



Legislative Update

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Number 12
April 5, 2019
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SENATE DEBATES CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION

The Senate debated SS/SCS/SB 292 (Eigel) on April 2 for over eleven hours but did not bring the bill to a vote. The Senate appears likely to take the bill up again at some time next week or soon after. The bill would allow charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in other parts of the state. The Association strongly opposes SS/SCS/SB 292.

IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY DONE SO, please call, write or use the link below to send an e-mail to urge your State Senator and State Representative to oppose the charter school expansion bills. The message can be edited, and your message will have **GREATER IMPACT** if you add your own comments.

Charter school policy is an unfamiliar issue for many legislators, particularly those who were recently elected, so the Association hopes that many of these advocacy messages will serve as the beginning of a dialog that helps legislators fully understand the Association's position and guidance.

https://actionnetwork.org/letters/hcshb-581-charter-school-campaign-feb-2019?source=direct_link&

The Association's position statement on charter schools can be found here:

https://www.mnea.org/Uploads/Public/Documents/News/Positions/CharterSchools_PositionPaper_2017.pdf

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

MNEA Capitol Action Days continued on April 3 when members from Governance Districts 9 & 11 visited the Capitol. Capitol Action Days will continue through the end of session in May.

PLEASE NOTE THE LOCATION CHANGE: MEET AT MNEA HEADQUARTERS AT 10 A.M. FOR THE BRIEFING!

For details and contact information, please visit:

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

WORKING AFTER RETIREMENT REVISION PASSES LEGISLATURE

The Senate approved HB 77 (Black) on April 4. The bill is now Truly Agreed To (passed by both chambers in the same form) and will be reprinted in final form and sent to Governor Parson for his approval or veto.

HB 77 would undo the effect of a change passed last session, SB 892, as it relates to community college teachers. SB 892 applies when a PSRS retiree is doing work in a school (or other PSRS employer) in a position that does not require a DESE certificate. For that work, there is no limit on hours, but the retiree can earn no more than \$15,000 during the school year (60% of the \$25,000 state minimum teachers' salary).

An unintended effect of SB 892 was to also change the working after retirement (WAR) limit for community college teachers who are PSRS retirees. Community colleges are PSRS employers, but community college teachers are not required by law to have a DESE certificate, so the new law also applies to their teaching work. HB 77 would reverse this change, leaving PSRS retirees employed as community college teachers once again under the same 550 hour limit per school year that still applies when PSRS retirees teach in school districts. The Association supports the bill to correct this unintended change.

INITIATIVE PETITION AND AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

The Senate debated SS/SJR 1 (Sater), but did not bring the bill to a vote. The joint resolution pertains to signature requirements for initiative petitions. SJR 1 more than doubles the signature requirements by mandating that petitions to amend the Constitution be signed by 15% of the legal voters in each of all eight Congressional districts (rather than the current requirement of 8% each from six of the eight districts) and also requires a two-thirds majority for a petition measure to be adopted, except for a petition to repeal prior initiative petitions such as Amendment 1. The Association opposes this measure that would make it harder and more costly for citizens to bring forward relevant policies through the initiative process.

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee voted to approve HCB 10 (Shaul). The HCB bill includes some of the provisions heard last week regarding initiative petitions. The HCB imposes a minimum \$350 refundable filing fee for an initiative petition plus \$25 per page over ten pages. The HCB also includes the provisions of HB 496 (McGaugh) to require the Secretary of State to establish the format for initiative petition signature pages and provide the forms in electronic format. The HCB does not contain a fee per signature requirement.

The House General Laws Committee was scheduled to hear HJR 51 (Plocher) on April 1 and then again on April 3, but the hearing was postponed both times. The HJR would, upon approval by a simple majority of voters, amend the constitution to say that any future constitutional amendments must be approved by at least a 60% supermajority. The Association opposes the joint resolution that would also make it harder for citizens to bring forward and enact policies through the initiative process.

CLEAN MISSOURI AND ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT

The House General Laws Committee heard HJR 46 (Christofanelli), HJR 47 (Trent) and HJR 57 (Pogue) on April 3. Each of the HJRs would significantly undermine the newly approved

redistributing reforms approved by voters in Constitutional Amendment 1, also known as CLEAN Missouri. The Association opposes these joint resolutions.

STATE DEMOGRAPHER

The House gave final approval to HB 973 (Trent) on April 1. The bill requires the nonpartisan state demographer to establish the Redistricting Public Comment Portal for the purpose of publicly accepting any comments, records, documents, maps, data files, communication, or information of any kind relating to the redistricting process. Any such submissions shall be accompanied by a disclosure that indicates whether the person making the submission was responsible in whole or in part for the submission or another person contributed money that was intended to fund preparation of the submission and, if so, the disclosure shall additionally identify each such contributor.

APPROVAL OF TAX ISSUES

The Senate Local Government Committee heard SJR 24 (Cierpiot) on April 3. The SJR would create a minimum voter turnout threshold for state and local tax increase elections. The joint resolution would nullify a state or local election to approve a new tax or increase an existing tax, even if it receives a qualifying majority of the those voting in favor, if fewer than 22% of all qualified voters vote in the election. The Association believes this provision is unfair to those citizens who do participate in elections and also serves to discourage citizens from participating in future elections if their past participation was nullified.

