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The Illinois General Assembly's 2014 session is in full swing. The deadline for introducing new legislation has passed, so we have a good idea of the issues we will work on this session, both for and against.

The following is not a complete list of education bills being tracked, but they appear to be the most relevant. As the session moves forward and bills are changed, there will be additions and subtractions to the list. For now, legislation in the education realm can be broken down into three areas: (1) appropriations, (2) regulation and (3) school choice.

APPROPRIATIONS

HB 4573 & SB 2938 – These are CCI drafted bills appropriating \$12.5 million to the Textbook Block Grant. The House sponsor is Representative Kelly Burke, and the Senate Sponsor is Senator Bill Cunningham. As we move further into the session and the state's budget begins to come together, we will send out more information, including action alerts, on these bills. **CCI supports these bills.**

REGULATION

SB 2934 – This bill would allow the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) to make school security grants to public schools, K-12. CCI engaged IEMA representatives and the bill's sponsor, and they have agreed to an amendment allowing IEMA to also make school security grants to nonpublic schools, K-12. The bill is permissive, not mandatory, but it is a step in the right direction. **CCI will support this legislation once our amendment goes on.**

SB 2710 – CCI negotiated this bill with ISBE. It will require state recognized nonpublic schools to hold an annual meeting to review the school's crisis plan. ISBE attempted a similar effort through administrative rule last year without regard to the nature of nonpublic schools. We pushed that effort back and replaced it with this negotiated bill. **CCI supports the legislation.**

HB 4262 – This bill effectively removes the requirement that new school employees undergo a TB test. **CCI supports the legislation.**

HB 3724 – This bill requires health education in secondary schools to include training on how to properly administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to use an automated external defibrillator. **CCI is monitoring this legislation.**

HB 5621 – This bill requires that as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma, each pupil entering the 9th grade in the 2015-2016 school year or a subsequent school year must successfully complete 4 (instead of 3) years of mathematics, which may include math-intensive courses outside of traditional mathematics courses (instead of one of which must be Algebra I and one of which must

include geometry content), and 3 (instead of 2) years of science, one of which must be a laboratory science. This bill is unlikely to move forward, but **CCI is monitoring this legislation.**

HB 5892 – This bill provides for the administration of undesignated epinephrine auto-injectors (undesignated = owned by the school) by a pupil, school nurse, and trained personnel. The bill also requires a school to permit the self-administration and self-carry of asthma medication by a pupil with asthma. (Law already allows this for epinephrine auto-injectors.) The bill does not mandate that a school carry undesignated epinephrine auto-injectors or train school personnel. The bill would simply allow for it. If undertaken, the bill stipulates designated personnel must submit to the school's administration proof of completion of a training curriculum to recognize and respond to anaphylaxis. **This bill seems to allow for quicker application of needed medicine and provides strong liability protections without new mandates. CCI is monitoring this legislation.**

SB 2682 – This bill would require the study of the history of organized labor in America and the collective bargaining process to be included in the teaching of the history of the United States. **CCI is monitoring this legislation.**

SB 3497 – This bill would require all student teachers in public or nonpublic schools to undergo criminal history records checks before beginning work in the schools. The cost of the check would be covered by the student teacher. **CCI is monitoring this legislation.**

HB 4263 – This bill adds school buildings to the definition of religious facilities which do not have to be offered for the solemnization or celebration of same-sex marriages. Our schools already have legal cover in this regard, but this bill would provide clarity. **CCI supports the legislation.**

SCHOOL CHOICE

CCI continues to coordinate with Ed. Choice Illinois (formerly Freedom to Learn) and the Illinois Policy Institute (IPI) in efforts to support school choice. Ed Choice Illinois has asked us to sign on to their statement or principles in education reform, and we are working through the appropriate language. In the meantime, below are descriptions of school choice bills introduced this session.

HB 4330 – This school choice bill has been introduced for the past several years. CCI has discussed the bill with the sponsor, Representative LaShawn Ford, to offer some important changes, but to date, he has declined to adopt them. The bill has never made it out of committee. **CCI is monitoring the legislation.**

HB 4670 – This bill requires ISBE to establish an education savings account for each participating student to be funded through GSA. Students can then use money to attend the school of his or her choice. This is the ultimate school choice bill. It will be a very tough road ahead on this, but **CCI is supporting the legislation.**

SB 3449 – This bill is a permanent extension of the temporary income tax increase that is scheduled to expire next year. In addition to making the tax increase permanent it makes a number of other tax changes including lifting the cap of the education expense tax credit from \$500 to \$1000. **CCI is monitoring the legislation.**

HB 5718 & SB 3534 – These bills, introduced by Representative Senger and Senator Murphy, are the latest version of the Meek's voucher bill. They do almost the same, but the new bill does lift the

scholarship level to \$5200 (at our request). This is good but makes it tougher for the program to be revenue neutral to the state. We continue to work on bipartisan support, without which, the road ahead looks tough. **CCI supports the legislation.**

SB 3533 – This bill would allow for public school students in underperforming schools to enroll in specific courses from independent providers. The providers would be reimbursed by the state. Those eligible to become providers of these courses would include nonpublic schools. Versions of this idea have been discussed in the past, but the logistics seem difficult. It is an innovative idea. **CCI is monitoring the legislation.**

I-CAN

Illinois Catholic Advocacy Network (I-CAN) – CCI has adopted this technology to improve our advocacy efforts in Springfield across the board. Our Principal and Legislative Action Person (LAP) email lists are now housed in this database and our action alerts are better designed and MUCH easier to act on. In fact, after receiving an action alert through the I-CAN network, you will now be able to send a pre-drafted email to your state representative and state senator in as little as three clicks and under a minute. It can't be beat!

I-CAN is a grassroots advocacy email network, and the best news is you do not have to be a principal or LAP to sign up for I-CAN. If you care about Catholic schools (or any other issues the Church speaks on), you can sign up today and be an informed and active participant. When signing up for I-CAN you will be asked for both an email address and home address so we can pinpoint your state lawmakers. You will also be allowed to sign up for specific issue areas, so that you can receive alerts on issues you care about and not for those you don't.

Please go to <http://capwiz.com/ilcatholic/mlm/signup/>, and fill out the form. CCI does the rest.

In addition to signing up for I-CAN, LAPs should be focused on building a relationship between your school and your state legislators, in the House and Senate. Because there are a lot of bad voting records out there, I do not recommend holding events awarding legislators, but having your state representative and state senator into your school for a tour, so they can witness the good and essential work being done there, is always a good idea. Please contact me if you need any help with this.

Thank you for all your continued help and support – what is described above is our only method for influencing public policy debates in Springfield. May God bless you.

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