

HCS HB 355 -- INFORMATION PROVIDED TO STUDENTS

SPONSOR: Baker

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 6 to 2. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 11 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 355.

This bill creates the "Students' Right to Know Act", which, beginning January 1, 2022, requires the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development to annually collect and compile specified information to help high school students make more informed decisions about their futures and ensure they are adequately aware of the costs of four-year college and alternative career paths. The document must be available to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for distribution to public school guidance counselors by October 15th each year.

The information provided by the public institutions is also required to be available on the website of the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development.

This bill is the same as HB 233 (2021) and similar to the HCS for HB 1774 & 1994 (2020).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill will help compile pertinent information on education costs and job potential and help present this to students and parents in an accessible manner. The bill is similar to previous legislation and helps parents have a starting point for conversations with their student.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Baker; Missouri School Counselor Association; and the Opportunity Solutions Project.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that there are already several quality websites like the College Scorecard that serve this purpose and contains information that most institutions would not have ready access to. This bill has a costly impact and as drafted would require additional staff at each public institution and there would be very little guarantee that "self-reported" data would be accurate.

Testifying against the bill were Kathy Schmidtke Felts, Ph.D., University of Missouri System; University of Missouri System; and Paul Wagoner, Council on Public Higher Education.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the spirit of the legislation should be supported, although there are several aspects of the bill that are already in existence.

Testifying on the bill was the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.