



Legislative Update

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PROPERTY TAX CAPS

The House gave first round approval to HCS/HB 248 (Coleman) on April 6. The bill was referred to Fiscal Review Committee and has not been taken up by that committee. It appears that the bill is effectively dead for this session due to opposition to the enormous financial harm the bill would cause to school districts and other local entities.

The bill would seek to cap assessments of residential properties at the current levels, with future adjustments based on CPI increases, if a constitutional amendment is approved to allow such a cap. Currently the Missouri constitution requires property to be fairly assessed at its true value in money, without arbitrary restrictions of this kind.

The House approved an amendment to reduce all residential real property values by twenty percent before capping the values. With the adoption of this amendment, the proposal would drastically reduce local school revenues and reduce the ability of schools across the state to provide quality education to all students. The Association strongly opposes the bill.

The Senate initially approved an amendment offered by Sen. Luetkemeyer to SCS/SB 5 (Wieland) that would also have capped growth in residential real estate assessment to five percent, but the Senate later voted to defeat the entire SCS version of the bill along with the many amendments already added to it. The Senate went on to perfect only the original SB 5, which only extends the sunset on the law pertaining to advanced industrial manufacturing (AIM) zones.

REPEAL OF INCOME TAX

The Senate narrowly adopted an amendment offered by Sen. Eigel onto SB 36 (Bernskoetter), a bill pertaining to certain tax credits. Sen. Eigel's SA 1 would effectively cap state general revenue at \$10.3 billion and gradually phase out the state income tax by reducing the top rate when net general revenues exceed that level. SB 36 was placed on the informal calendar and not brought to a perfection vote. That bill also appears to be dead for this session, but this tax issue could be brought back on another bill this session.

This amendment would further reduce the adequacy of state general revenue from the current level of about 3% of the state's economy to a progressively smaller fraction as the state's economy grows over time. The Association opposes this change that would undermine the state's capacity to invest in public education and other vital services.

REPEAL OF PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX

The House Ways and Means Committee heard HJR 57 (Wiemann) on April 7. Beginning in 2027, HJR 57 would permanently eliminate all taxes on personal property. Based on the official fiscal note for the bill, this change is expected to permanently reduce local school revenues by roughly \$1 billion per year and to make this change in a single year. The Association believes that this loss of local school funding will undermine the ability of schools to provide quality educational programs for students. Accordingly, the Association opposes the joint resolution.

PAYCHECK DECEPTION

The House Economic Development Committee approved HCS/HB 88 (Taylor) on April 8 by a party-line vote of 6-3. HCS/HB 88 would enact onerous and intrusive restrictions on certain public employees regarding payroll deductions for dues and deductions for political action. The Association opposes HB 88.

HB 1413 from 2018, the anti-bargaining bill, was blocked by 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. An appeal of the court ruling is currently pending before the Missouri Supreme Court and a final decision is expected during this year's court term.

PETITION FOR SCHOOL BOARD AGENDA ITEM

The House rejected an amendment offered by Rep. Basye to HB 441 (Falkner). The bill pertains to local governments. Basye's amendment would have created a process where voters of a school district could file a petition to require the school board to place a requested item on the next meeting's agenda and shall take a vote on the petitioned item. Petitions could seek to address board policy, administrative actions, curriculum, instruction or the school calendar. The amendment was defeated on a voice vote.

HIGHER EDUCATION BILL

The House perfected HS/HB 297 (Wallingford) on April 8. The bill would create a new statewide mission for Southeast Missouri State University. The HS version was created by the Legislative Review Committee and adds the provisions of several other bills relating to higher education:

HB 355 (Baker) to require the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development to annually collect information on a variety of topics, including the costs of four-year college and alternative career paths. School counselors will receive this information annually. Prospective students must verify that they have read the information prior to applying to a public institution.

HB 627 (Patterson) to rename the Missouri MOST 529 education savings plan and create a children's savings account program for children born in 2022 and thereafter.

HB 908 (Andrews) to allow Northwest Missouri State University to develop a statewide mission.

HB 856 (Richey) to suspend the caps on tuition increases at public institutions of higher education.

HB 1208 (Chris Brown) to require Missouri public educational institutions to grant undergraduate course credit for students who score 3 or higher on advance placement examinations.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard five bills on April 6:

HB 624 (Richey) relating to proficiency-based learning and alternative graduation pathways for high school students. The Association supports the portion of the bill to create a task force on proficiency-based learning. The bill also renames the state's 529 education savings program to be the Missouri Education Program and includes all eligible educational institutions allowed under federal law.

SB 166 (Arthur) to allow students to attend multiple public summer school programs non-concurrently. The Association supports the bill.

SB 352 (Koenig) to create a grievance process for parents and guardians of elementary and secondary school students. The Association is concerned that the bill would undermine local school governance and create an appeal process to DESE with no standard for consideration of such an appeal.

SB 386 (Eslinger) to require the State Board of Education to develop a statewide plan for minimum requirements for career and technical education certificates. The Association supports the bill.

SB 448 (Rowden) to revise the requirements for a visiting scholar's certificate of license to teach. The bill would allow the visiting scholar structure to be used for hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-fill positions.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee met on April 7 to hear several bills:

HB 254 (Brown) to require school districts to implement policies requiring accommodations for breast-feeding mothers. The Association supports the bill.

HB 368 (Gregory) pertaining to reading intervention in schools. The bill repeals retention in grade requirements for struggling readers, requires assessment and intervention beginning in kindergarten and requires systematic and explicit interventions for students with characteristics of dyslexia. The Association believes that reading instruction, with appropriate evidence-based reading intervention, especially in the early grades, is essential for learning and achieving high standards in all content areas. The Association also believes that key decisions regarding assessment, placement, additional instruction and advancement should be made at the local level with district, employee, parent and student input.

HB 1360 (Basye) and HB 1381 (Shields) would enact new provisions governing Braille instruction. The bills are expected to increase the fraction of vision-impaired students receiving Braille instruction.

HB 743 (Wiemann) to require trauma-informed schools to keep incident records and provide notice of certain incidents.

In addition to hearing bills, the committee voted to approve the following bills:

HB 64 (Pike) to revise the calculation of aid relating to the cost of serving high-needs students. The bill ensures that a district's per pupil average used as a basis for the high-needs funding is not skewed by the high cost of serving those students. The Association supports the bill.

HB 465 (Pike) relating to suicide prevention education and information. The bill provides that the optional, professional development training in youth suicide awareness and prevention, contain a unit relating to stress management strategies for students and faculty. The Association supports the bill.

HB 872 (Pike) to ensure that make up day requirements for half-day preschool programs are proportional to the program's schedule. The Association supports the bill.

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