-1 advantage](#) which could [impact the outcome of legal challenges to Ohio's voucher system](#) and the strain it places on public school funding.

The new, and potentially more disturbing news for public educators is the three branch stranglehold (**see above*) Republicans will have at the federal level beginning in January. For those of you rusty on your Government, a Republican controlled Congress could have the ability to pass laws according to their agenda which will be signed by the Republican President, and more or less rubber stamped as Constitutional by a Supreme Court dominated by Trump appointees and other conservatives.

[Among the priorities listed in Project 2025](#) are the [elimination of the Department of Education, elimination of Head Start, discontinuing the Title I program and its funding for economically disadvantaged schools, and diverting money to private schools](#). Other Trump initiatives could involve the [elimination of protections for LGBTQ+ students and civil rights protections for other students](#).

Read "[Trump won the presidency. What does that mean for education?](#)" for more.

Beware the Lame Duck: As if this wasn't enough, an end to election season only means the arrival of its sinister cousin. No, not Christmas, the Lame Duck. For those of you unaware, the Lame Duck is the political period of time after the election and before newly elected politicians take office. It is during this period when politicians on their way out, or those embracing the unfettered power that comes with a supermajority (*I'm looking at you Ohio Republicans*), attempt to leave a lasting legacy by hurrying bills through the General Assembly. Oftentimes the shenanigans included in [these pieces of legislation cannot be passed under normal circumstances, so are moved during the Lame Duck with very little if any public comment](#). In short, remain vigilant.

The Ohio General Assembly has yet to reconvene. The Ohio Senate is back in session on November 13th, and the Ohio House on November 20th. Keep an eye on Honesty for Ohio Education's [Legislation Tracker](#) to see what's happening.

If you prefer the information straight from the horse's mouth, you can find the schedule of the Ohio Senate Sessions [here](#), and the Ohio House Sessions [here](#).

Feel the need to do something now? Here's some possibilities...

- 1) Honesty for Ohio Education has indicated concern regarding two bills for the Ohio Lame Duck. HB 445 would authorize school districts to adopt a policy authorizing student [release time for religious instruction](#). SB 104 is a College Credit Plus Bill that now contains the [transgender bathroom ban](#) for primary secondary and college students. Feel strongly enough about these bills, then use the above links to see how you can take action.
- 2) Learn more about the Lame Duck and how you can get involved in influencing the Ohio General Assembly in a [meeting hosted by the Ohio ACLU](#) on Thursday, November 21st from 6:30-8.
- 3) If you find yourself more concerned about the attacks against marginalized groups that will almost certainly be levied by the federal government beginning in January, then I would recommend that you look into the American Civil Liberties Union nationally at [aclu.org](#). The organization fought against Trump's illegal policies more than 400 times in his first term and already has a plan for his second. As I'm sure you are aware, their historic fight for civil rights in the face of racism, misogyny and xenophobia is legendary.