



Legislative Update

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www.mnea.org

ACTION ALERT: ASK YOUR SENATOR TO OPPOSE CHARTER EXPANSION

The Senate is expected to hold a lengthy debate on SB 649 (Eigel) next week. This broader charter school expansion bill would allow charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in districts around the state.

The Association strongly opposes SB 649.

ACTION NEEDED: 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 to oppose charter school expansion.

The message can be edited, and your message will have **GREATER IMPACT** if you add your own comments. This message is hosted on Action Network, which the Association now uses for Legislative Forum registration and other advocacy actions.

https://actionnetwork.org/letters/stop-charter-school-expansion?source=direct_link&

Guided by the MNEA Position Paper on charter schools, the Association believes that charter schools should be sponsored by and accountable to the local community through the elected school board and approved only after an impact study is conducted by the district to consider the proposal. Existing charter schools should move to district sponsorship when their charters come up for renewal.

Charter schools should be subject to the same standards of accountability, transparency and respect for the rights of students, parents and staff as are applicable to traditional public schools. SB 649 does not enact these reforms, and the Association strongly opposes the bill.

LEGISLATIVE FORUMS

Missouri NEA's regional legislative events continued this week with the Jefferson County/Southeast Legislative Forum on February 27. The final event for the 2020 session will be the Mid-Missouri Legislative Forum on March 5.

These events provide a chance for members to build relationships with area legislators and support their understanding of MNEA priorities and education issues. Plan to attend and invite fellow members, administrators and school board members who would enjoy and benefit from a discussion regarding support for public education!

TO REGISTER NOW for the Mid-Missouri Legislative Forum please visit:

<https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/PoliticalAction/5.aspx>

Be sure to click through the "RSVP now" link for your event and then "Send RSVP" to register. For additional information contact Sandy Smith (sandy.smith@mnea.org).

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

MNEA Capitol Action Days will continue on March 4 when members from Governance Districts 7 and 8 are scheduled to come to the Capitol. Capitol Action Days allow planned, face-to-face contact with legislators throughout the session. Capitol Action Days will generally be on Wednesdays through most of the remaining weeks of session.

To register for the Capitol Action Day for your Governance District or to find details and contact information, please visit:

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

If you are not able to attend on your scheduled day, feel free to register to attend a different Capitol Action Day. Each Capitol Action Day will start with a briefing at 10 am at the MNEA HQ to provide you with the most up-to-date information.

ATTACKS ON THE REFORMS OF CLEAN MISSOURI

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SS#3/SJR 38 (Hegeman) on February 10 by a nearly party-line vote of 22-9. Sen. Lincoln Hough was the only majority party Senator to vote against the measure. SJR 38 is similar to HJR 76 and HJR 101 and would undermine the redistricting reforms of Amendment 1, also known as CLEAN Missouri. The SS#3 still 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 SJR 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 strongly opposes SJR 38.

HEALTHCARE FOR CHILDREN

The House-Health and Mental Health Policy Committee heard HB 2379 (Helms) on February 24. The bill would allow children eligible for healthcare coverage under Mo HealthNet to maintain continuous eligibility for a twelve-month period. The Association believes adequate and timely healthcare services are vital to maintain the health of all children throughout the state. Proper healthcare is critical to ensuring that all children come to school ready to learn. The Association supports the bill.

HOUSE PASSES CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION BILL

The House gave final approval to HCS/HB 1868 (Swan) on February 24. The bill requires the State Board of Education to develop a statewide plan for career and technical education that matches workforce needs with appropriate educational resources.

APPROVAL OF TAX ISSUES

Due to protracted debate extending through the night and well into the morning, the Senate Local Government Committee postponed the hearings scheduled on February 26 for SJR 46 (Cierpiot) and SJR 52 (Eigel). These similar measures would create a minimum voter turnout threshold for state and local tax increase elections. The joint resolutions 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 those voting in favor, if fewer than the specified fraction of all qualified voters vote in the election. SJR 46 requires a minimum of 22% voter participation, while SJR 52 requires at least 50% voter participation. 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.

PAYCHECK DECEPTION

The Senate General Laws Committee approved SB 701 (Onder) on February 27. HB 1413 from 2018, the anti-bargaining bill, was blocked by a permanent court injunction resulting from a lawsuit filed by the Association and other public labor organizations. This permanent injunction strongly affirms public employees' constitutional right to bargain and their right to join the association of their choosing. Despite this court ruling, SB 701 would attempt to enact even more onerous and intrusive restrictions on certain public employees regarding payroll deductions for dues and deductions for political action. The Association strongly opposes the bill.

MINIMUM WAGE

The House gave final approval to HB 1559 (Remole) on February 27. The bill would exempt hourly wage workers in private religious schools from the state minimum wage law requirements. Hourly wage workers in public schools are currently exempt from the state minimum wage law.

INITIATIVE PETITION PROCESS

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee approved HCS/HJR 102 (Simmons) on February 26. HJR 102 is another joint resolution to make it harder for citizens to use the initiative petition process. HJR 102 would require an initiative petition amending the Constitution to have at least 8% of voters signing the petition in each of two-thirds of the counties of the state and then require a two-thirds vote for the proposal to be adopted. These requirements would make an already difficult task much harder to complete. The Association opposes HJR 102 and believes the measure would make it harder and more costly for citizens to bring forward and approve relevant policies through the initiative process.

