

TO: LONGWOOD FACULTY
FROM: EDWARD KINMAN, REPRESENTATIVE TO FACULTY SENATE OF VIRGINIA
DATE: 4 FEBRUARY 2008
RE: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE OF BILLS SUPPORTED BY FACULTY SENATE OF VIRGINIA

CURRENT STATUS

The past two weeks have been hectic at the General Assembly, with a record number of bills awaiting committee resolution and a dismal budget forecast presenting a challenge to any legislation with a fiscal impact. Nonetheless, we proceeded with our legislative agenda to keep it at the forefront of the discussion, and to gain useful information about legislator's concerns to use in the future. Below is a brief summary of each bill and its **Current Status**. To read the full text of each bill, simply click on the bill number.

Also, it is my understanding that a newspaper article indicated that the FSVA supported HB118, a bill submitted this year by Delegate Landes. The writer of the article was misinformed. The FSVA has not discussed or taken any position regarding HB118, and Delegate has been apprised of that information for future reference.

- **SB126 Partial tuition waiver; children of university and college faculty.** Establishes the Dependent Children of University and College Faculty Reduced Tuition Program, to provide 50 percent tuition waivers for the children of current full-time faculty members who have been employed full-time by any one or more public Virginia college or university for an aggregate period of at least seven years. The tuition waivers shall be used for undergraduate education at any public institution of higher education in Virginia.

CHIEF PATRON: SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS

Current Status: This bill reported out of the Higher Education sub-committee, reported from the Health and Education Committee by a vote of 12-3, then referred to the Finance Committee. Last week I met with several members of the Finance Committee to work on substitute language to make it more acceptable, and the bill was then referred out to the Senate with a substitute. It is now scheduled for a third reading in the Senate, where it will then be voted on. It seems likely that the Senate will now support the bill, which would then go over to the House for further consideration and action.

- **SB127 Retirement; teachers and administrative faculty of institutions of higher education.** Provides that teachers and administrative faculty of institutions of higher education who are covered under an optional retirement plan (in lieu of the Virginia Retirement System) and have 10 years of service with the Commonwealth may make a one-time, irrevocable election to transfer into VRS.

CHIEF PATRON: SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS

Current Status: Remains in Finance Committee. This is the Senate companion bill to HB483.

- **SB128 Optional retirement plan; institutions of higher education.** Provides that the annual contribution to optional retirement plans covering certain employees at institutions of higher education would not be less than the percentage contribution rate in effect that is generally applicable for state employees who are members of the Virginia Retirement System, including the five percent member contribution rate.

CHIEF PATRON: SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS

Current Status: Remains in Finance Committee. This is the Senate companion bill to HB482.

- **HB482 Optional retirement plan; institutions of higher education.** Provides that the annual contribution to optional retirement plans covering certain employees at institutions of higher education would not be less than the percentage contribution rate in effect that is generally applicable for state employees who are members of the Virginia Retirement System, including the five percent member contribution rate.

CHIEF PATRON: DELEGATE JAMES SHULER

Current Status: Delegate Shuler and I discussed the bill this week in the Compensation and Retirement sub-committee. VRS was present to provide a fiscal impact projection, which it estimates to be \$12.2 million per year including the institution's contribution based on current number of faculty. We had agreed last session to roll this bill into the JLARC Compensation study which will not be completed until Fall 2008. It is likely the bill will be carried over to the 2009 session given the need for the JLARC data and the projected budget gaps for this biennium.

- **HB483 Retirement; teachers and administrative faculty of institutions of higher education.** Provides that teachers and administrative faculty of institutions of higher education who are covered under an optional retirement plan (in lieu of the Virginia Retirement System) and have 10 years of service with the Commonwealth may make a one-time, irrevocable election to transfer into VRS.

CHIEF PATRON: DELEGATE JAMES SHULER

Current Status: Delegate Shuler and I also discussed the bill this week in the Compensation and Retirement sub-committee. VRS was present to provide a fiscal impact

projection, which it estimated to be revenue neutral at the initial point of transfer.

However, because a faculty member could in future years purchase years of service at a predetermined percentage that is less than the actual cost to VRS, it is possible that the future cost would not be revenue neutral. The VRS Director and I met after the committee meeting to discuss an amendment that would also make the future impact revenue neutral.

