



Legislative Update

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www.mnea.org

REGISTER NOW TO ATTEND YOUR MNEA LEGISLATIVE FORUM

KANSAS CITY FORUM TAKES PLACE NEXT WEEK ON JANUARY 25!

Missouri NEA's regional legislative events get underway next week with the Kansas City Legislative Forum on January 25. These 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).

PAYCHECK AND ANTI-CB BILLS

The House Economic Development Committee heard HB 1413 (Taylor) on January 17. 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 opposes HB 1413.

The Senate General Laws Committee heard SB 602 (Onder) on January 17. The bill applies to public unions and requires annual authorization for payroll deduction for dues and any deduction of fees for political action. The bill also imposes a number of onerous and problematic provisions relating to public union representation and collective bargaining. The bill mandates automatic recertification elections for every public sector bargaining unit, imposes numerous restrictions on bargained agreements, 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.

TAX CREDIT-STYLE VOUCHERS (EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS)

The Senate Government Reform Committee heard SB 612 (Koenig) on January 17. The bill creates a new 100% state tax credit capped at \$50 million per year for taxpayer contributions to third-party organizations that will use some of the proceeds to fund accounts that parents can use to pay private school tuition and other expenses for their students. The Association opposes this and similar proposals to divert public funds to private schools not subject to the same standards of accountability, transparency and respect for the rights of students, staff and parents as apply to public schools.

WORKPLACE ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS

The House Special Committee on Litigation Reform heard HB 1512 (Corlew) on January 16. The bill changes the Uniform Arbitration Act regarding agreements between employers and at-will employees. Missouri NEA believes the bill may allow employers to pressure employees to accept unfavorable arbitration terms that reduce the ability to hold employers accountable for discriminatory acts.

BIG TAX CUT BILLS

The Senate Ways and Means heard two tax-related bills on January 16: SB 611 (Koenig) and SB 617 (Eigel). Both bills make numerous changes to tax law, including reduction or elimination of the state income tax, placing limits on certain existing tax credits and enacting the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement. While each bill contains some tax law changes supported by the Association, both bills would significantly reduce state revenues. The Association believes the bills would significantly reduce the state's capacity to invest in public education and other vital services and strongly opposes both bills.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee met twice during the week. The committee met first on January 16 and voted to approve several bills heard the previous week.

The committee spent the most time considering HB 1408 (Spencer). The bill would establish a new course access program by revising the current MoVIP. The committee adopted several amendments, including revisions to the reporting, financing and course approval portions of the bill, and eventually combined the adopted amendments into a House Committee Substitute or HCS version of the bill. The Association believes that virtual courses can play an important role for schools and students, and supports the bill.

The following bills were approved unanimously and without amendment:

HB 1371 (Sommer) to require any district with a state-approved gifted education program to have a process that allows parents or guardians to appeal a determination that their child does not qualify for gifted services. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1421 (Pfautsch) to require each school district to establish a policy on acceleration and districts with gifted education programs to establish appeal procedures. The Association supports the bill. The

bill was approved as a Consent Bill and will go to a special calendar. If taken up by the House as a Consent Bill, it will not be subject to amendment on the House floor.

HB 1660 (Swan) to create the Career and Technical Education Certification (CTEC) Program. The bill requires the CTEC Council to approve appropriate CTE certifications, in collaboration with districts and employers. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1665 (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.

The committee met again on January 17 to hear two bills:

HB 1606 (Gannon) to provide financial aid for first time test takers of the HISET high school equivalency exam. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1940 (Corlew) to grant greater freedom for student journalists. The bill 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 Association supports the bill.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on January 17:

HB 1267 (Lichtenegger) to change the law by adding virtual institutions to the "Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program".

HB 1268 (Lichtenegger) regarding dental faculty permits.

HB 1528 (Dohrman) to revise requirements pertaining to the civics achievement examination required for higher education students.

HB 1275 (Kendrick) to create a student work-study program.

The committee also voted to approve HB 1744 (Hansen). The bill would 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.

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