PHOTO ID MANDATE RETURNS

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee heard HJR 109 (Simmons) on February 26. HJR 109 is another joint resolution that would require registered voters to provide a government-issued photo identification. A similar provision was passed as HJR 53 in 2016, approved by voters and then blocked by a Missouri Supreme Court ruling that found the option to vote without a photo ID by giving a sworn statement was confusing for voters.

The House also gave first-round approval (Perfection vote) to HCS/HB 1600 (Simmons). The bill reimposes a strict photo ID requirement for Missouri voters to cast a regular ballot. Missouri NEA opposes barriers that keep eligible citizens from voting and being politically active and opposes both HJR 109 and HB 1600.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on February 24:

HB 1470 (Appelbaum) to enact requirements relating to suicide prevention education and information. Districts are required to offer two hours of professional development and teachers are required to participate in the training or to review materials on their own. After the hearing, the bill was combined with HB 1820 (Kelley), a similar bill heard the prior week and approved by the committee.

HB 1565 (Basye) to modify provisions governing school district course materials or instruction on human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases. The bill radically expands the definition of course materials and instruction to include nearly any form of communication with students in the school setting. The bill also targets discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity for parental opt-out and authorizes citizen lawsuits for enforcement of the requirements of the bill, including the possibility that school districts would face punitive damages. The Association believes this bill is an unnecessary intrusion on local control of instruction and opposes the bill.

HB 2435 (Swan) to modify requirements for a visiting scholar's certificate of license to teach. The bill expands the existing visiting scholar certificate, primarily to address persistent vacancies in hard to staff subjects at the high school level.

The committee voted to approve HCS/HBs 1820 and 1470 (Kelley) on February 25. The bill enacts requirements relating to suicide prevention education and information. Districts are required to offer two hours of professional development and teachers may participate in the training. The bill also requires student ID cards to have suicide prevention contact information. The Association supports the bill.

The committee approved the following bills on February 27:

HCS/HB 1345 (Baker) regarding elective social studies courses on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament in public schools. The bill is similar to HB 267 from the last session and contains permissive language that purports to allow schools to offer such elective courses. The committee defeated an amendment offered by Rep. Shamed Dogan to add permissive language regarding courses on texts from other religions on a 7-7 vote.

HCS/HB 1961 (Schroer) to require every school to maintain an armed officer at all times during the school day at every school site. The Association believes that arming educators as a method of school security or violence prevention increases the risk of potential violence and accidental shootings endangering all stakeholders. The Association opposes the bill. The HCS includes an amendment offered by Rep. Dogan to remove the mandate and make the provisions of the bill optional for all school districts.

HCS/HB 2068 (Fitzwater) to create a tax credit voucher program that would be housed in the State Treasurer's Office. The bill has relatively few details about how the program would operate and contains essentially no requirements on the private schools that might receive funding under the measure. The Association believes that private school option plans compromise-free, equitable, universal and quality public education for every student and opposes the bill.

HCS/HB 2435 (Swan) to modify requirements for a visiting scholar's certificate of license to teach. The bill expands the existing visiting scholar certificate, primarily to address persistent vacancies in hard to staff subjects at the high school level. The HCS allows the one-year certificate to be annually renewed for up to four years.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard three bills on February 24:

SB 734 (Emery) to revise funding to charter schools. SB 734 is similar to HB 1664 (Richey). The Association remains concerned regarding the wording of this bill and urges the legislature to provide an equitable 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. Charter schools should be sponsored by and accountable to the local community through the elected school board and approved only after an impact study is conducted by the district to consider the proposal. Charter schools should be subject to the same standards of accountability, transparency, and respect for the rights of students, parents and staff as are applicable to traditional public schools.

SB 802 (Hegeman) to modify provisions relating to the use of public funds by public officials and public employees in elections and campaigns. While bearing some similarities to HB 1347 (Baker), the bill does not attempt to restrict the advocacy of school officials or employees in interacting with the legislature.

SJR 50 (O'Laughlin) to enact a constitutional provision that specifically overrules current MSHSAA Board Policy on Transgender Participation as taken from existing NCAA policy. Instead, SJR 50 would ask voters to approve a Constitutional Amendment to require students participating in any single-gender event or activity organized by MSHSAA or another statewide organization to participate in the event corresponding to the student's biological sex at birth. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies and procedures that govern the activities of Missouri students who participate in high school activities and opposes SJR 50.

The committee voted to approve SCS/SB 645 (Hoskins) on February 25. The bill requires districts to identify and provide services and programs for gifted children. The Association supports the bill. The SCS version delays the effective date for the new requirements to identify and serve gifted students to give time for more teachers to seek certification as gifted teachers.

HOUSE CAREER READINESS COMMITTEE

The committee heard HB 2387 (Riggs) on February 26. 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.

HOME SCHOOL PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

The House Downsizing State Government Committee approved HCS/HB 2273 (Deaton) on February 24. The bill would require MSHSAA to allow home school students to participate in activities or member schools will lose state funding. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies that govern student activities.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard HB 1644 (Windham) on February 24. The bill requires public institutions of higher education to establish a personal injury or accidental death insurance program for their athletes

The committee also approved HB 1796 (Hicks) on February 24. The bill changes the law regarding the Missouri Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Fund.

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