As with HB482, we had agreed last session to roll this bill into the JLARC Compensation study. It is likely the bill will be carried over to the 2009 session.

- **HJ128 Resolution; encouraging international education programs.** Encourages the Commonwealth's public institutions of higher education to enhance opportunities for international educational programs. The Commonwealth's institutions of higher education are encouraged to (i) develop courses of study, academic programs, and enrichment opportunities to increase student understanding of global issues and cultural differences; (ii) promote courses in foreign languages to prepare students to seek careers in a global marketplace and enhance their understanding of other countries; (iii) provide opportunities for students in all majors to participate in programs to study abroad to enrich their academic training, intercultural perspectives, and personal development; (iv) provide opportunities for domestic and international students to interact effectively and routinely to share their views, perceptions, and experiences; and (v) develop innovative public education programs, methods, and venues to explore global issues and world cultures.

CHIEF PATRON: DELEGATE DAVID NUTTER

Current Status: Remains in Rules Committee. Not schedule on their docket this week.

Updates of each bill will be available weekly on the FSVA website (<http://fsva.asp.radford.edu/>) or via the General Assembly's Legislative Information website (<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?071+men+BIL>).

HOW TO HELP

Faculty from across the Commonwealth can help by:

1. Forwarding this e-mail to as many colleagues as possible on your campus.
2. Contacting the Delegate and Senator's office in Richmond that represents your area by telephone and or e-mail and inform them of your support for these bills. Remember to refer to specific bill numbers. Contact information for each Delegate and Senator can be accessed at: <http://legis.state.va.us/>, or via the FSVA website <http://fsva.asp.radford.edu/>.

3. Most importantly, contacting members of the sub-committee and committee to whom each bill has been assigned, informing them that you support these bills. Sub-committee and Committee members names for the bills are:

■ Senate Bills:

- i. (SB 126, SB127, SB128) Education and Health Committee— Houck (Chairman), Saslaw, Lucas, Howell, Quayle, Martin, Newman, Edwards, Ruff, Whipple, Blevins, Locke, Barker, Northam, Miller, J
- ii. (SB 127, SB128) Finance Committee—Senators Colgan (Chairman), Wampler, Stosch, Houck, Howell, Saslaw, Stolle, Quayle, Norment, Hanger, Watkins, Miller, Y.B., Marsh, Lucas, Whipple, Reynolds

■ House Bills:

- i. (HB482, HB483) Compensation and Retirement Sub-Committee— Jones, S.C. (Chairman), Tata, Ingram, Hogan, Joannou, Brink, Ware, O., Bowling
- ii. (HJ128) Rules Committee—Delegates Howell, (Chairman), Putney, Hargrove, Griffith, Landes, Cox, Jones, S.C., Hogan, Abbitt, Hall, Joannou, Spruill, Johnson, Amundson, Armstrong

You should be able to link directly to their e-mail account by clicking on each representative's name.

It is important that we contact legislators promptly and consistently over the next two weeks by telephone and e-mail so they understand the importance of these issues to us. We also need faculty present at each sub-committee and committee hearing to offer additional information regarding the impact of the legislation, and to continue visiting key legislative leaders. If you are available and willing, please let me know so I can include you on the meeting agenda with the relevant committee clerk. We will also provide you with additional information to use in your remarks to the committee.

NOTE: When contacting Delegates and Senators by telephone, e-mail, or personal visits, remember that you are offering your input as a faculty member and are not representing your respective university's position on the issue. Of course, it would be helpful to know if your university or college has a position on these bills because some legislators may ask that question. Perhaps you could also meet with your respective university and college government relations person and or President to gain support as an institution. Some universities may also have policies governing the use of university resources for such contacts, so it might be best to use a personal phone or e-mail account when making the contacts.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this legislation, or other issues you think the Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSVA) should consider as we proceed, please contact me. I also

encourage each of you to inform faculty at your institution about FSVA's legislative efforts this year, and provide them with our web site address so they can easily follow important developments as they occur. Finally, if the Faculty Senate or Council at your institution does not have a link to the FSVA web site (<http://fsva.asp.radford.edu/>), please ask them to consider adding it as another point of contact for faculty to stay informed.

Thanks in advance for your help as we finish the process we have begun on behalf of 15,000+ faculty across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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