



Feb. 25, 2014 Senate Education amends and approves drug testing bill

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Drug testing bill advances No action on Sexuality Education bill

Committees done for the first half

The Senate Education Committee passed two bills out of committee today which was their last meeting before turnaround. SB 335 (drug testing and fingerprinting teachers) and SB 367 (student data privacy act) were both amended and passed out favorably.

SB 335 includes both the drug testing of teachers and the fingerprinting of teachers. In an attempt to keep the bill in line with other federal laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the committee amended section one which addresses drug testing. New Section 1 now states that if there is reasonable suspicion a district will require a teacher to have a drug test. If the test is positive the teacher may request a second test to rule out a false positive before any disciplinary action may be taken against the teacher. The second amendment deletes the requirement for fingerprinting every time a teacher renews their license. The fingerprinting requirement now tracks the proposal by the State Board of Education.

A conceptual amendment (which is an amendment not written, but discussed at length) was adopted the intent of which is to make sure all teachers are finger printed either at renewal for those without finger prints on record or upon application for an initial license. The committee wanted to ensure that all teachers are fingerprinted during the time they are licensed to teach in

Kansas. A representative from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) stated that there was no need to renew fingerprints for their system. Once is enough. The representative stated that if someone applied for a license with a false identity and then was fingerprinted, the system would help bolster the person's claim to a false identity. They also stated that if a person committed a crime in another state the KBI would not know because there is no current communication with the KBI and the FBI. The bill passed out of committee on a 6-2 vote. Three Senators abstained.

The committee amended SB 367 to include sharing student data with the National Institute of Health in case of health concern or possible pandemic. The bill passed out of committee on an 11-0 vote.

House Education Committee cancelled

The House Education Committee had planned to continue work on HB 2620, the sexuality education bill that they had been debating yesterday. At the conclusion of floor action today, Chair Kasha Kelley announced that there was still work to be done on the changes to the bill and so the meeting for today would be cancelled.

This ends committee work for both education committees as we move to turnaround, the halfway point of the session. For the next three days we'll be watching for which bills die and which survive for the second half.

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