



The ACCS Legislative Update

2017 Legislative Session Update #2017-07

April 7, 2017

Legislature Returns / Senate Passes ETF Budget

After a two-week Spring Break recess, the Alabama Legislature returned to work this week, meeting on Tuesday, April 4 and Thursday, April 6 which completed the 14th and 15th legislative days of the 2017 Regular Legislative Session. We are now right at the halfway point of the session. As expected, the Senate took right up where it left off two weeks ago and continued debate on **SB129**, the Education Trust Fund budget, and other budget-related bills. After several hours' worth of debate, which included an amendment offered by Senator Paul Bussman to move \$20 million of funds from higher education to K-12 that ultimately failed, a substituted version of the ETF budget was passed by the Senate. Although the substitute was different than the one passed by the Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee, there was no difference in the appropriation for the Community College System. All programs under the Community College System were level-funded except for an increase of \$1.75 million for workforce development initiatives. The budget now moves to the House of Representatives, where further changes are likely. The Senate also passed **SB315** on Tuesday, which puts new requirements and restrictions on future participants in the disabled veterans and dependents scholarship program under the Alabama Department of Veterans' Affairs, which has consumed most of the available new dollars within the higher education side of the ETF budget.

The Legislature will reconvene next week on Tuesday, April 11, with the Senate coming in at 2 PM and the House at 4:30 PM.

Lastly, a big **THANK YOU** is in order to all the students, faculty, and staff that participated in and made ACCS Day a success yesterday. Many of our legislators were able to enjoy the festivities and meet with students and faculty at their community colleges, and commented on what a great event it was.

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 (*Both SB114 and HB163 are still in position to receive final passage from the Legislature soon*)

SB129 – Sen. Orr:

To make appropriations for the support, maintenance, and development of public education – **the Education Budget** (*Passed by the Senate 4/4; assigned to House Ways & Means Education Committee*)

SB315 – Sen. Dial:

To modify existing requirements of the disabled veterans and dependents scholarship program under the Alabama Department of Veterans' Affairs and increase the education assistance provided to eligible Alabama National Guard members (*Passed by the Senate 4/4; assigned to the House Ways & Means Education Committee*)

HB356 – Rep. Patterson:

To create a lump-sum cash payment retirement option for retirees of TRS and ERS and to create the Alabama Pension Authority to issue bonds to fund the program (*Given Favorable Report by the House Ways & Means Education Committee 4/5*)

HB262 – Rep. Drummond:

To allow persons who complete 420 clock hours of apprenticeship with a licensed or registered cosmetologist to be eligible for licensure as a natural hair stylist (*Given Favorable Report by the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee 4/4; in line for final passage by Legislature*)

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 (*Given Favorable Report by the Senate Finance & Taxation Education Committee 3/9 and the House Ways & Means Education Committee 4/5*)

HB483 – Rep. Mooney:

To allow the display of the national motto "In God We Trust" in or on any public building or public school in the state (*Introduced this week and assigned to the House State Government Committee*)

HB486 – Rep. Mooney:

To authorize a Constitutional Amendment allowing for the display of the Ten Commandments on state property or property owned by a public school or public body (*Introduced this week and assigned to the House Constitution, Campaigns, & Elections Committee*)

