# 2024 Legislative Session

**5-21-2024**: The 2024 Regular Session of the Missouri legislature adjourned Friday, May 17th. The House and the Senate will not be considering any more bills for this session. All bills which had not passed and been sent to the Governor are "dead" for this year. New bills with new bill numbers will begin being filed on December 1, 2024, for the 2025 legislative session.

Thank you for your participation-calls, emails, attendance at committee meetings, attending the Homeschool Day, etc. "We are Better Together".

This was a busy and difficult session, but with everyone working together we have protected our homeschool freedoms!

In the coming weeks FHE will be updating our home school information to reflect the statute location change that will take effect on August 28th.

As this is an election year, FHE would like to encourage you to get to know the candidates. Be an ambassador for homeschooling and let them know the importance of homeschool freedom. It will be helpful when the session begins next year if you already have a positive relationship with your state representative and senator.

All of the state representative districts will be on the ballot. The odd numbered state senator districts will be on the ballot. Some candidates will be up for re-election. There are a number of representatives and senators which are term limited out, are not re-running, or are running for a different elected office. Following the election and the candidates can be a great learning experience for your children.

Have a wonderful summer!!!

**5-7-2024 News:** The Governor has signed SB 727 and HB 2287. They will become effective on August 28, 2024. Feel free to go to our <u>Blog post</u> for more information on what this changes.

# 4-25-2024 Update on HB 1672 (substitute bill posted with permission)

HB 1672 was originally sponsored by Rep. Mark Matthiesen. Rep. Bishop Davidson is now the handler of the bill. The bill has been changed to a "Home School Protection bill". FHE testified in favor of HCS HB 1672 on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

On April 23<sup>rd</sup> the House Special Committee on Education Reform voted a recommendation of "do pass" on HB HCS 1672. The home school protections included in the bill are the repeal of 167.042 ("Declaration of Intent to Home School), requirement for the prosecuting attorney to have "probable cause" to review home school records, and home school privacy of personally identifiable information a public school might possess.

These are law changes FHE has been advocating for several years. <u>HB 1139</u> passed the House Education Committee in 2019 but was not heard in the Rules-Oversight Committee.

It is late in the legislative session, so it is unlikely that <u>HCS HB 1672</u> will advance this session. Since it passed the Committee this year, there is a good chance it will be introduced early in the 2025 session. FHE will be watching to see.

UPDATE - UPDATE - UPDATE - UPDATE - UPDATE SB 727 – Firearms Concern Fixed Update on SB 727—Calls are no longer needed

The legislature has fully addressed Families for Home Education and HSLDA concerns of the possibility of home school families being charged with a crime for having a gun in their home.

FHE is no longer opposing SB 727, but has moved to a neutral position.

Thursday, April 18th, the House passed <u>SB 727</u> along with <u>HB 2287</u>. Both bills were "Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed". This was the last step before the bills will be sent to the governor. The governor will have until July 14th to either sign the bills, veto the bills, or he can let them become law after July 14th by not vetoing or signing them. Unless he vetoes the bills, they will go into effect on August 28, 2024.

When HB 2287 is companioned with SB 727, it does two things.

1. Changes the definition of a home school to:

For purposes of state law regarding this section and sections 161.670, 162.996, 167.013, 167.031, 167.042, 167.061, 167.600, 167.619, 210.167, 210.211, 211.031, and 452.375, a "home school" is a school, whether incorporated or unincorporated, that: (**HB 2287, page 12, lines 1-4**)

2. Adds the definition of a school in RSMo 571.010.17 to the Missouri code crimes chapter.

(17) "School", any charter school, as such term is defined in section 160.400, any private school, as such term is defined in section 166.700, or any public school, as such term is defined in section 160.011; (RSMo 167.012.1) (**HB 2287, page 21, lines 60-62**)

Therefore, the home school definition gives the specific sections of the statutes where home school is used. The crime code chapter makes it clear it is referring to charter schools, private schools, and public school by not only naming them in the definition, but also giving the section numbers of their definitions.

Thank you for your calls and emails. Your involvement makes a difference!!!

