

HCS SB 987 -- HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH

SPONSOR: Stouffer (Hobbs)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 10 to 0.

Currently, the maximum amount that the University of Missouri Board of Curators may annually award for a grant for the investigation of spinal cord injuries and other specific disease processes is \$50,000. This substitute raises the annual maximum to \$250,000.

The substitute specifies that an entity in which an institution of higher education holds an ownership or membership interest will not be deemed to be a public governmental or quasi-public governmental body as it relates to the Open Meetings and Records Law, commonly known as the Sunshine Law, if the entity is engaged primarily in activities involving current or prospective commercialization of the skills or knowledge of the institution's faculty or of the institution's research, research capabilities, intellectual property, technology, or technological resources and the institution maintains as an open record an annual report identifying specified information. Meetings, records, and votes may be closed to the extent that they relate to records or information submitted in connection with a proposal or agreement to license intellectual property; perform sponsored research involving students, faculty, or staff; or promote or pursue economic development which contain sales projections or other business plan, financial information, or trade secrets the disclosure of which may endanger the competitiveness of a business.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the amount of research that can be completed under a \$50,000 grant is negligible. A comparable figure for a grant from the National Institutes of Health is more than \$300,000. Raising the grant amount does not raise the cost of the program which is funded through court costs.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Stouffer; Armon Yanders, University of Missouri Spinal Cord Injury Research Program; and Washington University.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.