

Pensions Committee deliberations

This morning the House Pensions Committee heard HB 2473, a proposal to allow for a 100% lump sum distribution option for KPERS. There were no proponents on the bill. Representative Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita) summed up things nicely by stating, "If we don't want to do a defined contribution plan, why would we want to do this?" Chairman Johnson (R-Assaria) indicated that the hearing today is likely as far as the measure will go.

The committee also spent time this morning continuing the beat to the address the issue of working after retirement. A new bill, HB 2760 has been introduced by House Tax to continue the discussion and produce a final bill to get out of committee. The committee most likely will meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday next week. Testimony regarding working after retirement will start on Monday. Next Friday is the last day for non-exempt committees to vote a bill out of committee and that is the opinion of both Representatives Johnson and Rubin.

The Senate KPERS Committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow at 3:30 to complete testimony on SB 425 which is the Senate's version of the cash balance tweak and includes adding corrections officers into the KP&F side of KPERS. Also the Senate Pensions Committee will hear testimony on HB 2564 which extends the retirement period to 60 days before being a person is eligible to work after retirement for an employer who is included in KPERS such as schools, state hospitals and correction facilities among other employers. Finally, HB 2602 which increases the percent of KPERS agency unclassified employees from 25% to 50% will be heard and perhaps worked by the committee. The current plan is for the committee to meet again on Monday to work all bills previously heard. Hopefully that will be the end of the committee's work for the session.

Education Committees cancelled

Both Education Committees had been scheduled to meet earlier this week. Yesterday afternoon Senate Chairman Steve Abrams (R-Arkansas City) announced that he was cancelling the Senate Education Committee for today. This morning we were notified that House Chair Kasha Kelley (R-Arkansas City) had also cancelled her meeting.

They are currently scheduled to meet jointly tomorrow.

School Finance Rumbings

Actually, we keep waiting to hear some rumbings about school finance in light of the Gannon decision.

This morning the House Appropriations Committee - which has been tasked by Speaker Merrick to handle the issue - decided to separate K-12 Education and the Department of Corrections from the traditional comprehensive and enormous budget bill. They plan to begin deliberations and discussions next Tuesday.

On the Senate side, we only know that the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee voted yesterday to pull the K-12 budget back for possible revision. No word yet on when they will begin their work.