



The ACCS Legislative Update

2017 Legislative Session Update #2017-04
March 3, 2017

Moving Right Along...

As has been the standard so far this session, the Alabama Legislature once again met for two days this week – Tuesday, February 28 and Thursday, March 2, completing the 7th and 8th legislative days of the 30 days allowed in the Regular Session. This week's activities in both the House of Representatives and Senate largely consisted of routine business and passage of mostly noncontroversial legislation. On matters of importance to ACCS, our "Body Corporate" bills (**SB114/HB163**) continued to take steps forward in the legislative process. On Tuesday, the House passed **HB163** by a unanimous vote of 96-0, and has been assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Affairs Committee. On Wednesday, the House Education Policy Committee gave a quick favorable report to **SB114**, leaving only passage by the full House to send the bill to Governor Bentley for his signature into law. As a reminder, these bills would establish ACCS as a body corporate under the governance of the ACCS Board of Trustees and grant corporate powers to the system that are similar to those held by four-year universities in Alabama. The legislation would also grant additional powers and authority to the Board of Trustees in acquiring and disposing of property. The bills also mandate that regardless of the new corporate structure, current and future employees of ACCS and all community and technical colleges continue to be eligible to participate in the current retirement and health insurance plans offered.

Several big ticket, controversial legislative items that could take up much time and deliberation in the near future made their first appearances this week, including **SB59**, the Governor's \$800 million bond issue to build four new large prisons and close most existing prisons across Alabama. Sponsored by Sen. Cam Ward, the bill received a robust public hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday and is scheduled to be back before the committee for further discussion next Tuesday. The bill will likely undergo substantial revisions as it moves through the legislative process, and given ACCS's role in prison education efforts, we will continue to monitor the bill as it progresses through the legislature.

With the new bills introduced this week, the total number of bills is now up to 626 (356 in the House and 270 in the Senate). The Legislature will reconvene next Tuesday, March 7, with the House convening at 1 PM and the Senate at 2 PM.

Bills of Interest:

SB114/HB163 – Sen. Pittman/Rep. McMillan:

To establish the Community College System as a body corporate and give the Board of Trustees authority to manage the acquisition and disposition of property (*SB114 given favorable report by House Education Policy Committee; HB163 passed by House on 2/28*)

HB71 – Rep. Poole:

Warrantless arrests, authorized for a person trespassing on property of an educational institution (*Passed by the House on 3/2; has not been assigned to a Senate committee yet*)

HB152 – Rep. Boyd:

To exempt the purchase of library/research electronic databases of manuscripts, books, maps, pamphlets, or periodicals from the competitive bid law (*Passed by the House on 2/28; assigned to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee*)

HB319 – Rep. Nordgren:

To require adjunct and part-time instructors employed at two-year community and technical colleges to receive at least 50% of the compensation provided to a full-time instructor for teaching the same or similar courses at the same institution in the same field of study (*Introduced this week and assigned to the House Education Policy Committee*)

HB356 – Rep. Patterson:

To create a lump-sum cash payment retirement option for retirees of TRS and ERS equal to and in lieu of up to 50% of an individual's retirement allowance; and to create the Alabama Pension Authority to issue bonds to fund the program (*Introduced this week and assigned to the House State Government Committee*)

SB262/HB345 – Sen. Waggoner/Rep. Gaston

To provide a new income tax credit against the tax liability of a taxpayer for the rehabilitation, preservation, and development of historic structures (*Introduced this week and assigned to the Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee and the House Ways and Means Education Committee*)

