

UPDATE to the Update: And they changed the time again. Changes are valid as of 6pm on 1-22-24. 😊

Update: One thing about Jefferson City, things are always changing and very fluid. FHE will try to keep you updated as quickly as possible.

**The Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee Meeting room has changed time and room. Still tomorrow, Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 11:30 AM, but changed to Room SCR 2.

****SB 867** has been removed from the schedule for Tuesday; however, may possibly be added back in the following week. FHE would suggest that you continue with your phone calls and/or emails at this time, but if you were planning on going to Jeff City to testify, you will not be able to at this time since this bill will not be discussed.

****SB 729**, which is a similar refundable tax credit bill was voted “do pass” in Executive session Wednesday, January 17, 2024, but has not been reported out of the Committee as of 1/19/2024. The sponsor said that SB 729 is modeled after the Oklahoma [“voucher style”] private school tax credit bill. SB 729 actually requires a homeschool to acquire certification from the department of Education to verify your child was not in the public school for the tax year you are claiming the tax credit (page 3, lines 67-75). This would indirectly be a homeschool registry. FHE testified in opposition to SB 729. Please ask the Senate Committee to NOT report it out of committee and to the Senate floor.

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/24info/pdf-bill/intro/SB729.pdf>

Senate Bill 867 - UPDATE Not being heard on Tuesday, but may come up again later.

Action - Calls Needed!!!!

Calls and/or Emails Needed!!!!

Senate Education and Taskforce Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 11:30 AM, Room SCR 2

Hearing on SB 867 – refundable tax-credit voucher (ESA) type bill

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/24info/pdf-bill/intro/SB867.pdf>

Calls are needed to the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee in opposition to SB 867, sponsored by Senator Rick Brattin. SB 867 sets up a refundable tax credit. This is a voucher – style tax credit. It is very similar to last year’s SB 255 – Education Savings Account bill.

The words “tax credit” can be deceiving. A refundable tax credit means a taxpayer can be refunded more than their tax liability. This is government money, not just a taxpayer being able to keep their own money. The government would be paying for private education and a home school. It is very similar to an ESA which makes this tax credit bill a voucher (ESA)-type

program. With government money always comes required accountability (strings). In states like Arizona there is already a push to add more accountability to their ESA program.

SB 867 will leave the rule making to the Department of Revenue. We do not know what the rules will look like. What will they require to prove you homeschool? How will they prove your expenses really qualify as curriculum expenses? This is exactly what happened with the MO Scholars program which was passed in 2021.

By filing for the tax credit, it creates a home school registry with the state government for those filing. FHE is opposed to any form of registration for a home school. The best way to help homeschool families would be to cut taxes for all.

Action Item:

If you agree with Families for Home Education (FHE) please email today and/or make a call on Monday, January 22, to each of the Senate Education and Workforce Committee members. Ask them to oppose this voucher-type tax credit bill and protect home schools from government intrusion and overreach. You could also contact your own state senator about this issue.

If you are able, please consider coming to the Senate Education and Workforce Committee meeting on Tuesday. A presence at the meeting can make a difference. You will need to arrive early. SB 902 (see below) will also be heard which includes “Parents’ Bill of Rights for Student Well-Being” which usually draws a crowd. For questions or information contact Sheryl Schmidt, FHE Lobbyist, at

staff@fhe-mo.org.

Sample Email:

Dear Senator _____,

Please Oppose SB 867. This is government money, not just a taxpayer being able to keep their own money. The government would be paying for private education and a home school. It is very similar to an ESA which makes this tax credit bill a voucher (ESA)-type program. With government money always comes required accountability (strings). In states like Arizona there is already a push to add more accountability to their ESA program.

SB 867 will leave the rule making to the Department of Revenue. We do not know what the rules will look like. What will they require to prove you homeschool? How will they prove your expenses really qualify as curriculum expenses? This is exactly what happened with the MO Scholars program which was passed in 2021.

By filing for the tax credit, it creates a home school registry with the state government for those filing. FHE is opposed to any form of registration for a home school. The best way to help homeschool families would be to cut taxes for all.

Sincerely,

(Insert Name)

Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee Members:

Senator Andrew Koenig, Chairman

573-751-5568

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Senator Rick Brattin, Vice Chairman

573-751-2108

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Senator Lauren Arthur

573-751-5282

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Senator Doug Beck

573-751-0220

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Senator Elaine Gannon

573-751-4008

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Senator Denny Hoskins

573-751-4302

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Senator Greg Razer

573-751-6607

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Senator Nick Schroer

573-751-1282

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Senator Curtis Trent

573-751-1503

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/DistrictWebApplic.../Disclaimer...>

Find your state senator: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/LegisLookup/Default>

****For Information purposes (no action at this time)**, but will be discussed in the hearing tomorrow:

SB 902 is on the hearing schedule in the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee

Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 11:30 am

SB 902 - Creates and modifies provisions relating to elementary and secondary education, which includes the Public School Access for a Home School Student and the FLEX School language from last session's SB 411 bill

Sponsor: Schroer, Nick

There are several issues covered in SB 902. One is the home school access to the public school activities. FHE is neutral on this portion of the bill as long as there is nothing that would infringe on other home schools not participating in the programs. SB 902 also includes the FLEX school designation. FHE did not ask for the FLEX school language and since the two categories of homeschool families presents no harm in and of itself, FHE does not presently oppose the concept. However, there has been much controversy in the broader homeschool community over the issue of the FLEX school designation and, along with the many other issues in SB 902, after careful consideration FHE will not be supporting SB 902.

SB 902 also contains a couple of changes to the MO Scholars Program, "The Parent Bill of Rights for Student Well-Being" and several public school provisions.

FHE does not support SB 902 and will be watching it carefully.

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/24info/pdf-bill/intro/SB902.pdf>

More information about SB 867:

The MO Scholars bill which was passed in 2021 tasked the state treasurer with writing the rules for the program. SB 867 will leave the rule making to the Department of Revenue. We do not know what the rules will look like. What will they require to prove you homeschool? How will they prove your expenses really qualify as a curriculum? There are many unanswered questions and other states which have already passed vouchers for private and home school education are now going back and revising their allowable expenses to tighten the fraud and misuse.

The Arizona governor is proposing that all schools, public and private, adhere to the same standards. See what the Governor of Arizona is proposing to this year's legislature:

<https://azgovernor.gov/.../governor-katie-hobbs-announces...> We are already hearing these

kinds of comments in the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee meetings. The tax credit voucher, whether intentional or unintentional, is bringing all K-12 education under government control and destroying private education.

RSMo 167.031 states, “a "home school" is a school, whether incorporated or unincorporated, that: has as its primary purpose the provision of private or religious-based instruction”. What is private education? It means that the “school” does not receive government funds and the government authorities do not manage the school. Therefore, if a home school provides “private or religious based instruction” the parents/guardians would be the ones paying for and managing the home school. This is private education.

FHE seeks no financial aid from any government entity, and we ask for no further restrictions on the current statute governing home education in Missouri (directly or indirectly). FHE is committed to protecting the inalienable right of the parents of Missouri to teach their own children without further state regulation and control.