



Legislative Update

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www.mnea.org

CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION

The Senate appears likely to take SS/SCS/SB 292 (Eigel) again within the next week. 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 April 10 when members from MNEA-Retired and Governance District 8 visited the Capitol.

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>

BUDGET

The Senate Appropriations Committee worked on the House operating budget bills, HBs 1-13 (Smith) this week. The committee completed an initial review and markup on HB 2, the K-12 education budget, and HB 3, the higher education budget on April 9. The committee left open the key decisions

on the K-12 school funding formula and aid to community colleges and public four-year institutions, while closing out many lesser items. The committee will continue to meet next week, cycling back through the bills to close out remaining open items and work on language.

CLEAN MISSOURI AND REDISTRICTING

The Senate debated SS/SCS/SJR 13 (Holsman) on April 9, but did not bring the measure to a vote. The SS version of SJR 13 would make several changes regarding the legislature. The SS would reduce the size of the House from 163 to 136 members, revise term limits for legislators to any combination of terms of a total of sixteen years in the two chambers, grant legislators a CPI cost of living adjustment to legislative pay and exempt legislative work product from the state's Sunshine Law.

Sen. Onder offered SA 1 to undo most of the redistricting reforms of Constitutional Amendment 1, also known as CLEAN Missouri. The amendment, if approved by votes, would eliminate the Nonpartisan State Demographer and rewrite the priorities for the redistricting process to reduce the priority of partisan fairness. The Association opposes this amendment. The SJR was laid over on the Informal Calendar with the amendment pending.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICS AND SUNSHINE LAW

The Senate Government Reform Committee heard HB 445 (Dogan) on April 9. The perfected bill limits lobbyist gifts to elected and appointed local officials, including lobbyist gifts to school board members and superintendents, incorporates revolving door policies and campaign contribution limits for local officials and changes the Sunshine law.

The House adopted an amendment that weakens the state's open records law, also known as the Sunshine Law. HA 3 (Schroer) would amend the Sunshine Law with a broad exemption to allow all governmental officials to close any records pertaining to "constituent" communications regarding any request for information or assistance. This provision is especially broad when applied to school board members. Since nearly all school board members are elected at-large, this amendment could allow school board members to close communications with any person in the district, since everyone in the district is a "constituent." HA 3 also allows an official to close any document received or prepared by or on behalf of the official and consisting of advice, opinions and recommendations in connection with decisions made by the public body. The Association opposes this amendment.

CONCEALED WEAPONS ON CAMPUS

The House gave final approval to HB 575 (Dohrman) on April 8 by a vote of 98-52. The bill would allow campuses to designate campus protection officers who are allowed to carry weapons on campus. The bill also takes 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 amended HB 575.

TRANSPORTATION BONDING

The Senate spent many hours debating SS/SCR 14 (Schatz) on April 9, and then approved a revised version on April 11. The SS#2 version of the SCR expresses support for issuance of bonds by the Highways and Transportation Commission to pay for construction and repair of 215 bridges on the

state highway system, as selected by the Commission, not to exceed \$301,000,000. This resolution also expresses approval for debt service to be paid from future appropriations by the General Assembly from the General Revenue Fund beginning no earlier than FY 2021. The bonding would be contingent on the Commission receiving and accepting a federal grant for road and bridge purposes.

SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

The House gave final approval of HB 485 (Dogan) on April 8 by a vote of 146-3. The bill requires the State Board of Education to modify accreditation standards for special school districts. The bill attempts to ensure that accreditation standards applied to special school districts are those that are applicable to a student population consisting entirely of students with an identified disability.

APPROVAL OF TAX ISSUES

The House gave first round approval to HCS/HJR 19 (Christofanelli) on April 10. The HJR would require any state or local election to approve a new tax or increase an existing tax to occur on a general (November) election date. The Association opposes this limitation on the approval of local ballot issues. Municipal election dates are the usual time for local communities to focus on school board and school levy elections.

SCHOOL FUNDING

The Senate gave first round approval to SB 465 (Burlison) on April 10. The bill would prohibit DESE from limiting the reimbursement rate to school districts for early childhood special education program facility lease agreements. Sen. Wallingford added the language of his SB 407 to the bill. This amendment would include students in the attendance calculation for the school funding formula if they attend an early childhood education program that is under contract with a district or charter school and that meets standards established by the State Board of Education.

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

The House gave final approval to HB 606 (Basye) on April 11 by a vote of 102-42. The bill would allow school districts to contract with municipal bus programs to transport pupils. The contract shall require an adult supervisor approved by the school board and a designated student seating section on each bus. The House approved HA 3 (Rowland) by a vote of 75-69. HA 3 provides that pupils may not be transported by self-driving buses.

GIFTED EDUCATION

The House gave final approval to HB 112 (Sommer) on April 11 by a vote of 138-5. The bill would require a district to establish a gifted education program if three percent or more are identified as gifted. The Association believes that gifted and talented students need a challenging curriculum and a program that identifies and supports their unique needs. The Association supports the bill.

SCHOOL IMMUNIZATIONS

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee heard HB 711 (Morris) on April 8. The bill states that children who are not immunized may not be discriminated against, primarily as it relates to medical care.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The committee heard three bills on April 9:

HB 1016 (Shawan) to provide that local law enforcement shall determine whether certain offenders may be present on school property. Currently, the superintendent or school board decide whether to allow offenders on school property.

HB 1023 (Mackey) to modify provisions relating to seclusion and restraint policies in public schools. The bill requires each school board to have a policy on seclusion and restraint. The bill also creates requirements for reporting, notice to parents, and appeals to the school board with review by DESE.

HB 1212 (Stacy) to modify provisions relating to Bryce's Law. The bill moves the administration of this program from DESE to the State Treasurer. The administrative agency will seek gifts, grants and donations and then coordinate services for students with certain special needs using those resources.

The committee voted to approve three bills:

HCS/HB 836 (Rehder) to require adult students to undergo background checks before attending certain classes in public schools. The HCS clarifies specific offenses that would preclude such students from attending adult education classes during regular school hours.

HCS/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 Association supports the bill.

HB 976 (Swan) to add an additional category to the visiting scholar's 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.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard three bills on April 9:

HCS/HBs 161 & 401 (Knight) to mandate that school districts start school no earlier than fourteen calendar days prior to the first Monday in September. The Association believes that school calendars should be locally determined and opposes the bill.

HCS/HB 169 (Gannon) to require public schools to teach students appropriate online behavior. The Association believes school districts should have policies in place to address this important subject.

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

The committee approved two bills on April 10:

SCS/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.

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

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee voted to approve two bills on April 8:

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.

HCS/HB 1099 (Griesheimer) to create new provisions relating to agreements between public institutions of higher education and private developers

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