

HCS HB 607 -- SALARIES FOR TEACHERS

SPONSOR: Lewis

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs by a vote of 8 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 8 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 607.

This bill clarifies language relating to additional funding for teacher salaries that districts receive if the district has a school calendar with 169 school days. The clarification provided allows for inclement weather or authorized reductions to the number of days the district must be in session to qualify for the funding (Section 163.045 RSMo).

The bill modifies the minimum teacher salary to remove the requirement that a teacher's master's degree must be in an academic teaching field directly related to the teacher's assignment. Additionally, the bill delays increases to the minimum salaries due to inflation until 2030 and only authorizes increases due to inflation from 2030 to 2035.

Beginning in 2030-31 the bill limits grants authorized under the "Teacher Baseline Salary Grant Program" to 50% of the amount necessary for a district to increase minimum teacher's salaries to meet the threshold set. The remaining 50% must be spent by the district from the Classroom Trust Fund moneys unless the fund is expended and then the district may receive additional grant funding.

The bill adds an expiration to the grant program of June 30, 2035 unless the program is reauthorized (Section 163.172).

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

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this is SB 727 with tweaks. Last year, the base salary increased dramatically. This bill is meant to fix the minimum baseline as it was intended. If the base salary is \$40,000, and it increases accordingly until 2035, the salary will get to \$50,000. The school districts have to split the cost of the teachers' base salary, increasing the base from \$20,000 to \$40,000 making it a lot for school districts to have to pay. This bill gives the supporters something manageable and does not break the

banks for schools. There was also a bump relating to schools that had a five-day school week, but it was hard to define what a five-day school week was, especially if there was a snow day. It did not have exceptions for alternative methods of instruction days or snow days. The fix in this bill would put it in line with going back to school days. If schools have allocated all their classroom trust fund moneys, then they can ask for money.

Testifying in person for the bill was Representative Lewis.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that it is concerning to have to come back a year after the legislature made the changes to hold the legislature to its promises. Missouri are competing against other states, so it is very important to increase the minimum teacher salary in order to be competitive. Opponents say the Missouri State Teachers Association was neutral on SB 727 but now they are opposing this because it's undoing some of the increases. School districts are currently responding to the changes passed in SB 727, and this bill undoes something that is very necessary for Missouri's teachers. Opponents further say hard conversations need to be had, including that this ultimately should become a matching program. This bill is going to bring up a lot of issues.

Testifying in person against the bill were Missouri State Teachers Association; and Missouri Council Of School Administrators.

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