



January 2024

Dear AFT Massachusetts leaders and members:

I am writing to alert you to a divisive and harmful bill pending in the Massachusetts Legislature that is being heavily promoted by a New York-based and billionaire-funded group named Educators for Excellence (E4E).

We are calling it the E4E “Attack on Teacher Rights” bill. Technically, the bill is [H.583](#) in the House and [S.340](#) in the Senate, where it has only one sponsor, a sign of its meager support. .



The bill has little likelihood of passing the Legislature, and we have told E4E directly that we strenuously oppose it. However, E4E persists in aggressively promoting their proposal with educators, often using inaccurate and misleading characterizations of the bill.

To combat this misinformation, AFT Massachusetts has prepared the bullet points below to inform you about the E4E bill in advance of possible E4E-organizing efforts in your community. If E4E does show up in your district, please circulate this letter and the bullet points among your membership. Please also call AFT Massachusetts immediately to let us know that E4E is active in your community.

In solidarity,

Beth Kontos

President, AFT Massachusetts

The Truth About the E4E “Attack on Teacher Rights” Bill

Recruiting and retaining more educators of color should be a top priority of the Legislature and school districts, and AFT Massachusetts strongly supports genuine efforts to do so.

E4E claims their bill ([H.583](#) / [S.340](#)) would boost diversity efforts by giving school administrators more discretionary authority in a layoff situation. But a closer look shows that the E4E bill would harm both the teaching profession generally and diversity efforts specifically by weakening the “professional teacher status” (PTS) rights that educators of all backgrounds rely on, including educators of color.

PTS rights – earned after three years of continuous employment in a district – are important because they protect educators from arbitrary and capricious dismissal, and hence protect teachers’ voice in decision-making.

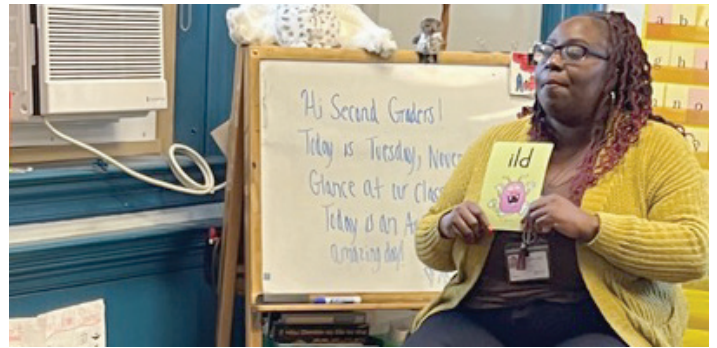
The back side of this flyer explains the flaws and harms of the E4E bill in greater depth.

The Truth About the E4E “Attack on Teacher Rights” Bill

All of E4E’s claims about their bill fall apart when subjected to scrutiny. The truth is as follows:

- **The E4E bill is a management rights bill, not a diversity bill.** The bill has little or nothing to do with either educator diversity or quality and would in fact undermine those goals by making all educators, including educators of color, more vulnerable to whims and biases of school administrators. The bill creates numerous “exemptions” that school administrators can use at their discretion in a layoff situation to override educators’ PTS rights and undermine their job security; higher-cost and outspoken educators would be particularly vulnerable. The bill’s exemptions, such as working in a “hard to staff” school, are vaguely defined, largely unrelated to either diversity or quality, and rife with Management discretion.
- **The E4E bill does not protect early-career educators from dismissal either.** That’s because the bill retains a school district’s authority to non-renew a non-PTS educator without giving a reason. Thus, the so-called “protections” for newer educators in the bill are meaningless: Whether an educator is retained from one year to the next would still be the school district’s decision.
- **Weakening teacher rights would hurt students.** PTS status is vital to safeguarding teacher voice in school decision-making; it allows educators to advocate for their students without fear of reprisal. Diminishing teachers’ voices would harm the students they serve.
- **A recent letter to *The Boston Globe* from a group of Boston educators exposes the E4E bill for what it is – a pretext for the eradication of hard-won teacher rights. These educators write in part:** *The legislation, though framed as a means to foster educator diversity in Massachusetts, threatens to dismantle the due process system that safeguards the rights and job security of educators. Without these protections, educators of color would be even more vulnerable to the whims and sometimes not-so-subtle bias of administrators. Passage of the bill would undermine our recruitment pipeline while claiming to advance something we all believe in. We stand firmly against any legislation that exploits the cause of diversity to erode the rights and protections of educators, particularly educators of color.*
- **Retired UMass professor Maurice Cunningham exposes the true intent of E4E and their funding sources in a [recent blog post](#).** He writes in part: *E4E is a billionaire funded “teacher” house operation intended to undermine real democratic unions. From 2017-2021 E4E took in \$5,495,000 from the Waltons, some of which probably found its way to Boston.*
- **The E4E bill is a distraction from the genuine efforts we need to diversify our educator workforce.** Real solutions include more scholarships for individuals training to become teachers; more investment in para-professional-to-teacher pipeline programs and other paid teacher-apprenticeship programs; and concerted efforts to create the working conditions (such as mentoring and induction programs for new teachers and competitive compensation) that will retain educators of color (and educators generally).

Real solutions also include establishing alternative non-MTEL routes to educator certification and passing the Educator Diversity Act ([S. 311](#)), which AFT MA strongly endorses. We look forward to working with all legislators and educators who share our commitment to enacting proven strategies for diversifying the educator workforce. Misguided schemes such as the E4E bill should be soundly rejected.



For more information about the E4E “Attack on Teacher Rights” bill, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera.

