



Under the Dome Today

March 11, 2015

Senate Committee hears bill to end collective bargaining for state, municipal employees



Collective bargaining and protecting you from you Ramming speed on the block grant

Ending the teacher of the year program for a more political award show

This morning the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing on **SB 179**, a bill that dismantles the Kansas Public Employee Employer Relations Act (PEERA). PEERA is the law regarding collective bargaining for public employees other than teachers. Teachers are covered under the Professional Negotiations Act.

SB 179 would allow public employees to negotiation only minimum salaries, eliminate the Public Employee Relations Board, ban mediation and fact finding, and put whether or not a municipality could bargain with employees to a public referendum.

KNEA joins other public employee organizations in opposing this bill.

In a show of just how Committee Chair feels about the bill, the three proponents were allowed 20 minutes of time to address the committee while opponents were allowed one minute each. We wonder if you can guess who were the proponents?

And why not ban payroll deduction!

Tomorrow the same Committee will hold a hearing on **SB 212**, a bill that will prohibit public employees from using payroll deduction to pay Association or Union dues. They laughingly call this "Strengthening Protection of Public Employee Paychecks Act" because, as you know, public employees must be protected from

themselves and who better to do that than the Kansas Policy Institute, the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, and anti-union legislators?

[Click here to tell the Committee to vote NO on SB 212^{\[1\]}.](#)

Block grant finance plan now up to "ramming speed"

Remember the old Viking movies when they ordered the oarsmen to work at "ramming speed" when attacking an enemy ship? Well, that's a lot like the legislative process being used to pass a school finance bill that no one in the education community supports.

Oh, the bill does have supporters - the Kansas Policy Institute, the Kansas Tea Party's Kansans for Liberty, and the Kansas Chamber of Commerce. It just doesn't have the support of school boards, superintendents, school administrators, teachers, the Kansas PTA, Game on for Kansas Schools, and every other group associated with public education in Kansas.

Unveiled at a Thursday press conference, the bill was available to be read on Friday. The hearing was Monday morning. Crammed into Senate Bill 7, it was passed out of Committee Tuesday morning. It will be debated on the floor of the House tomorrow. ***RAMMING SPEED!***

The Legislature has spent years debating and pondering whether or not supermarkets can sell beer but only five days on the financing of the state's entire system of public education!

Some folks believe that this plan is not so bad in that it seems to keep schools from losing millions more over the next two years. But that's simply not true. Even Senate Ways and Means Chairman Ty Masterson (R-Andover) admitted during the Senate hearing on the plan that there were no guarantees that the funds would not be cut. The state budget, after all, is in something of a crisis and there have been no efforts to fix the drying up revenue stream. And without that fix, nothing is guaranteed.

[Click here to urge your Representative to vote NO on SB 7^{\[2\]}.](#)

House Ed Committee considers bill to replace the Teacher of the Year program

Suggesting that excellent teachers should stay in their classrooms instead for working state-wide, Rep. Jerry Lunn (R-Overland Park) has proposed **HB 2378**, a bill which would create a legislative teacher award program. A small group of business leaders, legislators, and principals, most of whom are political appointees, would select 15 teachers they considered excellent and provide them with large financial awards to the limit that they could generate funds. These teachers would not be ambassadors of great teaching as are the current teachers of the year.

This bill would also end the current Teacher of the Year program which has been in place since 1955. The Kansas TOY program has been a model for those in other states.

Many of the most conservative legislators around the room expressed the sentiment that Kansas teachers are underpaid. We agree. Teachers ARE underpaid. In fact, Kansas ranks 42nd in the nation in teacher salaries. Truth is they really are interested in only rewarding a few and getting their photo in the paper with one of those 15. We would suggest that a good way to start rewarding excellence would be to fund the Nationally Board Certified Teachers program that hasn't been funded in years. That program would benefit many teachers who have demonstrated excellence.

The Committee plans to work the bill tomorrow.

Kansas National Education Association 715 SW 10th Avenue Topeka, KS 66612-1686
(785)232-8271

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1. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=7dc099172bec2de5e9d85cd293b79870f2cbfe4177fada56f4c97dea8eec14f731326144c3535744>
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