

4.03.17 MACTE Weekly Legislative Update

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This week's update will be short since action is concentrating on the omnibus bills and because we'll have time for a "deeper dive" at Thursday's MACTE meeting. Here's where things stand as of Monday morning, April 3.

Omnibus Bills Completed

Both the House and Senate completed work in committees on their omnibus bills (HF 890 and SF 718) last week. HF 890 was also passed off the floor of the House last week on a nearly party line vote. Because it received final action first, it has now become the bill that will be used to move forward to completion of an omnibus E-12 bill. That doesn't mean that the Senate has accepted its full text in place of its own bill but rather is the mechanism for having a single bill number around which all future action will be based. It appears likely to be acted on by the Senate today, which means that the next step is to name a conference committee and begin working out differences between the two bills. Since the Easter/Passover break starts on Saturday, April 8, it seems possible that conferees will be named before the break with a first convening of the conference committee after their return to the Capitol on Tuesday, April 18. Since there are some provisions in one bill that we find preferable to similar provisions in the other, this conference committee may provide an important time for MACTE member action.

Uncertainty about Governance and Tiered Licensure Resolution

As reported previously, the House has chosen to move its major teacher licensure bill, HF 140, separately from the omnibus HF 890, and two weeks ago, that is how the Senate had announced its own plans. However, when the Senate unveiled its omnibus bill last week that included all of the provisions of its licensure bill, SF 4, it became less clear how those issues will move toward resolution. It is possible, but not yet certain, that a single conference committee will be named to take up both the omnibus bills and licensure bills. This is an issue that we will follow very closely.

In the meantime, supporters of Governor Dayton sought last week to separate omnibus bills into separate policy and finance bills, which the Governor has suggested is a better way to do business. One element of this for Dayton is likely that a governor can line item veto spending items but not policy items, making policy bills essentially "all or nothing." However, all such efforts so far have failed in the Republican-majority bodies.