

Senate votes down Melcher PNA bill

Yesterday we reported that the Senate had approved an amendment by Sen. Jeff Melcher that changed the PNA bill agreed to by KNEA, KASB, USA/KS, and KSSA into a bill that all opposed. The Melcher amendment would have allowed the negotiation of only minimum salaries and prohibited the negotiation of any fair dismissal or due process procedures in non-renewals. Additionally the amendment ended the continuing contract law and fact-finding as part of the negotiation process.

The Senate had earlier pass a PNA bill agreed to by educators on a unanimous vote but yesterday, 20 of those senators reversed course in voting for the Melcher amendment.

The bill - now in **HB 2326** - was up for a final action vote on the floor of the Senate this morning. A preliminary count on the vote showed the bill with only 18 votes - three short of the required 21 for passage. A call of the House was put on to force some who had passed to vote.

As those votes were cast, the vote turned to 19 ayes and 21 nos. With the bill losing, other Senators then changed their vote and the bill was defeated on a vote of 13 to 27.

At this point, the bill is considered killed although there is the possibility that someone might try a motion to reconsider the bill. We will be watching for this the rest of today and on Monday.

Voting NO on the bill were:

Bowers, Denning, Donovan, Faust-Goudeau, Fitzgerald, Francisco, Haley, Hawk, Hensley, Holland, Holmes, Kelly, Kerschen, King, LaTurner, Longbine, Love, McGinn, O'Donnell, Ostmeyer, Petersen, Pettey, Schmidt, Smith, Wagle, Wilborn, and Wolf

Voting YES were:

Abrams, Arpke, Baumgardner, Bruce, Knox, Lynn, Masterson, Melcher, Olson, Pilcher-Cook, Powell, Pyle, and Tyson

Senate Ed Committee Finishes Hearing on Abrams Finance Bill

The Senate Education Committee met over lunch again today to finish the hearing on **SB 294**, Senator Abrams' pilot school finance proposal.

Testifying today were Chris Brown of the Tea Party's Kansans for Liberty, Mark Tallman of KASB, Mark Desetti of KNEA, and Cheryl Semmel of USA/KS. All testified as neutral suggesting that the bill had some interesting ideas but also raised concerns.

KNEA specifically mentioned concerns about the proposed Success Incentive funds. While the plan is to reward school districts whose graduates move into higher education or the workplace in the 24 months following graduation, there is no way currently to gather the data required for making all of these decisions. Additionally, they don't account for those who choose to take low-wage jobs after graduation to save money for college. The plan will also likely raise very serious concerns for those who already have problems with the sharing of individual student data.

Since the bill is double-referred to both Education and Ways and Means it must be approved by both committees in order to be sent to the floor. It is awfully late in the session for such major legislation to be considered.

We'll be tracking this bill over the next week.

Legislature to be out until next week

Today is second turn around, the day by which bills must have been voted on by the second chamber in order to go on. Bills that don't get through the second chamber and are not in an exempt committee will die tonight.

Of course, as all of us learned last April, no bad idea ever dies. Please remain connected and vigilant through the last Legislative day sometime in May!

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