

KRTA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE 05 – 2012 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Feb 3, 2012

Each session has its own rhythm. But speaking generally, January has a quick burst of early legislative news, then lawmakers gear down for a long uphill grind that builds to a late March/mid-April peak. The process takes a while, as it should. As January fades, and the one-quarter mark of the 60-day session passes and the one-third point approaches, here are the latest snapshots of where things stand.

This week redistricting continued to dominate much of the discussion. The suit filed last week by the House Republicans asks the court to overturn the House redistricting plan approved by both chambers and signed by the governor. A Franklin County Circuit Court judge has issued a restraining order that extends the filing deadline for state legislative candidates until February 7 and sets a hearing over district maps for February 6.

The House and Senate conference committee appear to close to an agreement on redrawing Congressional districts.

The Senate Appropriations & Revenue Committee heard details on of the governor's \$19.4B Executive Branch Budget plan for 2012-14 (HB 265) on Tuesday of this week. As you know, the plan includes \$815M in new spending along with spending cuts and other measures to fill a projected \$742M budget gap over the next two fiscal years.

The House Appropriations & Revenue Committee and its subcommittees continued to hold more discussion on the 2012-14 biennial budget (HB 265) this week. Legislative action in both the House and Senate was very limited this week.

HB 265 (the budget bill) still contains the funding necessary for the state to meet its "Shared Responsibility" obligation to the KTRS Medical Insurance fund and the employer match for active teachers to the KTRS Pension fund.

A major initiative of Governor Beshear this year is gambling. Historically, pretty clear lines have been drawn. The governor has wanted expanded gaming. The Legislature has not fully bought into the idea, not in the majorities need to pass both chambers. This year, the governor has proposed casino gambling in the form of a constitutional amendment submitted to the voters for an up-or-down vote. Actual details remain vague. The news this week, however, is that the legislator likely to file the gambling legislation wants to wait until after the deadline for legislative seats passes before filing the bill.

HB 300 (Retirement) filed last week by Rep. Mike Cherry (D, Princeton) was assigned to the House State Government Committee this week. As you know, this bill pertains to KTRS in that it sets term limits for KTRS Board of Trustee members of three consecutive terms. It also calls for the trustees to be subject to the executive branch code of ethics and restricts the use of placement agents.

KTRS already has a strong code of ethics in place for our trustees and does not use placement agents at all. The term limits could be problematic. Our volunteer advocates continue to monitor HB 300 closely.

At this point, no other bills pertaining KTRS have been filed.

2012 SESSION SCHEDULE

Legislative Part: Jan 3 – Mar 23

Concurrence Only Days: Mar 26 – Mar 27

Governor's Veto Days: Mar 28 – Apr 7

Final Legislative Day: Apr 9

FOLLOWING LEGISLATION

To check on bills that are filed and to follow legislation, go online to www.krta.org. Then click on "Links." Then click on "2012 Regular Session Legislation." You can check the status of any bill or resolution.

CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATOR

To contact your legislator, go online to www.krta.org. Then click on "Links." Then click on "Who's My State Legislator in the Kentucky Legislature." You will find the contact information for your legislator.

When asked to contact your legislator identify yourself as a constituent (i.e., your name, Legislative District); say “please” and “thank you;” and try to pin down those contacted as to their position. Ask for a response!

Our message is:

1. Maintain KTRS as a Defined Benefit Group Retirement Plan.
2. Make no changes to the KTRS governance structure.

KRTA BILL TRACKING REPORT

To check on bills that KRTA is following, go online to www.krta.org. You will see a “special link” where you can check the KRTA Bill Tracking Report.

KENTUCKY GENERAL ASSEMBLY TOLL FREE NUMBERS

Legislative Message Line - 800-372-7181

Bill Status Line - 866-840-2835

Meeting Information Line – 800-633-9650

TTY Message Line – 800-896-0305

Dust off your "email and telephone trees" and get ready to go! Share this information with your friends.

If you have specific questions or need more information, please call the KRTA office toll-free at 1-800-551-7979 or email us at INFO@krta.org.

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