

# Legislative News



April 13, 2012

Follow the MDHE on Twitter:  
**MDHE\_tweet**



A skylight in the Capitol rotunda.

## Senate Appropriations closes open items in committee

The fiscal year 2013 budget got one step closer to final passage this week as the Senate Committee on Appropriations continued its work on the budget. The committee closed items on Wednesday it had left open in the higher education appropriations bill during mark-up last week. Thursday morning, appropriations bills were passed out of committee.

During the week, the committee closed Missouri Western State University at its House recommended level. The item was left open last week after discussion of \$2 million added by the House for Southeast Missouri State University to address per full-time enrollment funding inequities. Senate Appropriations removed that amount last week, and suggested Wednesday it would fight that addition in

conference.

Senate Appropriations also cut \$1 million added to the MOFAST state and federal partnership technology program by the House and moved the program back to the Department of Economic Development from University of Missouri-related, where it had been moved by the House. Funds for innovation centers in the amount of \$1.36 million was, however, moved by Senate Appropriations from the DED budget to HB 2003, to go directly to institutions operating innovation centers on campus.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, chairman of Senate Appropriations, explained during the week that the tax amnesty program budgeted by Gov. Nixon and the House to bring in approximately \$70 million in revenue would not be passing the Senate, though he was in favor of the proposal. This necessitated additional cuts among open items, though the higher education appropriations bill was largely spared.

The appropriations bills, including House Bill 2003, will now go to the Senate floor for consideration of the full body. Once bills have passed the Senate, the two chambers will go to conference on differences between each chamber's versions of the bills. Appropriations bills must be passed this session by Friday, May 11.

## House Retirement reconsiders College and University Retirement Plan bill

The House Committee on Retirement reconsidered HB 1741 during an executive session Thursday morning. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Mike Leara (R-St. Louis), would amend provisions relating to the defined contribution plan for professors of certain public higher education institutions.

Specifically, the bill cuts existing ties between the College and University Retirement Plan and the Missouri State Employees' Retirement System. Currently CURP employer contribution rates are tied to the rates used in

*continued on page 2, see "College and University Retirement Plan"*

## Legislative committees move on several bills

Following a lengthy floor discussion on a charter schools bill Wednesday, the Senate Committee on Education convened at a rescheduled time later that day to hear legislation relating to the proprietary schools certification program conducted by the Missouri Department of Higher Education and hold an executive session on another higher education bill before the committee.

House Bill 1722 was presented to the committee by sponsor Rep. Mike Thomson (R-Maryville). The bill would modify several provisions relating to proprietary institutions. Those changes include providing for a two-year certification option for certain schools, modifying the fee structure associated with certification and providing specified time frames for the review of new or amended programs. The compro-

mise between the MDHE and the proprietary schools industry seeks to strike a balance between the consumer protection duties of the MDHE through its review process and the desire of the industry to remain responsive to student and market needs.

Testifying in support of the legislation on Wednesday were MDHE Deputy Commissioner Paul Wagner as well as Bill Shoehigh, Brian Grace and Dick Wiles, registered lobbyists for University of Phoenix, Kaplan Higher Education and Associated Industries of Missouri, respectively.

During an executive session, the committee combined HB 1722 with HB 1042 in a committee substitute. House Bill 1042, also sponsored by Rep. Thomson and similar to SB 455 sponsored by Sen.

David Pearce (R-Warrensburg), would modify several duties of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education, mainly relating to course transfer and remediation, in order to improve student success in moving through the higher education pipeline. The committee unanimously voted the substitute do-pass. The bill, however, was not reported out of committee to the Senate floor by week's end.

In the house, a committee substitute adding the provisions of HB 1722 to SB 455 was voted do-pass by the House Committee on Higher Education and reported to the floor on March 27. The bill was referred to House Rules the same day, where it currently remains.

The House Committee on Higher Education did not meet during the week.



*The majestic chandelier in the Capitol rotunda.*

## College and University Retirement Plan, cont. from page 1

MOSERS, but under the bill CURP rates would be set at 7%. The bill would also allow institutions to require employees to contribute up to 4% of salary into the defined contribution plan as deferred compensation and new hires would no longer be able to transfer to MOSERS after at least six years of employment.

The bill was heard by the committee on March 5 and originally voted do-pass during an executive session on March 19. The bill was reconsidered, however, to be added to a committee substitute for HB 1543, sponsored by Rep. Ward Franz (R-West Plains), which

revises the death benefit amount for an active member of the County Employees' Retirement System. That committee substitute was adopted, voted do-pass by the committee and reported to the floor Thursday. It was later referred to House Rules.

A Senate companion bill encountered opposition from the committee chairman during its hearing before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Emerging Issues, Pensions and Urban Affairs. The bill, SB 756 sponsored by Sen. Kevin Engler (R-Farmington), has not been voted on in committee since its hearing on March 8.

**Subscription:** To subscribe or unsubscribe to this publication visit <http://dhe.mo.gov/mdhedigest/signup.php>.