FHE would also like to thank the legislature for working with FHE and HSLDA on resolving this issue.

Thank you to HSLDA for the tireless efforts and time they spend working with FHE to protect our home school freedoms in Missouri.

#### Alert - SB 727 (4/15/2024):

FHE and HSLDA have changed our neutral positions on SB 727 to OPPOSE.

FHE and HSLDA, through our intensive research, have concluded there must be language in SB 727 to address the home school gun concerns. Even though we have solid gun rights laws, there are courts in Missouri that do not stick to the "strict scrutiny" of the law.

If you agree with FHE and HSLDA, call and/or email your State Representative NOW. It could come to the House floor as soon as 4:00 PM today.

Ask them to oppose SB 727 unless they amend it to fix the problem. The sponsor and the bill carrier have been contacted by FHE with proposed amendment language to fix the problem which FHE and HSLDA support.

Legislative look up link: <u>https://www.senate.mo.gov/LegisLookup/Default</u>

# Update 4/13/2024- SB 727

# Concerning the homeschool gun issue:

Many of you have reached out to FHE with your concerns. While we continue to remain neutral on the bill for now, we are continuing to research the issue.

# UPDATES on SB 727, HB 2937, HB 2125, HB 2127, and HB 2323 as of 4-9-2024

# FHE Capitol Report Update – April 9, 2024

FHE would like to thank everyone for all of the calls and emails you have sent so far this legislative session. This has been one of the busiest for homeschoolers.

**Update on SB 727** which was voted "do pass" in the House Special Committee on Education Reform without any changes on 4/2/2024. It was then referred to the House Rules – Regulatory Oversight Committee and is scheduled for an Executive Session (no public testimony) Tuesday, April 9, at 4:30pm or upon adjournment - HR 5.

<u>Click Here</u> to view the last bill substitute which was perfected on March 14, 2024. (SS#2/SCS/SB727) <u>Click Here</u> to view HSLDA's analysis on the most recent concern about SB 727 limiting a homeschool family's ability possess a gun in their own home. FHE is in full agreement with HSLDA's analysis.

# <u>Click Here</u> to view the Division of Research analysis.

<u>Click Here</u> to view the Missouri Firearms Coalition response. And you can go to their <u>Facebook page</u> for more details of their response.

We understand there have been a few concerns about some word changes in the new "homeschool" definition section of the bill. The definition is unchanged except for a home school is not "a family paced education school" and cannot participate in the MO Scholars program. The "log of hours" being a defense to a truancy or educational neglect charge was moved to the new section. The requirement that only a prosecuting attorney can review home school records was also moved to the new section.

If the House Rules – Regulatory Oversight Committee reports SB 727 back to the House floor it will still have several steps before it becomes law. It must pass the House Fiscal Review Committee, go back to the House floor for "Perfection and Third Read". Note: when a bill is in the second house "Perfection and Third Read" are done one right after the other. If the bill is passed, "Truly Agreed and Finally Passed" it will then be sent to the Governor to veto, sign, or let go into law without his signature by waiting for the constitutional deadline for signing bills to pass.

FHE, at this point, continues to be neutral on SB 727. We will continue to carefully watch as the bill proceeds through the process.

Update on HB 2937 which was heard in the House Special Committee on Education Reform on March 25, 2024.

Thank you for all who came to testify, made calls, and sent emails. A special thank you to Scott Woodruff of HSLDA who came to testify.

The bill has not been brought up for a vote. FHE is keeping a close eye on HB 2937 which we continue to oppose.

**Update on HB 2125, HB 2127, HB 2323** which were bills heard in the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee on January 24, 2024. At present, they have not come up in the committee for a vote. FHE continues to monitor these bills which would lower the compulsory school attendance age to 5 or 6.

FHE would like to again thank everyone that came to testify, sent in testimony, made calls, and emailed. It takes all of us working together to protect our homeschool freedoms.

# UPDATE 2-27-2024: SB 727 and HB 2104

SB 727 may be heard on the Senate floor this week. Because of some changes which include the removal of a home school from the MO Scholars program, FHE is neutral on the bill.

