Stephanie Bice voted time and again to hurt public school children. She voted to cut funding for public education. Her votes lead to the largest teacher walkout in Oklahoma history. Bice claims that she protects teachers but then when she thought no one was paying attention, she voted to cut teacher benefits and health insurance and to pay teachers less than the state minimum. Stephanie Bice stands with Mary Fallin and her special interest donors, not with our teachers and students.

The Oklahoman: Bice Backed “Deep Cuts To State Services, Including Education, During The Second Term Of Gov. Mary Fallin.” “As Republicans work to tie Horn to Pelosi, Democratic-aligned groups are slamming Bice for backing deep cuts to state services, including education, during the second term of former Gov. Mary Fallin.” [Oklahoman, 10/12/20]

The Oklahoman: Bice “Did Vote Along With The Senate Republican Majority To Cut Common And Higher Education.” “In a discussion about education cuts and former Gov. Mary Fallin, Bice said it was “categorically false” that she had voted against education funding as stated in several political ads. She said that she had voted for two teacher pay raises, one in 2018 and another in 2019. But Bice, who was first elected to the state Senate in 2014, did vote along with the Senate Republican majority to cut common and higher education after the state’s economy crashed along with oil prices.” [Oklahoman, 10/16/20]

Bice Voted For SB 860, Oklahoma’s General Appropriations Bill For 2018. Bice voted for Oklahoma’s General Appropriations Bill for 2018: “General appropriations; making appropriations to various agencies; providing for certain transfers of funds.” [Oklahoma State Senate, SB 860, RCS 786, 5/24/17]

Governor Mary Fallin Signed The 2018 Budget That Held Education Funding Flat And Denied Raising Teacher Pay. “Gov. Mary Fallin signed a $6.8 billion spending bill on Wednesday that slashes the budgets of most Oklahoma agencies by about 5 percent over the objection of critics who say the measure may be unconstitutional and is likely to face a legal challenge. Fallin signed the general appropriations bill, along with more than a dozen other measures approved by the Legislature in the last days of the legislative session that ended Friday. The bill maintains flat funding or provides slight boosts in appropriations to 15 ‘core-mission’ state agencies such as the Department of Human Services, Health Care Authority, prisons and public schools. […] Fallin also proposed an increase in teacher pay, which was strongly supported by the governor and the House, but faced too much opposition in the GOP-controlled Senate.” [Associated Press, 6/1/17]

Bice Voted For HB 2242, Oklahoma’s General Appropriations Bill For 2016. Bice voted for HB2242, “Appropriations; general appropriations; purposes; effective dates.” “An Act relating to general appropriations for the expenses of various agencies of the executive, legislative and judicial departments of the state; defining terms; stating legislative intent; summarizing appropriated funds; summarizing dedicated funds; summarizing interagency funds; summarizing other funds; providing totals; making appropriations to the State Board of Education, […] $8,213,441,911.” [Oklahoma Legislature, HB2242, 5/22/15]

The FY 2016 Bill Included A Nearly $31 Million Decrease In Education Funds From The Previous Fiscal Year. HB2242 included a $30,699,189 decrease in appropriated education funds from FY 2015. [Oklahoma Legislature, HB2242, 5/20/15]

Bice Voted For SB 1922, Oklahoma’s General Appropriations Bill For 2021. In May 2020, Bice voted for “General appropriations; making appropriations to various agencies; providing for certain transfers of funds; Effective date.” [Oklahoma Legislature, SB1922, 5/13/20]

The FY 2021 Budget Reduced Education Funding By 2.5%, Or $78 Million, Resulting In State School Aid Per Student Being 31% Less Than In FY 2008. “The budget reduces the largest agency, the State Department of Education, by 2.5 percent ($78 million). Adjusted for inflation, state school aid per student in FY 2021, is 31 percent less than in FY 2008.” [Oklahoma Policy Institute, 6/2/20]
The Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Bill That Reduced Funding To The Teacher’s Retirement System. “Earlier in the day Wednesday, Stitt announced that he vetoed House Bills 2741, 2742 and 2743. He said House Bills 2741 and 2742 would reduce the percentage of revenue appropriated to the teachers’ retirement system, the Oklahoma firefighter’s pension and retirement fund, the police pension and retirement system and the law enforcement fund while increasing revenue appropriated to the 1017 Education Fund.” [KOCO, 5/20/20]

Quartz HEADLINE: “Charted: The Disastrous Economic Decisions Behind Oklahoma’s Teachers Strike.” [Quartz, 4/3/18]

Teachers From Oklahoma Walked Out Of Their Classrooms To Protest Huge Cuts To State Education Funding. “Thousands of US public school teachers from Oklahoma walked out of classrooms yesterday to protest huge cuts to state education funding. They’re protesting what some call a “crisis” in the Oklahoma economy and political system, which stripped funding from school supplies and salaries while giving huge tax cuts to corporations.” [Quartz, 4/3/18]

Thousands Of Teachers From Around Oklahoma Protested At The State Capitol For Low Teacher Pay And Years Of Cuts To School Funding. “Thousands of teachers returned Tuesday to the Oklahoma Capitol in Oklahoma City to protest low teacher pay and years of cuts to school funding, continuing a strike launched Monday. Nearly 200 of the state’s 550 school districts remained closed, according to a tally on the Oklahoma Teacher Walkout Facebook group. An estimated 30,000 teachers and educators had gathered at the capitol on Monday, joined by hundreds of state employees.” [Vox, 4/3/18]

