

Legislative Update for OACTE, OAPCTE, and SUED

April 26, 2024

House activity

The House Primary and Secondary Education Committee on April 23 held a third hearing on Senate Bill (SB) 168 for opponent testimony. Representing the Ohio Association of Colleges for Teacher Education was Dr. Mary Heather Munger, who was joined by two students at the University of Findlay – Landyn Dotson and Emma White. Also testifying in opposition were the Ohio Education Association and the Ohio Federation of Teachers.

The committee also heard proponent testimony from various organizations and individuals on House Bill (HB) 432, which creates licensure flexibility for career-technical educators.

The committee will not meet again until May 7.

There is a possibility the committee could amend and vote HB 432 out of committee at its May 7 meeting. SB 168, meanwhile, will likely receive amendment modifications, but it is uncertain whether that will occur at its May 7 meeting or its May 21 meeting.

The House Higher Education Committee on April 24 held opponent testimony on HB 394, which requires colleges and universities to adopt a policy that prohibits the evaluation of employees and students based on beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements or political ideology. The House had previously passed a similar bill that applied to K-12 schools – HB 214 – that is now pending in the Senate, indicating the likelihood that HB 394 has the support of the House and could be passed soon.

Despite having the opportunity to hold a vote of the full House on HB 183 – the same-sex bathroom bill for K-12 schools and colleges and universities – House Speaker Jason Stephens did not place the bill on the House’s agenda for its April 24 session. The next possible vote could occur at its May 8 session.

Senate activity

The Senate on April 24 passed HB 250 by a vote of 32-0. The bill, which originally dealt with the state’s high school graduation system, was previously amended in committee with several policy changes, including:

- a provision specifying that teachers who teach outside their current licensure grade band by up to two grade levels – a recent flexibility from the budget bill – are considered to be “properly certified or licensed” teachers. Currently, a notation is added to a school district’s report card if they employ teachers in such a manner, and HB 250 would remove that notation.
- a provision specifying that license holders who renew their license can have a license under the former three-grade-band system or the current two-grade band system, provided the new license includes at least one of the grades they were previously authorized to teach;
- a provision specifying that the Department of Education and Workforce, and not the State Board of Education, will be responsible for adopting standards and curriculum to incorporate capitalism into the financial literacy standards, as recently enacted by SB 17.

HB 250 awaits a final concurrence vote in the House, which could occur at its next meeting on May 8.

The committee also held sponsor testimony on SB 219 on April 17. SB 219 would restore the licensure grade bands to the previous three grade bands, rather than the current two grade bands. SB 219 was not on this week's agenda and, absent a push from Senate Democrats and other stakeholders, may not appear on the agenda again before lawmakers depart for summer recess.

Judge issues temporary restraining order halting House Bill 68

A Franklin County Common Pleas Court judge on April 16 temporarily blocked the implementation of a controversial bill that would prohibit gender transition services for minors and require same-sex sports teams for public and private K-12 schools and colleges and universities. Judge Michael Holbrook issued a two-week temporary restraining order halting House Bill (HB) 68, which was set to take effect on April 24.

Meanwhile, Gov. Mike DeWine's proposed administrative rules that would ban transgender services for minors continue to advance on their own separate path as they cleared the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review this week. DeWine proposed the rules after he vetoed HB 68, claiming his administrative rules proposal achieved many of the goals of the legislation but also provided options to minors to access those services in limited circumstances.