

MACTE Weekly Legislative Report, 4.26.15

Prepared by Cyndy Crist, MACTE Legislative and Policy Liaison

Nearing the End Game at the Capitol. We have now reached perhaps the most challenging time of the legislative session, when the looming deadline of constitutionally mandated adjournment by Monday, May 18 looms over every committee hearing and floor session. A wide array of individual bills have been combined into omnibus bills, which means that likely every legislator can find something he or she doesn't like in each one. Since only a few legislators can serve on conference committees, discussions of these bills provide one of the last chances for many legislators to be heard and seek changes. This can make for moments of high drama in the midst of long and sometimes boring debates. Here's where things stand as of this writing:

Higher Education Bills: The House Omnibus Higher Education Bill, **HF 845**, will be taken up by the full house on Monday, April 27. The Senate omnibus bill, **SF 5**, has already been passed. Next, each chamber will name conferees to resolve the differences between the two bills. Just two provisions in the current version of the House bill and one in the Senate bill are of direct importance to teacher preparation and licensure. Each bill contains funding for year-long student teaching pilots at up to two MnSCU universities. The Senate is slightly more generous in its support at \$175,000 compared to the House appropriation of \$100,000. Only the House bill contains funding for a teacher shortage loan forgiveness program. Once conferees are named, it will be timely to contact members to urge them to retain the House loan forgiveness program in the final, negotiated omnibus bill.

E-12 Bills: The House passed its omnibus bill, **HF 844**, on Saturday, April 25, another indication of the pressure to finish the work of this session. An Urdahl amendment was adopted to add a provision similar to SF 229 directing the BOT, at the request of a school district or charter school, to issue a standard license to an individual teaching under a temporary license who has attempted but not achieved the specified score on the MTLE skills test or ACT/SAT, has taught successfully for three years, and has been evaluated to be an effective teacher during each of those three years. The Senate omnibus finance bill, **SF 811**, was passed out of the Finance Committee early on Friday, April 24, and will be heard in Senate Taxes on Monday, April 27. The Senate omnibus policy bill, **SF 1495**, remains separate. Likely for that reason, Senator Clausen attempted on Thursday night to amend his licensure bill, **SF 559** (which we supported and which was incorporated into SF 1495), into SF 811 bill but the amendment was withdrawn, perhaps because of the late hour (the committee reconvened at 9:45 p.m. after a long floor session and adjourned at 12:30 a.m.). At this point, it is not clear how the bills will be "conferenced." In general, the Senate's policy positions are much closer to MACTE's positions with the exception of the two late additions to the Senate finance bill mentioned in last week's briefing (CAPS and data reporting), both of which we oppose in their current forms.

Next Steps for MACTE. Please watch for targeted messages requesting action to contact legislators about specific provisions of greatest interest to us. These will be requests to email or call conference committee members regarding specific provisions being discussed as these small groups work out differences between the bills passed by each body. Timelines will be tight.