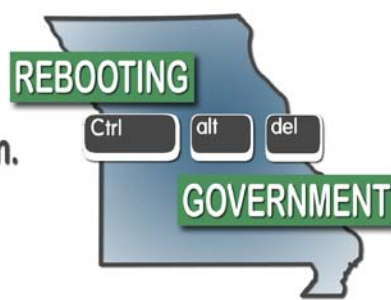


Control. Alterations. Deletion.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 22, 2010

Senate Votes to Give Missourians Choice on Creating a Seamless Education System

Bill Now Moves to the House for Similar Consideration

JEFFERSON CITY – Two resolutions that would let Missouri voters decide whether or not to consolidate Missouri’s Board and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with Missouri’s Higher Education Board and Department were passed by the Missouri Senate this week. Senate Joint Resolution 44, sponsored by Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, passed the Senate Tuesday (4-20). That measure would go to a vote of the people to let them decide whether or not to retool Missouri’s current education system. The second measure, Senate Joint Resolution 45, also sponsored by Shields, would also let voters decide whether or not to implement a new education system that would encompass early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, as well as higher education.

The proposed changes to administering Missouri’s education systems is part of the “Rebooting Government” effort, but Shields said the potential \$1 million plus in savings is not the reason to shift from dual departments to a single education department.

“We want to achieve the best education for our students to make sure they are prepared and ready to learn when they begin kindergarten. Students should do not fall behind in their K-12 studies and should be able to pursue an education past high school,” said Shields. “We must have a seamless education department that can work to improve our efforts across the entire education spectrum.”

SJR45 would create a new, lone State Board of Education that would have the authority and functions of the current state board of education and coordinating board for higher education. The new board will coordinate public higher education as well as early childhood and K-12 education. The board would also be charged with promoting and developing a seamless and efficient system of education.

The new board would be comprised of six members, who initially would serve in staggered terms. Those staggered terms include two members serving for two years, two members serving for four years, and two members serving for six years. After those initial terms are complete, all new members would serve terms of six years. Members of the board would be appointed by the governor and must receive Senate confirmation. The board is also tasked with selecting a commissioner, who would also undergo Senate confirmation.

SJR44 now moves to the House for similar consideration. SJR45 is anticipated to gain final Senate approval next week. If both bills are approved in the House, Missouri voters would decide the final outcome of these constitutional changes in an upcoming general election.

The education consolidation idea was discussed during the Senate’s all-day work session last month in collaboration with the “Rebooting Government” initiative. To see a complete list of the program’s recommendations, or to submit your own ideas on how to streamline state government, click on the Rebooting Government logo on the Missouri Senate website (www.senate.mo.gov).

###

Farrah Fite, Senate Majority Caucus Communications Director
(573) 751-1562 – ffite@senate.mo.gov