FHE is neutral on HB 2104 because of some changes which are being made which includes the removal of a home school from the MO Scholars program.

HOUSE & SENATE ALERT 2-10-2024: Say NO to Government Money and MO Scholars Program. House Hearing on Monday at 1:00 pm and Senate Hearing on Tuesday at 8:00 am. Click <u>HERE</u> for ALL Committee member emails, bill information and bill links for HB 1615, HB 1671, HB 1738, HB 2104, SB1391, and SB1392.

<u>UPDATE 2-6-2024</u>: Thank you for making calls and sending emails opposing HB 2125, HB 2177, and HB 2323. One of these bills would lower the compulsory attendance to 5 years old and two would lower the compulsory attendance age to 6 years old.

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee completed the public hearing. As of Tuesday morning, February 6, 2024, the bills are not on the Committee agenda for Wednesday to vote on the bills. However, the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee can vote on these bills at anytime during a Committee meeting.

If you oppose the lowering of the compulsory attendance age and have not called or emailed the members of the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee you may still let your voice be heard by calling or emailing today.

For more information, see the original alert with the Committee contact information by clicking <u>HERE</u>.

**SB 729 and the SB 867**, the ESA type tax credit bills, have not moved as now. SB 729 has been voted do pass, but has not been reported to the Senate floor. SB 867 has not been rescheduled for a hearing, but could possibly be placed on a hearing schedule in the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee. Stay alert! If they begin to move FHE will alert our members and friends.

<u>SENATE ALERT 1-22-2024</u>: Click <u>HERE</u> for the Alert Information on SB 867, SB 902, SB 729. Please contact the Committee TODAY. Hearing is tomorrow, Tuesday, January 23 @ 11:30 am (time changed), Hearing Room SCR 2.

HOUSE ALERT 1-19-2024: Click HERE for the Alert Information on HB 2125, HB 2177, HB 2323. Please contact the Committee Today. Hearing is Wednesday, January 24 @ 8 am, Hearing Room 7

House of Representatives – 163	Senate – 34
Democrats – 51	Democrats – 10
Republicans – 111	Republicans – 24
Vacancies - 1	No Vacancies

Capitol Report as of May 6, 2024:

Bills in this color are ones that have been updated or added.

**Compulsory Attendance** 

FHE Opposes any legislation lowering or raising the compulsory attendance age

<u>HB 2125</u> – Modifies provisions relating to age for school entry – Lowers compulsory attendance age to 5 years old

Sponsor: Mackey, lan

Last Action: 01/24/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

**Bill Information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

OPPOSE- Limits a parent's freedom to choose the best age to begin their child in formal learning

<u>SB 2177</u> - Modifies provisions relating to age for school entry – Lowers compulsory attendance age to 6 years old

Sponsor: Sassmann, Bruce

Last Action: 01/24/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

**Bill Information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

OPPOSE - Limits a parent's freedom to choose the best age to begin their child in formal learning

<u>HB 2323</u> - Modifies provisions relating to age for school entry – Lowers compulsory attendance age to 6 years old

Sponsor: Farnan, Jeff

Last Action: 01/24/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

**Bill information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

OPPOSE - Limits a parent's freedom to choose the best age to begin their child in formal learning

<u>SB 761</u>-Authorizes excusal from attendance at an elementary or secondary school if the child is unable to attend due to mental or behavioral health concerns

Sponsor: May, Karla

Last Action: 1/9/2024 - Second Read and Referred S Education and Workforce Development Committee

**Bill Information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

#### Watch

# HB 2252 – Requires school districts to excuse students with mental or behavioral health concerns from attendance at school

Sponsor: Johnson, Michael

Last Action: 01/04/2024 - Read Second Time (H)

Bill information page

Watch

HB 2343 - Requires school districts to excuse students with mental or behavioral health concerns from attendance at school

Sponsor: Fogle, Betsy (135)

Last Action: 01/10/2024 - Read Second Time (H)

Bill information page

Watch

#### Home School

There are three bills which include the participation of certain students in nontraditional educational settings and adds the Family Led Educational eXperience (FLEX) school designation and requirements.

