

HB 251 -- LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

SPONSOR: Taylor

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Economic Development by a vote of 8 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 11 to 3.

This bill prohibits any sum from being withheld from the earnings of a public employee for the payment of any portion of dues, agency shop fees, or other fees paid by public employee members of a public labor organization or a public employee who is a nonmember except upon the annual written or electronic authorization of the employee.

A public labor organization is prohibited from using or obtaining any portion of dues, agency shop fees, or any other fees paid by member and nonmember public employees to make political campaign contributions or expenditures unless it obtains a written or electronic authorization from the member or nonmember within the previous 12 months.

This bill further requires public labor organizations to maintain financial records, identical to those required by federal law (29 U.S.C. 431(b)), for no less than five years. Each report required under this section must be made available to employees in a searchable electronic format. If a public labor organization fails to make the reports available to an employee, that employee will have a cause of action against the organization.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill would enable public union members and nonmembers to divert their dues and fees from political purposes that they find unconscionable.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Taylor; Americans For Prosperity; and the Missouri Century Foundation.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this bill is unnecessarily duplicative because existing law and practices already permit public union members and nonmembers to opt out of membership and other payroll deductions, and that such redundancies will present administrative challenges to public unions.

Testifying against the bill were the Missouri NEA; Sherwood Smith, Missouri State Council Of Firefighters; Service Employees International Union (SEIU); MO/KS State Council; Missouri Fraternal Order Of Police; and the Missouri AFL-CIO.

This bill is similar to HB 1891 (2016) and HB 159 (2015).