

## **MACTE Weekly Legislative Update, 3.20.15**

**Prepared by Cyndy Crist, MACTE Legislative and Policy Liaison**

### **Policy Omnibus Bills Out of Committee**

This week saw policy committees in both the House and Senate complete work on and pass out of committee their omnibus policy bills. HF 1591 includes the provisions in HF 2 regarding preparation and licensure plus a few other small items. SF 1495 primarily includes licensure items from SF 559 as described in last week's update. Generally speaking, SF 1495 is much more in line with MACTE positions and interests, generally maintaining high standards for all candidates while providing some flexibility for those hired to teach in shortage areas and candidates prepared in other states. I encourage all members to review these bills on-line once they are posted with the committees' final changes. Look for a date of 3.19 on HF 1591 and 3.20 on SF 1495 to be sure you are reviewing the most recent version. It may be early next week before these will be available on-line.

### **Next Steps for Policy and Other Bills**

Now that the first policy bill deadline has passed, attention will turn primarily to finance committees. The bills they will consider may address policy issues that include appropriations, and sometimes the policy and finance bills are rolled into single E-12 omnibus bills, so I will continue to track their work and keep you informed. In addition, some policy bills without fiscal implications may still be heard in policy committees of either body, though those bills technically can't be moved forward to final passage this year since the first bill deadline has passed.

There are two important bills that include appropriations that we are tracking. One is Senator Torres-Ray's SF 664 on data reporting for teacher and administrator preparation programs. We are in discussions with Senator Torres-Ray and the Board of Teaching on potential changes in her bill (in the House, these provisions are included in HF 1591 with no reference to an appropriation, even though the bill as it was previously moving in the House did include an appropriation). SF 664 will be heard next in the E-12 education finance committee, likely in April. On the higher education side, we are working with several senators, including the author, to seek changes in Senator Brandon Petersen's SF 1273, which is described as creating a competitive Alternative Teacher Preparation Grant Program but for which the author acknowledged this week that only Teach for America would currently be eligible. We are working to improve definitions and criteria and to broaden its focus to include an array of nontraditional programs.

### **Upcoming Legislative Break and Meetings with Legislators**

Legislators will soon be heading home for a 10-day break, and this would be a great time to meet with them on campus or elsewhere in their district. With so much focus this session on licensure issues, it would be timely to highlight the licensure provisions in SF 1495 as better reflecting a commitment to ensuring quality while providing more flexibility than those in HF 1591. Sharing stories about how you have worked effectively with out-of-state candidates to help them get licensed, partnered with school districts to ensure teacher candidate quality and diversity, and why it is so important to "fix" licensure-related testing, including better accommodations for students with disabilities, are just three examples of how you can help make the case for the Senate provisions. As always, if you need help determining how to connect with the legislators that represent your campus districts and to find relevant legislation, please let me know (best to email me at [cyndy.crist@gmail.com](mailto:cyndy.crist@gmail.com)).