What would two designations look like? -- Link to pdf

Non-Academic Involvement in Public Schools – FHE's policy – Link to pdf

<u>SB 819</u> – Relating to participation of certain students in nontraditional educational settings – (includes changes to RSMo 167.031, home school/FLEX school) SCS SB 819

Sponsor: Ben Brown (26)

Last Action: 5/6/2024 - Formal Calendar S Bills for Perfection

**Bill Information Page** 

**Bill Summary** 

Neutral

<u>SB 902</u> - Creates and modifies provisions relating to elementary and secondary education [Includes changes to RSMO 167.031, home school/FLEX school, Repeal of Declaration of Enrollment RSMo 167.042, and Repeal of 167.071]

Sponsor: Schroer, Nick

Last Action: 1/23/2024 - Hearing Conducted S Education and Workforce Development Committee

**Bill Information Page** 

**Bill Summary** 

Watch

<u>HB 1905</u> – Establishes provisions relating to the participation of elementary and secondary school students in nontraditional educational settings [Includes changes to RSMO 167.031, home school/FLEX school, and Repeal of 167.071]

Sponsor: Hurlbert, Josh (008)

Last Action: 01/04/2024 - Read Second Time (H)

**Bill Information Page** 

**Bill Summary** 

Watch

HB 1672 - Changes provisions governing optional home school declarations of enrollment

HCS HB 1672 (substitute posted with permission)

Sponsor: Matthiesen, Mark (107)

Bill Handler: Representative Bishop Davidson

Last Action: House Special Committee on Education Reform

04/23/2024 - HCS Voted Do Pass (H)

**Bill Information Page** 

**Bill Summary** 

Support - support repeal of RSMo 167.042, prosecuting attorney-probable cause, homeschool data privacy

HB 1717 - Provides A+ scholarships for home school students who meet the program's eligibility requirements

Sponsor: McGirl, Mike (118)

Last Action: 01/18/2024 - Referred: Special Committee on Education Reform(H)

Bill information page

**Bill Summary** 

Watch

# Empowerment Scholarship Account Bills – Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Account Program (MOScholars)

# HB 1615 - Changes the definition of "qualified student" for purposes of Missouri empowerment scholarship accounts

Sponsor: Hudson, Brad (138)

Last Action: 02/12/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

**Bill Information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

OPPOSE

<u>HB 1671</u> - Changes the definition of "qualified student" for the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program

Sponsor: Matthiesen, Mark (107)

Last Action: 04/23/2024 - HCS Voted Do Pass (H)

**Bill Information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

OPPOSE

#### HB 1738 - Changes provisions governing educational scholarships

Sponsor: Richey, Doug (039)

Last Action: 02/12/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

**Bill information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

#### OPPOSE

<u>HB 2104</u> - Changes provisions governing educational scholarships [Removes a home school parent from the background check requirement]

Sponsor: Christofanelli, Phil (104)

Last Action: 02/12/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

Bill Information page

#### **Bill Summary**

NEUTRAL- Since the committee chairman has agreed to remove a home school from the MO Scholars program, FHE is neutral on the bill. FHE will be watching it closely to make sure there are not changes made

that will be harmful to a home school.

<u>SB 727</u> - Relating to educational scholarships [Removes a home school parent from the background check requirement] Current Bill version: <u>SS #2 SCS SB 727 – Truly Agreed and Finally Passed</u>

Sponsor: Koenig, Andrew

Last Action: 4/24/2024 - Delivered to Governor

**Bill Information Page** 

#### **Bill Summary**

NEUTRAL – Since the bill sponsor has agreed to make some changes, FHE is neutral on the bill. FHE will be watching it closely to see if the Governor signs the bill

HB 2287 - Modifies provisions related to the virtual school program

Bill Sponsor: Representative Phil Christofanelli

Current Bill version: SS HB 2287 – Truly Agreed and Finally Passed

Last Action: 04/25/2024 - Delivered to Governor

**Bill Information Page** 

#### **Bill Summary**

NEUTRAL – Language to address the homeschool gun concerns was placed in the SS HB 2287. FHE will be watching it closely to see if the Governor signs the bill.

