

SS SCS SB 98 -- STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

SPONSOR: Champion (Marsh)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 10 to 1.

This substitute changes the name of Southwest Missouri State University to Missouri State University; drops "Joplin" from the name of Missouri Southern State University-Joplin; and renames Missouri Western State College and Harris-Stowe State College as universities. Central Missouri State University is permitted to change its name to University of Central Missouri upon the approval of its governing board if it acts before August 28, 2007.

Missouri State University is prohibited from seeking land grant status or a research designation. The name change does not entitle the university to additional state funding. Cooperative programs in engineering and doctoral programs may be offered by Missouri State in conjunction with the University of Missouri, with the University of Missouri designated as the degree-granting institution. If the University of Missouri declines to cooperate within a year of program approval, Missouri State may cooperate with another institution or offer the degree directly. Missouri State University will not offer professional programs offered by the University of Missouri but may offer doctorates in audiology and physical therapy. The Coordinating Board retains the right of degree program approval.

In regard to Missouri Western State University, the substitute:

(1) Places in statute its mission as a statewide institution of applied learning;

(2) Changes its service area to Buchanan County and counties contiguous to Buchanan and aligns the selection of its governing board members with the revised area; and

(3) Requires discontinuing its associate degree programs by July 1, 2010, unless the Coordinating Board for Higher Education approves their continuance.

The governing board of Missouri State University is increased from seven to nine voting members and the board of Missouri Southern State University is increased from seven to eight voting members.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that Southwest Missouri State University already has the profile of a state university, so the

name change would not represent a change so much as a confirmation of its status. Its recognition as a state university is a necessary economic development tool for creating business partnerships, attracting international students, and eliciting grants. Language added in the Senate is intended to ensure the continued flagship status of the University of Missouri.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Champion; John Keiser, Southwest Missouri State University; Barbara Burns, Southwest Missouri State University governing board; Chris Curtis, Southwest Missouri State University student government association; James Scanlon, Missouri Western State College; Missouri Southern State University-Joplin; and Central Missouri State University.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that despite assurances to the contrary, state university status for Southwest Missouri State University will lead to requests for additional funding at a time when funding is scarce and a perception of diminished status for all other state colleges and universities. Even if no additional funding is requested now, new programs appropriate to a state university will require extra funding in the future. The University of Missouri has been known in the past as Missouri State University; a name change infringes on its historic past.

Testifying against the bill were Representatives Pratt and Johnson (47); Marissa Cabrera, Associated Students of the University of Missouri; Greg Chase, University of Missouri Legislative Information Network Committee; and James Sterling.

Becky DeNeve, Senior Legislative Analyst