CONCEALED WEAPONS ON CAMPUS

The House gave first round approval to HB 575 (Dohrman) by a vote of 98-42. The bill would allow campuses to designate campus protection officers who are allowed to carry weapons on campus.

The House approved several amendments. Most notably, the House approved HA 6 (Taylor) to add the provisions of his HB 258. This language 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 both HB 258 and the amended HB 575.

TURNAROUND SCHOOLS BILL

The House gave final approval to HCS/HB 604 (Henderson) on April 1. The bill would authorize appropriations to fund consultants that would help support instructional improvements in a set of schools identified by DESE for improvement.

TEACHER EXTERNSHIPS

The House gave final approval to HCS#2/HB 462 (Shields) on April 1. The bill would increase opportunities for teacher externships. The HCS#2 version of the bill removes the tax credit for business costs incurred. The bill does give teachers credit for externships on teacher salary schedules. The Association believes the bill would support and respect teacher participation in business externships that can have a beneficial impact for students.

STEM DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENT

The House gave final approval to HCS/HB 456 (Neely) on April 1. The bill creates an advisory committee that is tasked with making recommendations for standards for a high school diploma endorsement in the subjects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT

The House gave final approval to HCS/HB 739 (Miller) on April 4. The bill revises provisions relating to preventing sexual misconduct in schools. The bill requires school districts to check with prior school employers regarding employee conduct. The HCS contains language to ensure that any determination of an employee violation of board policy referenced in the bill would be made after the opportunity for a due process hearing.

The House added several amendments, including a requirement that districts perform background checks on school volunteers who have contact with students. The House also approved a provision to expand the application of the child abuse law to apply to abuse of students by school personnel, contractors and volunteers even if occurring outside of regular school hours or off school grounds if the relationship began in the school setting.

DIVORCE POPUP

The House gave first round approval to HB 723 (Pike) on April 2. The bill expands the options for survivor option popup of retired members in the case of divorce. Existing law provides options for those members who divorce on or after September 1, 2017 when the current law became effective. HB 723 creates similar options for survivor option popup for divorces that occurred prior to September 1, 2017. The House added an amendment allowing political subdivisions to enact retirement provisions for certain emergency personnel and other staff.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard three bills on April 2:

HCS/HB 225 (Swan) to create a new scholarship program to encourage adults to go back and complete college. The bill refers to the new scholarship as the Fast-Track Workforce Incentive Grant. Recipients must be at least 25 years of age with income under \$80,000 per year for a couple or \$40,000 for an individual. Scholarships last up to four semesters or until the student gets a bachelor's degree or other workplace credential. The Association supports this effort to increase educational attainment for Missourians.

SB 474 (Bernskoetter) to allow higher education institutions to enter into long-term concessions with private partners.

SB 461 (O'Laughlin) to raise the petition signature requirement to change school district boundaries.

The committee also voted to approve two bills:

SB 475 (Cunningham) to require DESE to make a school funding formula adjustment to compensate for loss of school revenues due to the 2018 legislation reducing the financial institutions tax (FIT). The

Association supports this effort to offset the financial impact to schools of the reduction in financial institutions tax revenues.

SB 478 (Holsman) to exempt school districts from the required number of days school districts are required to make up for days lost due to inclement weather for the 2018-2019 school year.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The committee heard three bills on April 2:

HB 976 (Swan) to add an additional category to the visiting scholars certificate for certification in a specialized area for teachers with a Master's or Doctoral degree in that area. The certificate remains a one-year certificate that may be renewed up to two additional years with satisfactory evaluation from an employing district.

HB 836 (Rehder) to require adult age students to undergo background checks before attending certain classes in public schools.

HB 957 (Pike) to exclude special education high needs funds from the district average per pupil spending that determines the threshold for those funds. The bill would increase high needs funding eligibility for all districts receiving the funds, especially for small districts with students with very high needs.

The committee also voted to approve several bills:

HCS/HB 299 and HB 364 (Kelley) to create a tax deduction for educator expenses.

HB 1010 (Ross) establishes a pilot program for agricultural education programs in elementary schools.

HCS/HB 1024 (Dogan) to create new provisions relating to academic performance standards for workforce education. The committee approved a controversial amendment offered by Rep. Mary Elizabeth Coleman that would cap salary and benefits for superintendents and assistant superintendents at three times the district average teacher salary.

HCS/HB 1139 (Baker) to revise home schooling law. The bill requires a local prosecuting attorney to have reasonable suspicion of a violation of law to investigate home school records. The bill also requires public schools to keep information about home school parents and students confidential.

HOUSE CAREER READINESS COMMITTEE

The committee voted to approve HCS/HB 744 (Riggs) on April 3. The bill creates the 21st Century Missouri Education Task Force. The mission of the task force is to study Missouri's public education system, standardized testing, effective teaching strategies, workforce development efforts, and the sufficiency of current funding for K-12 and higher education and plan for sufficient future funding. The Task Force will make recommendations to the legislature. The Association supports the bill.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard two bills on April 1:

HB 576 (Dohrman) to require higher education institutions to adopt policies on free expression.

HB 837 (Kelly) to prohibit public higher education institutions from discriminating against a religious student association or denying a religious student association any benefit available to any other student association. This bill prohibits discrimination against a religious student association based on its requirement that leaders of the association adhere to its sincerely held religious beliefs, religious practice requirements, or religious standards of conduct.

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