#### SB 1118 - Relating to educational scholarships

#### Sponsor: Coleman, Mary Elizabeth

Last Action: 1/25/2024 - Second Read and Referred S Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children Committee

#### **Bill Information Page**

**Bill Summary** 

OPPOSE

# <u>HB 2620</u> – Changes the definition of "qualified student" for purposes of Missouri empowerment scholarship accounts

Sponsor: Representative Cody Smith

Last Action: 02/05/2024 - Read Second Time (H)

**Bill Information Page** 

## <u>SB 1391</u> - Modifies provisions of the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program

Current Bill version <u>SCS SB 1391</u> Sponsor: <u>Luetkemeyer, Tony</u> Last Action: 5/6/2024 - Informal Calendar S Bills for Perfection <u>Bill Information Page</u> <u>Bill Summary</u>

#### OPPOSE

SB 1392 - Modifies provisions of the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program and authorizes charter schools to operate in Boone County, St. Charles County, and St. Louis County Sponsor: Trent, Curtis Last Action: 5/6/2024 - Informal Calendar S Bills for Perfection Bill Information Page Bill Summary

#### OPPOSE

#### HB 2893 - Modifies provisions governing Missouri empowerment scholarship accounts

Sponsor: Representative Betsy Fogle

Last Action: 03/01/2024 - Read Second Time (H)

**Bill information page** 

Watch

#### Tax Credits for a Home School – We are watching these bill closely

#### FHE ESA Policy

#### Tax-Credit ESA

FHE does not ask the government for money: therefore, for the most part FHE has been neutral on Tax-credit education proposals since it is private money supporting a school option allowed by the state of Missouri. Here are 2 court case links affirming the fact that tax credits are not government money: **Zelman v. Simmons-Harris, 536 U.S. 639 (2002)** and **Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn, 563 U.S. 125 (2011)**.

FHE has diligently followed proposed ESA bills in the Missouri legislature to ensure Missouri homeschool freedoms are secure. As the MOScholar bill progressed through the legislature we diligently watched and lobbied legislators with our concerns. The biggest concerns came when the Missouri state treasurer wrote the regulations for the program. FHE has asked the legislature to remove a home school from the MOScholars program.

#### **Government funded ESAs and Educational Vouchers**

FHE opposes a home school being a "qualified school" of government funded ESAs and educational vouchers. Along with government money comes regulations requiring accountability to the program. This would add more regulation on a home school than is required by the Missouri compulsory attendance statute, RSMo 167.031.2.

### FHE's Financial & Tax Policy – link to pdf

#### <u>SB 729</u> - Authorizes a tax credit for certain educational expenses

#### Sponsor: Koenig, Andrew

Last Action: 1/17/2024 - Voted Do Pass S Education and Workforce Development Committee

#### **Bill Information Page**

### **Bill Summary**

OPPOSE – One of the main reasons for opposition is that the bill gives the Department of Revenue the authority to promulgate (or create) the rules. Also, it is a refundable tax credit which means a taxpayer could receive more money refunded than their tax liability. This means government money would be going to a home school. Government money always leads to some kind of accountability required. Also, indicating your child is attending a home school is a back-ended way of registering a home school. This particular bill requires a verification from the school district to verify a homeschool student was not enrolled in the public school. FHE seeks no financial aid from any government entity, and we ask for no further restriction on the current statute governing home education (directly or indirectly).

### <u>SB 867</u> - Authorizes a tax credit for certain educational expenses

#### Sponsor: Brattin, Rick

Last Action: 1/23/2024 - Hearing Cancelled S Education and Workforce Development Committee

# **Bill information page**

#### **Bill Summary**

OPPOSE – One of the main reasons for opposition is that the bill gives the Department of Revenue the authority to promulgate the rules. Also, it is a refundable tax credit which means a taxpayer could receive more money refunded than their tax liability. FHE does not want this to lead to a back-ended way of registering a homeschool. FHE seeks no financial aid from any government entity, and we ask for no further restriction on the current statute governing home education (directly or indirectly).

