



The ACCS Legislative Update

2017 Legislative Session Update #2017-12

May 12, 2017

Crawling to the Finish Line

The Alabama Legislature met on Tuesday, May 9 and Thursday, May 11, completing the 25th and 26th legislative days of the 2017 Regular Legislative Session. Only four days remain in the session with lots of legislative work still left to finish. This week saw disagreements and discord increase in both the House of Representatives and Senate, which does not bode well for completing the large amount of significant work left next week in what is expected to be the last week of the legislative session. The House saw its entire week dominated by a single bill to redraw House legislative districts that is required due to recent federal court rulings. Before a final vote was held on the bill, House Democrats - who are upset with aspects of the new redistricting plan - used a procedural motion to have the bill read at length. As a result, the 538-page redistricting bill took 16+ hours to be read, starting Tuesday evening and finally ending after 10 PM Thursday night. After the passage of the redistricting plan, House Republicans were forced to cloture debate on several items of usually very routine business before adjourning. While the Senate had a much more productive week, the cooperative mood in the chamber quickly soured on Thursday afternoon after a cloture motion to end debate was quickly adopted on **SB101**, a bill to prohibit K-12 schools and higher education institutions from using public funds to advocate for or against local or statewide ballot measures. After passage of the bill, the Senate abruptly adjourned for the day. The negative atmosphere in both the House and Senate very well could linger into the weekend and spill over into next week.

Before adjourning on Thursday, the House was able to give final passage to the General Fund Budget and finalize conference committees for **SB129**, the Education Budget, and **SB315**, the Disabled Veterans and Dependents Scholarship Program bill, to work out the differences in the House and Senate versions of these bills. These conference committees are expected to meet at some point on Tuesday, with hopefully a quick resolution of the differences and final floor votes before the end of the week.

The Legislature will reconvene next week on Tuesday, May 16, with the House convening at 11:30 AM and the Senate at 2 PM. The exact schedule for next week is still up in the air; it is all but certain to be a three-day week at minimum, but has the potential to become a rare four-day legislative week if Friday is needed to complete all the necessary legislative work remaining. Regardless of the exact schedule, next week is likely to be the final week of the regular session, with increasing confidence that the Legislature will adjourn sine die either Thursday or Friday.

Bills of Interest:

SB129 – Sen. Orr/Rep. Poole:

The Education Budget (*Assigned to a conference committee*)

SB315 – Sen. Dial:

Modifying requirements of the Disabled Veterans and Dependents Scholarship and Alabama National Guard Education Assistance programs (*Assigned to a conference committee*)

SB307 – Sen. Orr:

Supplemental appropriation from ETF Advancement and Technology Fund to the Department of Education, Community College System, and 4-year universities (*Passed by Senate 5/11; assigned to the House Ways and Means Education Committee*)

SB101 – Sen. Orr:

To prohibit public colleges and universities, local boards of education, and public schools from using public funds or property to advocate for or against statewide or local ballot measures (*Passed by Senate 5/11; not assigned to House committee yet*)

SB188 – Sen. Orr:

To lower the number of weeks of unemployment benefits that a person may be eligible for and to add additional weeks of unemployment benefits for enrollment and progress in a job training or certification program (*Given Favorable Report by the House Commerce and Small Business Committee 5/10*)

SB288 – Sen. Dial:

To increase the time frame required for a K-12 teacher to give notice before terminating his or her employment and to delete postsecondary education employees from the requirements in the law (*Passed by the Senate 5/9; assigned to the House Education Policy Committee*)

HB345 – Rep. Gaston:

To provide a new income tax credit for the rehabilitation, preservation, and development of historic structures (*Passed by the Senate 5/9; awaiting concurrence by House*)

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