



Legislative Update

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www.mnea.org

ACTION ALERT: CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION BILL

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee met on February 9, but postponed the vote on HB 634 (Roeber). The bill would allow charter schools to operate in any district in the state. The bill was heard last week in House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. The sponsor distributed a HCS version at the meeting. The HCS would limit the expansion to St. Louis and Jackson County and allow charter school open enrollment in those counties.

The Association believes the charter school law must be transformed to ensure that charter schools function as team players in a single public school system, not as individual, privately-run schools that divert public funds without accountability to or control by local communities. However, the Speaker's office is pressuring the Committee to vote to approve the bill with only expansion and without the necessary reforms. If approved by the committee, the bill could be taken up by quickly by the House.

The Association opposes expansion of charter schools until such time as the law is revised to ensure that all charter schools are required to meet the standards of accountability, transparency and respect for the rights of students, parents and staff as are applicable to traditional public schools.

ACTION NEEDED: PLEASE CALL, WRITE OR USE THE LINK BELOW TO SEND AN E-MAIL TO URGE YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE TO OPPOSE HB 634.

<http://www.capwiz.com/nea/mo/issues/alert/?alertid=75342626&type=ST>

HOUSE PASSES PAYCHECK DECEPTION BILL

The House gave final approval (Third Reading vote) on February 9 by a vote of 95-60. The bill will now move to the Senate for consideration.

The bill applies to all public labor organizations and requires annual authorization for payroll deduction of member dues and annual authorization for member contributions of dues or fees for political action. The bill also imposes federal-style financial reporting mandates on both statewide public unions and all affiliated local organizations, regardless of size. The Association strongly opposes HB 251.

BUDGET

The Senate Appropriations Committee met on February 8 to hear a presentation of the Governor's Budget Recommendations on public debt, administration, employee benefits, real estate and capital improvements.

The House Budget Committee met on February 8 to hear presentations on the budgets of the State Auditor and department budgets for transportation, revenue and public safety.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee voted to approve two bills on February 9:

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 HCS makes several technical provisions regarding the enrollment process and reduces the maximum funding allowed per course. The Association believes that virtual courses can play an important role for schools and students, and supports the bill. The bill was approved by a vote of 10-2.

HCS/HB 441 (Corlew) to grant greater freedom for student journalists. This year's version includes anti-retaliation provisions to protect student communications sponsors and other staff from possible retaliation by boards or administration for granting students greater editorial latitude as provided by the bill. The HCS revised the anti-retaliation provisions. The Association supports the bill. The bill was approved by a vote of 10-1.

The committee heard several bills on February 6:

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.

HB 324 (Neely) to specify that no school board shall suspend a pupil for an act or acts of truancy. The committee indicated that the bill is likely to be limited to out-of-school suspensions.

HB 357 (Bahr) to limit the use of Small Schools Grant funding to the specific purposes listed in law.

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.

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 Association supports local control of school calendars and went on record in support of the bill.

The committee also voted to approve several bills on February 6:

HB 248 (Travis Fitzwater) to establish a statewide STEM career awareness program.

HCS/HB 253 (Swan) regarding the Career and Technical Education Advisory Council. The HCS requires the council to review, update and maintain a list of offerings, including industry certifications, professional licenses and competency assessments. The Association supports the bill.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee met on February 7 to hear two bills:

SB 249 (Kehoe) to allow the Gasconade R-II school district, which crosses county boundaries, to use the county that yields the highest dollar value modifier under the school foundation formula.

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

SCHOOL RETIREMENT

The House Pensions Committee heard several bills on February 6, including:

1) HB 304 (Pike) to create a divorce popup for PSRS and other school retirees, provided the divorce decree grants sole retention by the retired person of all rights in the retirement allowance.

2) HB 305 (Pike) to provide that PSRS retirees who are teaching part time in school districts and employed by a private agency, such as KELLY SERVICES, must also abide by the 550 restriction. The Association supports the bill.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee met on February 8 to hear HB 758 (Cookson). The bill would enact provisions relating to approval of various higher education degree programs. The bill is similar to SB 328 (Romine) and reflects an agreement on the process for approval of programs among the CBHE and two-year and four-year public institutions in the state. Due to budget constraints, the process will emphasize collaboration among existing institutions and programs rather than the creation of entirely new programs. The committee voted to approve the bill following the completion of the hearing.

The committee also voted to approve several bills heard on February 1:

HCS/HB 411 (Lightenegger) to allow students enrolled in virtual institutions to participate in the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program. The HCS version includes the State Technical College in the provisions of the bill.

HB 472 (Smith) to require a higher education institution to disclose its unaccredited status to students before enrollment.

HB 599 (Hansen) to modify the A+ Schools Program by removing the requirement that the student's attendance of public high school occur in the three years immediately prior to graduation. The Association supports the bill. The bill was approved with an emergency clause to allow it to go into effect by the end of the school year.

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS RETURN NEXT WEEK!

MNEA Capitol Action Days return for the 2017 session on February 15 when MNEA members from Governance Districts 2 and 10 will come to the Capitol. Capitol Action Days allow planned, face-to-face contact with legislators throughout the session.

NOTE: Visitors to the Capitol are now required to go through security checkpoints, including metal detectors and inspection of items. Please allow extra time for this process. There are two visitor security checkpoints: the "carriage" entrance under the Grand Staircase on the South side of the Capitol and the West Capitol Entrance.

Capitol Action Days will generally be on Wednesdays starting in February and continuing through the end of session in May. For details and contact information, please visit:

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

Your MNEA calendar includes the dates that MNEA Board of Directors members selected for your Governance District. 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. Each Capitol Action Day will start with a briefing at 10:00 a.m. to provide you with the most up-to-date information.

Typical Capitol Action Day Agenda

10:00-10:30 a.m. Meet for briefing in House Hearing Room 4 (in basement of Capitol)

10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Visit with your legislator/floor debate

1:30 p.m. Debrief with Mark Jones or Otto Fajen on 3rd floor of Capitol rotunda