



OEA Legislative Watch

*****REVISED*****

March 4, 2011

Do you know that the political process affects virtually everything in your school day?

Take action —
Become an OEA Member Lobbyist

Questions?

Contact your Governmental Services Team

Ron Rapp
Director
rappr@ohea.org

Melissa Clark
Lobbyist
clarkm@ohea.org

Robert Davis
Lobbyist
davisr@ohea.org

Matthew Dotson
Lobbyist
dotsonm@ohea.org

Pete Hackeman
UniServ Political Advocacy Consultant
hackemanp@ohea.org

Russ Harris
Education Research Development Consultant
harrisr@ohea.org

Senate Bill 5 Passes the Ohio Senate 17-16 Despite Bi-Partisan Opposition

Senate Bill 5 (R-Jones) passed the Ohio Senate 17-16 on March 2, 2011. Voting in opposition to the bill were all ten Democratic Senators and six Republican Senators. The bill would have stalled in the Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor Committee based on two Republican “no” votes on the committee, but Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) replaced one of the Republican “no” votes with a different Senator who committed to vote “yes,” which enabled the bill to be moved out of committee. Senate Republicans voting “no” on Senate Bill 5 were: Jim Hughes (R-Columbus), Tim Grendell (R-Chesterland), Gayle Manning (R-N. Ridgeville), Scott Oelslager (R-N. Canton), Tom Patton (R-Strongsville) and Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati).

Senate Bill 5 will drastically curtail collective bargaining rights for public employees in Ohio, taking away their voice to advocate on behalf of the support they need to effectively serve Ohio’s students and citizens. Senate Bill 5 now heads to the Ohio House of Representatives, where the OEA will continue to fight this damaging legislation.

Ohio Senate Floor Vote: 17 Yes - 16 No

Yes Votes - 17 Republicans

Bacon
Beagle
Cates
Daniels
Faber
Gillmor
Hite
LaRose
Jones
Jordan
Lehner
Niehaus
Obhof
Schaffer
Stewart
Wagoner
Widener

No Votes- 10 Dems./6 Rep.

Brown (D)
Cafaro (D)
Kearney (D)
Sawyer (D)
Schiavoni (D)
Skindell (D)
Smith (D)
Tavares (D)
Turner (D)
Wilson (D)
Hughes (R)
Seitz (R)
Grendell (R)
Manning (R)
Oelslager (R)
Patton (R)

HB 136: Statewide Voucher Program

House Bill 136, sponsored by Representative Matt Huffman (R-Lima), was introduced on Tuesday, March 1, 2011. The bill would create a statewide voucher program providing taxpayer money to students to pay tuition at private schools. Students would qualify on the basis of household income and those with incomes in excess of \$100,000 for a family of four would be eligible. The amount of the voucher would be deducted from state funding to the public school district of residence.

The bill would also eliminate the current Ed Choice and Cleveland voucher programs but those recipients would be grandfathered into the new statewide voucher program. HB 136 would also create a special education voucher program.

At introduction, the bill listed 37 cosponsors including two Democrats, Representatives Bill Patmon (D-Cleveland) and Michael Stinziano (D-Columbus). The bill has been referred to the House Education Committee, but is likely to become a part of the debate in the upcoming state budget.

OEA strongly opposes HB 136 and is opposed to voucher programs that use taxpayer dollars to fund parental choice programs that enroll students in private schools. The fiscal impact of this proposal could be devastating for school districts throughout the state. In a tough economy, facing budget deficits, we need to focus on the essentials. Vouchers drain scarce resources from public schools that serve the majority of Ohio's students and are open to all.