



# Legislative Update

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## **HOUSE AND SENATE CONSTRUCT OMNIBUS BILLS - STAY TUNED FOR ACTION ALERT**

House and Senate committees both constructed omnibus bills this week that contain harmful, intrusive and costly mandates and requirements on schools. This is a particularly challenging and uncertain time for students and schools. The Association opposes enactment of changes that would take away local control of schools, increase school costs or divert funds from our public schools.

### **PLEASE STAY TUNED FOR AN ACTION ALERT REGARDING THESE OMNIBUS BILLS!**

The Senate Education Committee approved an omnibus SCS version of HB 1540 (Basye) on May 8. The Association opposes the SCS version of the bill. The SCS now includes the language of 15 bills. Of particular note, the SCS imposes the reading instruction mandates of SB 966 (O'Laughlin). This language would take away local control of identifying students for reading intervention and dictate the specific interventions a school may use. The language also adds many timelines and paperwork mandates that will take up educators' time, reducing the time available for educating students.

The House may soon take up a revised and expanded HCS version of SB 570 (Koenig). The Association opposes the HCS version of the bill. The committee added the controversial property assessment cap language from HB 1710 (Eggleston). The Association believes this provision will make property assessments unfair and reduce local school funding. The HCS also contains the language of HCS/HB 1664 (Richey) to revise payments to charter schools. The Association opposes this language and urges the legislature to provide an allowance in the calculation for maintaining district capacity to serve all students. The Association also urges the legislature to fix the broken charter school law.

### **ATTACKS ON THE REFORMS OF CLEAN MISSOURI**

The House Rules - Legislative Oversight Committee is now scheduled to vote on SJR 38 on May 11. Once approved by this committee, the joint resolution could be taken up by the House for final passage at any time during the remainder of the session.

SJR 38 would undermine the redistricting reforms of Amendment 1, also known as CLEAN Missouri. This joint resolution removes the nonpartisan demographer created under Amendment 1 and opens the possibility for the population count to be skewed to exclude non-citizen or non-voting-age residents from the data used for drawing districts. The resolution also makes it harder to file suit against a faulty map and limits the remedies available to a judge in such a case. The Association opposes SJR 38.

## **BUDGET BILLS FINALLY PASSED BY LEGISLATURE**

The House and Senate finally passed HBs 2002-2013 (Smith), the bills for next year's budget on May 8. This was the last possible day allowed under the Constitution for approving the budget during regular session. The bills will now be printed in final form and submitted to the Governor for his approval. Unlike regular bills, the Governor has line item veto authority with respect to the specific line item appropriations in the budget bills, except that the Constitution prevents the Governor from reducing an appropriation for public schools.

Authorization to fully fund the K-12 school formula was already agreed to by both chambers and was not be a conference item. Conferees cut \$10 million from the core line for pupil transportation to \$90.5 million while including \$3.5 million in lottery funding, for a possible total of \$94 million next year. This represents a \$13.5 million cut from the current year appropriation.

In HB 2003, conferees took the Senate position on aid to public higher education institutions. Institutions could still see a 10% core cut, but HB 2003 will authorize restoration of these core cuts from general revenue for community colleges and from the "federal budget stabilization fund" for four-year institutions and the state technical college. If the state receives federal enhanced FMAP (Medicaid) funding during the first quarter of next fiscal year, this federal budget stabilization fund would be used to restore the cuts to those institutions.

Given the high level of uncertainty over state revenues and possible federal action on budget relief for states, no appropriation line can be considered a guarantee that the funding will actually be available next year.

## **OMNIBUS RETIREMENT BILL APPROVED**

The House finally approved SS/SCS/HB 1467 and HB 1934 (Pike) on May 7. The bill includes several provisions relating to public employee retirement systems. Among these provisions is the language of HB 1934 (Wiemann) to specify that the salaries of all employees and administrators of the PSRS/PEERS Systems shall be public information. The bill is now Truly Agreed To and will be sent to the Governor for his approval or veto.

## **HOUSE APPROVES JOINT RESOLUTION ON ASSESSMENT CAPS AND KANSAS CITY SCHOOL TAX**

The House perfected HJR 77 (Eggelston) on May 4. Once approved by the House Fiscal Review Committee, the joint resolution could be taken up for final passage by the House. HJR 77 (Eggelston) would ask voters to remove the requirement for uniformity of assessments and allow the legislature to pass laws to restrict assessments below true value based on the amount of increase from the previous assessment. The Association is concerned that HJR 77 overturns longstanding constitutional principles of uniformity and fairness of assessment and would adversely affect local school revenues in the long run. HJR 77 would also make Kansas City's constitutionally established school tax rate subject to roll back provisions or potentially to other reductions. The Association opposes HJR 77.

## **HOUSE REMOVES ASSESSMENT CAP FROM PROPERTY TAX BILL**

The House passed HB 1710 (Eggelston) on May 7. The bill was heard by the Senate Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions & Ethics Committee on May 8. The bill contains several provisions relating to property tax assessment. The original bill included a provision imposing a 10% cap on the increase of assessment of any residential real property (except for new construction and improvements). The Association believes this provision would overturn longstanding principles of uniformity and fairness of assessment and opposed the original bill. The House approved an amendment to remove this harmful provision from the bill. However, similar harmful provisions have been amended into HCS

versions of several Senate bills, and the Association will work to ensure that this language is removed if those Senate bills are taken up by the House.

### **SENATE APPROVES OMNIBUS LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL**

The Senate approved SS#2/SCS/HCS/HB 1854 (Pfautsch) regarding various political subdivisions on May 4. Among the many provisions, the bill revises the general restrictions on the use of any public funds in support or opposition to any ballot measure or candidate for office. The provision clarifies that this law applies to school districts and charter schools. While the Association supports clear restrictions on use of public funds for electoral purposes, the Association is concerned that the elevated penalty provision could have a chilling effect and deter school leaders and staff from providing the information the local community needs to make an informed decision on local school issues. The Senate version of the bill returns to the House for consideration.

### **HOUSE DEBATES PUBLIC SAFETY AND GUNS BILL**

The House added numerous amendments to SB 600 (Luetkemeyer) before laying the bill over on the informal calendar. The bill contains numerous provisions related to public safety and guns. Among the amendments were HA 8 (Taylor) to add the provisions of his HB 1638 to take away the ability of higher education institutions to regulate concealed weapons on campus. The Association opposes this provision.

The House also approved HA 9 (Baker) to change the portion of the bill that is similar to HCS/HB 1961 (Schroer). As amended, the bill now requires every public school in the state to employ a school protection officer who must carry a gun at all times when at school. This mandate is estimated to cost public schools from \$60 million to \$93 million per year. The Association also opposes this provision.

### **FUNDING FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

The Senate approved an amendment to add the provisions of SB 528 (Cunningham) to HB 1963 (Fitzwater) on May 6. HB 1963 is now an omnibus transportation bill. SB 528 provides that any excess funding appropriated to the school formula would be used to fund pupil transportation rather than just lapse. The Association supports SB 528 and this language in HB 1963.

#### **Legislative Update 2020**

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