



Legislative Update

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www.mnea.org

SIGN UP FOR MID-MISSOURI LEGISLATIVE FORUM!

Missouri NEA's regional legislative events continue with the Mid-Missouri Legislative Forum on March 8.

The 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 the Mid-Missouri MNEA Legislative Forum at

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

HOUSE CREATES SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE GOVERNOR

The House approved HR 5565 (Barnes) on March 1. The resolution creates the Special Investigative Committee on Oversight. The committee shall investigate allegations against Governor Greitens and report back to the House of Representatives within 40 days. The resolution also includes several specific rules to govern the committee's hearings and investigations.

SENATE COMMITTEE HEARS HOUSE PAYCHECK BILL

The Senate General Laws Committee heard HB 1413 (Taylor) on February 28. The Association strongly opposes HB 1413. 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.

SENATE PERFECTS VIRTUAL SCHOOL BILL

The Senate gave first round approval (Perfection vote) to SS/SCS/SBs 603, 576 and 898 (Onder) on February 27. The bill would establish a new virtual course access program by revising the current MoVIP. The Association believes that virtual courses can play an important role for schools and students, and supports the bill.

The SS makes several changes to ensure that the bill remains consistent with several important features of the existing MoVIP program. The Senate adopted several technical amendments, including language to ensure that medically fragile students may be exempted from the prior semester public school attendance requirement and adding the option for the school board to consider appeals of denied course requests. Sen. Munzlinger also amended his SB 682 to allow students enrolled in virtual institutions to participate in the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program.

“INNOVATION” SCHOOLS

The House Rules - Administrative Oversight committee approved HB 2200 (Rhoads) on February 26. This action will allow the bill to be placed on the House calendar for debate. The bill contains several components, but the “innovation” schools portion would have a profound and negative effect on teacher certification, tenure, retirement and salary schedules. The Association opposes the bill in its current form.

SENATE PASSES STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BILL

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SB 695 (Wallingford) on March 1. The bill requires the Governor to appoint a teacher representative to the State Board of Education. The Association supports having the concerns of educators presented in State Board discussions.

Sen. Romine amended his SB 794 onto SB 695. SB 794 enacts several provisions to clarify and stabilize the process for appointment of members of the State Board of Education. SB 794 requires the Governor to inform the Senate of any appointments to state boards or commissions made while the General Assembly is not in session. Only those State Board of Education members that have received the advice and consent of the Senate may be counted to establish a quorum or approve any official actions of the State Board. The Association supports SB 794.

COMPUTER SCIENCE INSTRUCTION BILLS

The House gave first-round approval (Perfection vote) to HCS/HB 1623 (Fitzwater) on February 28. The Senate gave first-round approval to SS/SCS/SBs 894 and 921 (Libla), a similar bill, on March 1. The bills would establish a statewide STEM career awareness program and enact several new provisions of law related to computer science. The bills also require creation of a work group to create standards for computer science instruction, add student flexibility to count one computer science credit as either a science, math or practical art graduation credit and create a fund to support grants for teacher professional development for computer science instruction.

The House adopted an amendment to HB 1623 requiring that students be notified of college entrance requirements for math credits and that students must still complete all required end of course exam requirements for current graduation requirements. SB 894 contains similar language. The Association supports the provisions in the bill to create academic standards for computer science and provide support for professional development for computer science instruction.

CONCEALED WEAPONS ON CAMPUS

The House General Laws spent many hours on February 26 to hear HB 1936 (Taylor). The bill would take away local control of college and university governing boards to regulate concealed weapons on campus and allow any person, including students and staff, with a concealed carry permit to carry concealed weapons on campus. The Association believes that all students and education employees

should be allowed to learn and work in a safe environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons and opposes the bill.

MINIMUM WAGE

The Senate Small Business and Industry Committee met on February 27 to hear three bills relating to raising the state's minimum wage:

SB 637 (Chappelle-Nadal) raises the state minimum wage to \$15, while SB 680 (Hummel) and SB 801 (Nasheed) would raise the state minimum wage to \$12 over several years. The Association supports all three bills.

SENATE PASSES BRAILLE BILL

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SB 681 (Hummel) on March 1. The bill provides for student instruction in Braille reading and writing for certain students as part of an individualized education plan.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on February 27:

HB 1665 (Swan) to authorize the granting of a visiting scholars certificate to teachers in public schools. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1465 (Cookson) to modify provisions relating to degree offerings at public institutions of higher education.

SB 728 (Wallingford) to allow children who attend early childhood education programs that are under contracts with districts or charter schools to be included in the average daily attendance of the district or charter school.

SB 759 (Schatz) to prohibit public higher education institutions from raising the tuition rate charged to Missouri resident undergraduate and graduate students for four years from the date the student enrolls at the institution.

The committee was scheduled to hear SB 684 (Chappelle-Nadal), but the bill was not heard. The bill would create new sub-districts for school board elections in certain school districts in St. Louis County.

In addition to hearing bills, the committee voted to approve the following bills:

SB 682 (Munzlinger) to allow students enrolled in virtual institutions to participate in the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program.

SB 640 (Sater) to allow students to possess and self-apply sunscreen at school without a parent or physician's approval.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee met on February 26 to hear several bills:

HB 1348 (Black) to specify that DESE shall handle funds from career and technical student organizations.

HB 1387 (Spencer) to exempt school districts from compliance with certain statutes in the event of withholding of funds by the Governor. The bill would suspend the requirement to spend 1% of state aid for teacher professional development activities as determined by the local professional development committee. The Association believes the expenditure requirement makes an important and necessary statement in support of the profession of teaching in Missouri and opposes the bill.

HB 1861 (Dohrman) to require superintendents and assistant superintendents to be employed by school districts only by written contracts and to limit buy-out clauses to a single year.

HB 2129 (Cookson) to require each student to have thirty minutes of instruction regarding decisions on organ donation during high school. The Association supports the bill.

HB2192 (Redmon) to modify the bonding requirement for the treasurer of a seven-director school district.

HB 2411 (Pike) to create new provisions relating to school librarians. The bill requires districts to establish library and media programs.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on February 28, including:

HB 1474 (Brattin) to eliminate tenure for all new employees at public colleges and universities. The Association believes that all education employees should have substantive due process rights and strongly opposes the bill.

HB 1811 (Smith) to require a higher education institution to disclose its unaccredited status to students before enrollment.

HB 2348 (Davis) to change the cap on tuition charged at public institutions of higher education. The bill would give institutions more flexibility to adjust tuition to maintain program quality and opportunities for students in an era of declining state funding. The Association supports the bill.

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