

## House barely passes school finance bill

On final action today, the block grant school finance plan was passed on a vote of 64 to 58.

This bill, which is opposed by the education community and supported only by Americans for Prosperity, the Kansas Policy Institute, and the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, entirely repeals the current school finance formula and replaces it with a nebulous "block grant." Schools would receive no more funds than they do this year for the next two school years. But most schools would actually lose funding under this bill.

The bill has been characterized as loaded with false promises supported by imaginary runs. Since this bill is a policy bill and not an appropriations bill, whenever it says "it is appropriated," what it really means is "later on we might fund it if we can put together a comparable appropriations bill." And unless the Legislature solves the current budget and revenue disaster brought on by the Governor's reckless tax cuts. If they can't find a way to fill the very deep revenue hole created by the tax plan, there is no way they can pay for this bill.

During floor debate, opponents of the bill pointed out that those who support the bill (KPI, AFP, and KCC) are the same three organizations that told Legislators to pass the income tax cuts in 2012.

Passage of the bill was not certain going into today's vote. It was advanced to final action yesterday on a vote of 64 to 57 and when the vote went up today, it was failing on a vote of 62-58. Five legislators were missing from the chamber. Four were excused (Democrats Barbara Ballard, Carolyn Bridges, and Republicans Virgil Peck and James Todd), while Rob Bruchman was MIA. It is not an uncommon practice on difficult votes to "hide" someone. If your side is losing and you need time to convince a couple more to join you, then you ask for a "call of the House."

Under a call of the House, no Legislator may leave the House floor and the missing members are called to come back and cast a vote. The waiting time is used for arm-twisting and bargaining.

After a couple hours, Rep. Todd returned and Rep. Bruchman was "found." They cast votes in favor of the bill and it passed.

Below you will find a list of how each legislator voted. Please feel free to thank those



Hineman<sup>[95]</sup>, Houston<sup>[96]</sup>, Jennings<sup>[97]</sup>, Johnson<sup>[98]</sup>, Kelly<sup>[99]</sup>, Kuether<sup>[100]</sup>, Lane<sup>[101]</sup>, Lusk<sup>[102]</sup>, Lusker<sup>[103]</sup>, Moxley<sup>[104]</sup>, Ousley<sup>[105]</sup>, Patton<sup>[106]</sup>, Phillips<sup>[107]</sup>, Rooker<sup>[108]</sup>, Ruiz<sup>[109]</sup>, Sawyer<sup>[110]</sup>, Schroeder<sup>[111]</sup>, Sloan<sup>[112]</sup>, Swanson<sup>[113]</sup>, Thompson<sup>[114]</sup>, Tietze<sup>[115]</sup>, Trimmer<sup>[116]</sup>, Victors<sup>[117]</sup>, Ward<sup>[118]</sup>, Waymaster<sup>[119]</sup>, Whipple<sup>[120]</sup>, Wilson<sup>[121]</sup>, Winn<sup>[122]</sup>, Wolfe Moore<sup>[123]</sup>,

## Present but Not Voting - (0):

## Absent and Not Voting - (3):

Ballard<sup>[124]</sup>, Bridges<sup>[125]</sup>, Peck<sup>[126]</sup>,

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### **Governor flies in Virgil Peck!**

Virgil Peck was excused from the Legislature today to join the Governor in Coffeyville for an event. When the call of the House went out, Peck was put on the Governor's plane and flown back to Topeka. Unfortunately for Peck, he arrived too late to cast a vote! See the story here in the Lawrence Journal-World<sup>[127]</sup>.

### **Payroll deduction bill gets a hearing**

The Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing on SB 212, a bill that would prohibit the use of payroll deduction for public employee union dues.

KNEA joined the Kansas Organization of State Employees, AFT, the Fraternal Order of Police, Superintendent Julie Ford of Topeka USD 501, Superintendent Martin Stessman of Shawnee Heights USD 450, and a number of state employees in opposing the bill. KNEA was represented by General Counsel David Schauner, teacher Nathan McAllister of Royal Valley, and school librarian Kate Thompson of Olathe.

Supporting the bill was the usual gang - Americans for Prosperity, the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, and the National Federation of Independent Businesses. The KCC was represented by Eric Stafford who, when a similar bill was heard a few years ago, blurted out "I need this bill to get rid of public sector unions!" One can only assume that's still why AFP, KCC, and the NFIB want this bill. We are sure it has nothing to do with the bill's title "Strengthening Protection of Public Employee Paychecks." You know, because you need to be protected from yourself!

