The Teacher Walk Out Was The Largest Protest Of State Funding For Public Education In Recent Years. “Thousands of Oklahoma teachers swarmed the Capitol on Monday for what turned out to be the largest protest of state funding for public education in recent years.” [Tulsa World, 8/3/18]

Bice Claimed She Was Proud To Stand Up For Teachers. “‘I was proud to stand up for our teachers and our schools, to give them the pay raise that they deserve,’ Bice says in her latest ad in the GOP runoff campaign in the 5th Congressional District.” [Oklahoman, 8/13/20]

2016: Bice Debated In Favor Of Legislation That Would Have Permitted School Districts To Opt Out Of Minimum Salary Requirements, Providing Health Insurance And The Teachers’ Retirement System. “The measure would let local districts, teachers and the State Board of Education decide if the district has to abide by certain regulations, such as the minimum salary schedule; participate in the Teachers’ Retirement System; and provide health insurance, among other things. […] Sen. Stephanie Bice, R-Edmond, debated for the measure.” [Tulsa World, 3/11/16]

See primary source document, “20160311 Tulsa World”

Bice Voted For SB 1187 Which Removed Requirements From The School District Empowerment
Bice: “This Bill Gives That Local Control Back To The Very People That Are Most Invested In Their Community And Schools, And That Is The Parents And The Children And The Residents.” “The measure would let local districts, teachers and the State Board of Education decide if the district has to abide by certain regulations, such as the minimum salary schedule; participate in the Teachers’ Retirement System; and provide health insurance, among other things. […] Sen. Stephanie Bice, R-Edmond, debated for the measure. ‘This bill gives that local control back to the very people that are most invested in their community and schools, and that is the parents and the children and the residents of that district,’ Bice said. ‘It is perplexing to me to understand why there is so much opposition to this particular piece of legislation.’” [Tulsa World, 3/11/16]

Bice: “It Is Perplexing To Me To Understand Why There Is So Much Opposition To This Particular Piece Of Legislation.” “The measure would let local districts, teachers and the State Board of Education decide if the district has to abide by certain regulations, such as the minimum salary schedule; participate in the Teachers’ Retirement System; and provide health insurance, among other things. […] Sen. Stephanie Bice, R-Edmond, debated for the measure. ‘This bill gives that local control back to the very people that are most invested in their community and schools, and that is the parents and the children and the residents of that district,’ Bice said. ‘It is perplexing to me to understand why there is so much opposition to this particular piece of legislation.’” [Tulsa World, 3/11/16]

Senate passes bill that could make minimum pay, insurance optional at schools
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Body
OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Senate on Thursday passed an optional education deregulation bill that critics say could result in lower pay for teachers.


Jolley said the measure would provide schools with flexibility.

The measure would let local districts, teachers and the State Board of Education decide if the district has to abide by certain regulations, such as the minimum salary schedule; participate in the Teachers’ Retirement System; and provide health insurance, among other things.

Jolley said that under the measure, schools that opted to do so and received permission would be able to hire adjunct and retired teachers without having to pay them the minimum salary schedule or participate in the retirement system.

Locally elected schools boards, teachers and the State Board of Education would have to approve the plan, Jolley said.

“Everybody sits at the table to agree to this,” Jolley said. “It is not forced upon anybody without them having a voice in the process.”

Sen. J.J. Dossett, D-Owasso, is a former teacher and the most recent addition to the Senate after winning a special election.

“It concerns me that it is possible we could, according to this piece of legislation, pay full-time teachers less than what is required to be paid,” Dossett said.

Jolley said that decision would be up to the local district, teachers and the State Board of Education. The bill is not designed to get around the minimum teacher salary schedule, Jolley said, but to allow for more options.

Jolley said administrators are concerned that red tape and regulations are getting in the way of educating students. The bill attempts to address those concerns, he said.
Oklahoma Education Association President Alicia Priest said she was disappointed that the measure passed in the Senate.

“Passage of this bill will hurt students because it fails to hold all schools to the highest standards,” Priest said in a statement. “Instead, it allows for shortcuts that weaken our education system all because our state refuses to properly fund our schools.”

Sen. Ron Sharp, R-Shawnee, a former teacher, questioned the type of adjunct teachers such a proposal would attract and questioned whether they would be effective in the classroom.

In rural Oklahoma, the adjunct instructor hired by the district might have only a high school education, be paid a fraction of the salary and be assigned to teach Advanced Placement English, Sharp said.

“This is going to upset the entire apple cart of public education,” Sharp said.

Sen. Stephanie Bice, R-Edmond, debated for the measure.

“This bill gives that local control back to the very people that are most invested in their community and schools, and that is the parents and the children and the residents of that district,” Bice said. “It is perplexing to me to understand why there is so much opposition to this particular piece of legislation.”

Dossett said the state needs to quit trying to find ways around properly funding education. He said the measure provides the opportunity to de-professionalize teachers.

“Whenever you hear the term empowerment and flexibility, that means we don’t have the money and it is up to you to figure it out,” said Senate Minority Leader John Sparks, D-Norman.