



Legislative Update

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CAPITOL ACTION DAYS RETURN

MNEA Capitol Action Days returned for the 2017 session on Feb. 15 when MNEA members from Governance District 10 came to the Capitol. Capitol Action Days allow planned, face-to-face contact with legislators throughout the session.

For the dates that MNEA Board of Directors members selected for your Governance District and other details and contact information, please visit:

<http://www.mnea.org/Missouri/CapitolActionDays.aspx>

If you are not able to attend on these designated days, feel free to contact Sandy Smith (sandy.smith@mnea.org) to arrange to attend a different Capitol Action Day.

WORKPLACE ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading Vote) to SB 45 (Romine) on Feb. 16 by a party-line vote of 25-7. The bill revises arbitration agreements between employers and at-will employees. Missouri NEA is concerned that the bill may allow employers to pressure employees to accept unfavorable arbitration terms that reduce the ability to hold employers accountable for discriminatory acts.

RECERTIFICATION AND OTHER ANTI-UNION ATTACKS

The House Economic Development Committee heard HB 238 (Wiemann) on Feb. 14. The bill imposes a number of onerous and problematic provisions relating to public union representation. The bill mandates automatic recertification elections every year for every public sector bargaining unit, limits economic factors in contracts to one year, requires all documents in the bargaining process to be public documents and imposes an exhaustive set of financial and other record-keeping requirements on public employee unions. The Association opposes the bill.

DISCRIMINATION AND WHISTLEBLOWER

The House Special Committee on Litigation Reform heard HB 550 (McGaugh), HB 552 (Austin) and HB 676 (Plocher) on Feb. 13. All three bills are substantially similar and would make significant

changes to the state's anti-discrimination law in employment, disability and housing. The bills also limit the state's "whistle-blower" protections. The Association believes these changes will make it harder to hold employers and their agents responsible for improper acts of discrimination. Missouri NEA believes that unfair, discriminatory treatment in the workplace should remain unlawful and opposes the bills.

VIRTUAL COURSE ACCESS

The Senate Education Committee heard three bills relating to virtual course access on Feb. 14: SB 238 (Onder), SB 327 (Romine) and SB 360 (Hoskins). SB 238 and SB 327 are similar bills to establish a new course access program by revising the current MoVIP. The program is available for students enrolled full-time in public school. The Association believes that virtual courses can play an important role for schools and students, and supports both SB 238 and SB 327.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In addition to hearing bills relating to virtual education, the committee voted to approve two bills heard previously:

SCS/SB 188 (Munzlinger) to allow students enrolled in virtual institutions to participate in the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program.

SCS/SB 328 (Romine) enacting provisions relating to approval of various higher education degree programs.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee cancelled hearings on all bills scheduled for its Feb. 13 meeting, but voted to approve five bills heard previously:

HCS/HB 138 (Spencer) to establish a new course access program by revising the current MoVIP. The program is available for students enrolled full-time in public school. The Association believes that virtual courses can play an important role for schools and students, and supports the bill. The committee reconsidered the amendments adopted last week and voted the bill out with a revised technical amendment regarding the enrollment process, but did not include a change to reduce the maximum funding allowed per course under the original bill.

HB 97 (Swan) to establish a visiting scholars certificate of license to teach. The temporary certificate is targeted to staffing in business-education partnerships such as Northland CAPS in the Kansas City area and GOCAPS in the Springfield area. The Association believes the bill may help recruit teachers into these emerging, specialized programs.

HCS/HB 324 (Neely) to specify that no school board shall suspend a pupil for an act or acts of truancy. The HCS limits the bill to block out-of-school suspensions, while allowing in-school suspensions based on student truancy.

HB 643 (Wood) to modify the calculation of the full-time equivalent average daily attendance of summer school students. The bill would reduce state aid for summer school attendance in those districts with a regular school term longer than the minimum number of 1044 hours.

HCS/HB 677 (Rowland) to allow a school district to use a calendar based on hours of attendance rather than hours and days of attendance, if the minimum number of hours is at least 1,044 hours of actual pupil attendance. The HCS also removes current restrictions on the maximum length of the school day. The Association supports local control of school calendars and went on record in support of the original bill.

HOUSE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The committee heard two bills on Feb. 15:

HB 680 (Travis Fitzwater) to establish adult high schools to be operated by a Missouri nonprofit organization.

HB 799 (Lauer) to allow teachers to count hours spent in externships with local businesses as professional development hours.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

The House Transportation Committee heard two bills pertaining to school bus drivers on Feb.15:

HB 631 (Redmon) to modify medical endorsement requirements for school bus drivers.

HB 560 (Redmon) to require school bus drivers who are seventy years of age or older to complete the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Skills Test and the Driving Test on an annual basis.

MNEA LEGISLATIVE FORUMS

Missouri NEA's new regional legislative events provide a chance for members to build relationships with area legislators and support their understanding of MNEA priorities and education issues. Plan to attend and invite fellow members, administrators and school board members who would enjoy and benefit from a discussion regarding support for public education!

PLEASE REGISTER NOW for your regional MNEA Legislative Forum at

<https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/PoliticalAction/5.aspx>

Be sure to click through the "RSVP now" link for your event and then "Send RSVP" to register. For additional information contact Sandy Smith (sandy.smith@mnea.org).