

GOV. JUSTICE SAYS SENATE MADE MISTAKE BY PASSING EDUCATION REFORM BILL

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. ([WCHS/WVAH Reports](#)) — West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice said the Senate made a big mistake by amending and then passing an education reform bill.

In an interview on MetroNews' Talkline on Tuesday, he said he wishes teachers would have waited to strike, but said he supports their right to exercise their voice.

On Monday evening, the Senate on a vote of 18-16 passed an amended version of the education bill that bundles together school employee pay raises with other education reforms.

The Senate's amended education bill now heads to the House, which could approve or reject the measure. If the House rejects the bill, it would go to a conference committee of House and Senate members to try to hammer out an agreement.

The controversial education reform bill has been batted back and forth between the House and Senate since Senate Bill 451 was initially passed. Some of the more controversial portions of that measure have been abandoned. The legislation no longer includes a non-severability clause that would nix all of the components of the bill if one aspect was successfully challenged in court or paycheck protection, which would require school employees to annually sign up for union dues.



In the Senate's latest education bill passed Monday, there are some key differences on what was passed by the House. The Senate's amended version calls for seven public charter schools, with two new ones permitted per year. One of the schools would serve at-risk kids. The West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind in Romney would have the option of converting to a charter school.

The Senate also included 1,000 education savings accounts for special needs and bullied students, specifying that the money could only be used for tuition and tutors.

Meanwhile, the House's version called for public charter schools to be a pilot program that would be capped at two schools. The House did not include education savings accounts in its version. [WCHS/WVAH Reports](#)