



Legislative Update

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www.mnea.org

CLEAN MISSOURI AND ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT

The House gave first round approval to HCS/HJRs 48, 46 & 47 (Plocher) on April 23. The House could take up the measure for final passage within the next week. 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>

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

MNEA Capitol Action Days continued on April 24 when members from Governance District 10 visited the Capitol.

For details and contact information, please visit:

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

SENATE APPROVES BUDGET

The Senate approved the SCS versions of House operating budget bills, HBs 1-13 (Smith), on April 24. The bills now return to the House for further consideration and will likely go to conference to resolve the differences between the House and Senate positions. Once the conference committees reach agreement, the final versions of all budget bills must be finally approved in the same form by both chambers no later than May 10.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICS AND SUNSHINE LAW

The Senate Government Reform Committee approved an SCS version of HB 445 (Dogan) on April 24. The SCS version limits lobbyist gifts to elected and appointed local officials, including lobbyist gifts to school board members, incorporates revolving door policies and campaign contribution limits for local officials and changes the Sunshine law. The SCS restricts the revolving door policy to only prohibit registering to lobby the governing body of which the person is a member.

The SCS revises the changes in the Sunshine Law to the language contained in the SCS version of SB 132 (Emery). This language primarily affects records held by legislators and legislative offices and will have little effect on records held by local governments. The SCS allows legislators to close any records pertaining to "constituent" communications, but this will not apply to any lobbyist, even if they are a constituent. The SCS also allows legislators to close records regarding proposed legislation or the legislative process. The Association remains concerned with the impact of these changes to the Sunshine Law.

INITIATIVE PETITIONS

The House gave final approval to HCB 10 (Shaul) on April 23. The HCB bill includes several provisions 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. House amendments added language regarding selection of local election judges and requiring that the word count of the language to be listed on a ballot measure.

FREE SPEECH ISSUES IN SCHOOLS

The House gave first round approval to HB 576 (Dohrman) on April 24. 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.

BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR EMPLOYEES

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee heard SCS/SB 363 (Riddle) on April 24. The bill revises employer access to the federal and state background check resources known as the RAP Back program.

SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACTS

The House gave final approval to HCS/HCB 7 (Roeber) on April 23. HCB 7 would enact several restrictions on school superintendent contracts. The HCS only limits superintendent contract terms in the case of termination for cause.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee voted to approve three bills on April 25:

SCS/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. The SCS includes SB 478 (Holsman) regarding forgiveness for excess inclement weather days during this school year.

HB 267 (Baker) to specify that school districts may offer elective social studies courses on the Bible. Regardless of any provision of state law, public school instruction about religion must adhere to U.S. Supreme Court case law regarding the separation of church and state under the First Amendment. The Association believes that schools should teach the rights and responsibilities associated with the freedom of religion, the religious heritage and diversity of the United States, respect for the beliefs of others and the historical and cultural influences of various world religions.

SCS/HCS/HB 604 (Henderson) to authorize appropriations to fund consultants that would help support instructional improvements in a set of schools identified by DESE for improvement.

HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The committee heard several measures on April 24, including:

HB 28 (Stacy) to require all local elections to use an instant runoff voting method.

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

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The committee heard SB 218 (Hoskins) on April 23. The bill establishes a pilot program for agricultural education programs in elementary schools. The bill also establishes a pilot program for for mental and emotional health education in elementary schools. The sponsor of the bill asked the committee to revise the latter program to refer to social and emotional education.

The committee also voted to approve two bills on April 23:

HCS/SB 206 (Arthur) regarding school district bid requirements. The bill raises the threshold for existing construction bidding requirements to apply to projects costing more than \$50,000. The HCS would set the project cost threshold at \$25,000. The HCS also includes the provisions of SB 126

(Hough) regarding energy cost savings contracts, SB 168 (Wallingford) regarding limits on proprietary products in public bidding requirements and HB 592 (Trent) regarding student data privacy.

HB 696 (Hicks) to modify the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Initiative fund.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard four bills on April 24:

HB 198 (Kendrick) to establish a work-study program within the Department of Higher Education.

HB 613 (Ann Kelley) to allow public institutions of higher education to charge differential tuition rates based on program of study.

HB 1019 (Murphy) to revise the definition of "tuition" used when institutions report the change in tuition from year to year. The bill includes supplementary fees, course fees, laboratory fees, and all other fees charged to a Missouri resident undergraduate or graduate student and applies this definition regardless of the number of hours of enrollment.

HB 1121 (Swan) to allow Southeast Missouri State University to develop a statewide mission.

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