

MACTE Weekly Legislative Update, 1.13.17
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Policy Committees Begin Meeting.

This week, the education policy committees in both the Senate and House got underway, primarily listening to representatives of various education organizations and advocacy groups as they shared their priorities for the 2017 session. I testified in both committees, sharing MACTE's priorities of addressing the findings of the report of the Office of the Legislative Auditor on Educator Licensing, teacher shortages, and teacher diversity. Those same priorities were among the lists shared by many other organizations, along with specific concerns about CTE and special education licensure.

Early Bill Introductions.

Legislators have begun introducing bills, and among these are four focused on OLA issues. These include HF 140 and its companion, SF 4; HF 69; and SF 116. Of these, the latter, authored by Senators Wiger and Clausen, is closest to MACTE's preference for all licensure matters to be consolidated under a board made up of a majority of classroom teachers as well as a teacher preparation representative and representatives of various other key constituencies. It is likely that more bills focused on the issues of governance, tiered licensure, and statutory "clean-up" will be introduced over the course of the next several months. These OLA-related issues will be the focus of the next hearing of the House Education Innovation Policy Committee on Tuesday, 1.17 at 8:15 a.m.

MACTE Legislative Action.

Although MEC had raised the possibility of an early "day of action" by MACTE members and students on February 7, it has become clear that this is not a workable date for many of our members so we will not proceed with this plan. A full discussion of emerging legislative issues and potential strategies will be part of the agenda at the MACTE business meeting on February 8 and, subsequent to those discussions, we will identify one or two later dates for action at the Capitol. In the meantime, because there are many new members of both policy committees, we are requesting that you review the following list of legislative members of those two committees and let me know at your earliest convenience if you are a constituent of and/or have connections with any of them. New House members are Cal Bahr, Matt Grossell, Barb Haley, Randy Jessup, Mary Kunesh-Podein, Fue Lee, Erin Maye Quade, and Laurie Pryor; returning members are Peggy Bennett, David Bly, Drew Christenson, Brian Daniels, Sondra Erickson, Carlos Mariani, Jason Rarich, Dean Urdahl, and JoAnn Ward. New Senate members include Justin Eichorn, Paul T. Anderson, Steve Cwodzinski, and Paul Utke; returning members are Roger Chamberlain, Greg Clausen, Gary Dahms, John Hoffman, Susan Kent, and Eric Pratt.

Special Education Concerns.

A number of questions and concerns have been expressed during the education policy committee hearings and I have been asked to meet with Senator Greg Clausen for further discussion. I am working with MEC to identify one or two members to join me in a meeting with him in the near future. In the meantime, I would welcome any thoughts or information you might share with me about the ABS license and how it is working for your students, programs, and the school districts with which you work.