



Legislative Update

By Otto Fajen
MNEA Legislative Director
Otto.fajen@mnea.org

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www.mnea.org

CLEAN MISSOURI AND ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT

The House gave final approval to HCS/HJRs 48, 46 & 47 (Plocher) on April 29 by a vote of 104-49. The measure now moves to the Senate for further consideration. The HCS would significantly undermine the newly approved redistributing reforms approved by voters in Constitutional Amendment 1, also known as CLEAN Missouri. If approved by voters, the HCS would eliminate the nonpartisan state demographer and move partisan fairness and competitiveness to the lowest priority in the redistricting process. The House also added language that may shift the basis of redistricting away from total population, as is currently the practice in all 50 states. The Association strongly opposes HJR 48.

ACTION NEEDED - PLEASE CALL, WRITE OR USE THE LINK BELOW to send an e-mail to urge your State Senator and State Representative to oppose any attempts to undermine the anti-gerrymandering rules in Missouri's constitution. The message can be edited, and your message will have GREATER IMPACT if you add your own comments.

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/keep-missouri-clean>

CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee failed to approve the motion to pass SCS/HB 485 (Dogan) on April 29 due to lack of a second. However, the committee could take up the bill at a future hearing. The SCS includes the entire language of SS#2/SCS/SB 292 (Eigel). SCS/HB 485 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 SCS/HB 485.

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&

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

MNEA Capitol Action Days concluded on May 1 when members from MNEA-R and Governance District 6 visited the Capitol.

For details and contact information, please visit:

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

WORKFORCE SCHOLARSHIPS AND TAX CREDIT VOUCHERS

The Senate debated HCS/HB 225 (Swan) on April 30, but did not bring the bill to a vote. The original bill would 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.

Sen. Koenig offered a SS version that includes his SB 160 to enact a tax credit voucher program. The bill was laid over with the SS and an amendment pending. The Association opposes measures like this SS that would divert public funds to private schools not subject to the same standards of accountability, transparency and respect for rights of students, parents and staff as apply to public schools.

FREE SPEECH ISSUES IN SCHOOLS

The House gave final approval to HB 576 (Dohrman) on April 30. The original bill would require higher education institutions to adopt policies on free expression. The House adopted an amendment to add the language of HCS/HB 743 & 673 (Fishel). This language grants greater freedom for student journalists in public high schools and colleges. 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 this portion of the bill.

STATE DEMOGRAPHER

The House General Laws Committee approved SS/SB 213 (Hegeman) on May 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.

The Senate Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions & Ethics Committee is scheduled to hear HB 973 (Trent). The bill enacts new provisions relating to the nonpartisan state demographer.

EDUCATION TASK FORCE

The House gave first round approval to HCS/HB 744 (Riggs) on May 1. 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 COMMITTEE CREATES OMNIBUS EDUCATION BILL

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee approved an HCS version of SB 218 (Hoskins) on April 30. The original bill would establish a pilot program for agricultural education programs in elementary schools.

The HCS creates an omnibus education bill that also contains:

HB 112 (Sommer) regarding gifted education programs.

HB 161 (Knight) to mandate school start date no more than 14 days before Labor Day.

HB 485 (Dogan) regarding accreditation for special school districts.

HB 581 (Roeber) to include language precluding deed restrictions that exclude charter schools.

HB 594 (Swan) to provide formula aid for pupils attending early childhood programs under contract with a district or charter school.

HB 604 (Henderson) to allow funding for school turnaround support in identified schools.

HB 606 (Basye) allow school districts to collaborate with municipalities for pupil transportation.

HB 1212 (Stacy) to extend the Bryce's Law program for donations to serve students with autism.

SB 349 (O'Laughlin) regarding mandates for reading intervention.

SB 465 (Burlison) regarding state reimbursement for an early childhood facility.

The Association supports several of the added provisions, but opposes the school start date and restrictive reading intervention mandates.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard two bills on April 30:

HB 54 (Bangert) to require school districts to provide instruction in cursive writing.

HB 577 (Dohrman) to require school districts to display "In God We Trust" in prominent locations in all schools.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard three bills on April 30:

HCS/HB 281 & HB 570 (Kelley) to allow school districts to implement alternative methods of instruction to avoid make-up days. The Association supports the bill.

HCS#2/HB 462 (Shields) to create certified teacher externships. The Association supports the bill.

HB 739 (Miller) to modify 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 bill also requires districts to perform background checks on school volunteers who have contact with students. The bill also expands 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.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT

The committee met on April 29 for the normally scheduled 2nd quarter meeting. The committee reviewed relevant legislation pertaining to public retirement systems and the recent investment returns for the systems.

BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR EMPLOYEES

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee voted to approve HCS/SCS/SB 363 (Riddle) on April 29. The bill revises employer access to the federal and state background check resources known as the RAP Back program. The Senate approved SS/HB 694 (Anderson), a substantially similar bill, on May 2. The SS version returns to the House for further consideration.

HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The committee voted to approve SCS/SJR 14 & 9 (Luetkemeyer) to establish a two-term limit for the statewide offices not currently subject to term limits.

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

The Senate Government Reform Committee heard HB 606 (Basye) on April 30. 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 bill also provides that pupils may not be transported by self-driving buses.

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Missouri National Education Association
1810 East Elm Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101-4174
(573) 634-3202 or (800) 392-0236
www.mnea.org

Charles E. Smith, President
DeeAnn Aull, Executive Director
Otto Fajen, Legislative Director
Sandy Smith, Administrative Assistant