<u>HB 1911</u> - Establishes the "Missouri Parental Choice Tax Credit Act" relating to a tax credit for certain educational expenses

Sponsor: Richey, Doug (039)

Last Action: 02/26/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

Bill information page

#### **Bill Summary**

OPPOSE – One of the main reasons for opposition is that the bill gives the Department of Revenue and the Treasurer the authority to promulgate the rules. Also, it is a refundable tax credit which means a taxpayer

could receive more money refunded than their tax liability. FHE does not want this to lead to a back-ended way of registering a homeschool. FHE seeks no financial aid from any government entity, and we ask for no further restriction on the current statute governing home education (directly or indirectly).

HB 2366 - Establishes the "Missouri Parent Empowerment Act" relating to a tax credit for certain educational expenses

Sponsor: McMullen, Aaron (020)

Last Action: 01/11/2024 - Read Second Time (H)

### **Bill Information page**

OPPOSE – One of the main reasons for opposition is that the bill gives the Department of Revenue and the Treasurer the authority to promulgate the rules. Also, it is a refundable tax credit which means a taxpayer could receive more money refunded than their tax liability. FHE does not want this to lead to a back-ended way of registering a homeschool. FHE seeks no financial aid from any government entity, and we ask for no further restriction on the current statute governing home education (directly or indirectly).

HB 2937 - Modifies provisions governing elementary and secondary education- "Student Opportunity Savings Accounts Program"

Sponsor: Representative Bishop Davidson

Last Action: 03/25/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

Date: 3/25/2024 Time: 4:30 PM or upon adjournment (whichever is later) Location: House Hearing Room 7

**Bill Summary Page** 

OPPOSE

#### Work Permits

HB 1536 - Modifies provisions relating to employment modifying work hours on school nights for certain students less than 18 years of age

Sponsor: Baringer, Donna (082)

Last Action: 02/15/2024 - Referred: Special Committee on Tourism(H)

#### **Bill Information Page**

Watch

#### HB 2271 - Modifies provisions relating to youth employment

Sponsor: Copeland, Ron (120)

Last Action :01/05/2024 - Read Second Time (H)

#### **Bill Information Page**

#### Watch

# HB 1795 - Modifies provisions relating to youth employment Current Bill Version: HCS 1795

Sponsor: Representative Dave Hinman

Last Action: 05/02/2024 - Placed Back on Formal Perfection Calendar (H)

**Bill Information Page** 

**Bill Summary** 

Watch

<u>SB 1057</u> - Modifies provisions relating to youth employment

Sponsor: Senator Nick Schroer

Last Action: 4/2/2024 - Hearing Conducted S Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children Committee

**Bill Information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

Watch

Social Service Issues

#### HB 1951 - Establishes provisions relating to the removal of a child from his or her home

Sponsor: **<u>Representative Jamie Gragg</u>** 

Last Action: 01/24/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

**Bill Information page** 

**Bill Summary** 

#### OPPOSE

HB 1904 - Modifies the offense of abuse or neglect of a child

Sponsor: Representative Josh Hurlbert

Last Action: 01/30/2024 - Public Hearing Completed (H)

**Bill Information Page** 

**Bill Summary** 

HB 2655 - Establishes provisions relating to failing to supervise a child Sponsor: Representative Yolonda Fountain Henderson Last Action: 02/08/2024 - Read Second Time (H) Bill Information Page

Oppose

HB 2690 - Establishes and modifies provisions relating to child abuse or neglect

Sponsor: Representative Jamie Gragg

Last Action: 03/26/2024 - HCS Voted Do Pass (H)

**Bill information page** 

Watch

# HB 2691 - Establishes and modifies provisions relating to child abuse or neglect

Sponsor: Representative Holly Jones

Last Action: 03/26/2024 - HCS Voted Do Pass (H)

**Bill Information page** 

Watch