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Legislative Update: Feb. 16, 2017



Senate Education Committee puts charter bill on fast track

• *Revised calculation for TABOR introduced*

[Senate Bill 61](#), titled "Additional Funding for Charter Schools," passed out of the Senate Education Committee this week on a 4-3 party-line vote and was moved directly to the full Senate. Normally, a bill like this, because of its \$110 million fiscal note, would move first to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 61 would force local school districts that have passed mill levy override (MLO) elections to share those funds with charter schools, even if the charter school did not exist when the MLO was approved. This would be a clear violation of local control, as school boards make commitments to their local communities about how MLO funds will be spent.

Last week, the Education Committee heard more than three hours of testimony on the bill but took no action because bill sponsor **Sen. Owen Hill**, R-Colorado Springs, had to leave early due to a family emergency.

CASB was well-represented at the committee hearing, with many board members and superintendents speaking in person or remotely via the state's remote testimony network. CASB made a strong case that what Colorado students really need is a system that equitably and adequately funds all students.

This week, all four Republicans of the Senate Education Committee voted for the bill and all three Democrats voted against it.

CASB will be calling on all of our members to contact their Senators to express their concerns with SB 61 when the bill comes up for debate on the Senate floor.

New thinking

Rep. Dan Thurlow, R-Grand Junction, and **Sen. Larry Crowder**, R-Alamosa, have introduced [House Bill 1187](#), titled “Change Excess State Revenues Cap Growth Factor; Concerning a change to the growth factor in the excess state revenues cap.”

The bill would change the annual calculation that determines the revenue limit in the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights (TABOR).

Currently, the revenue cap is adjusted annually based primarily on inflation and population growth. HB 1187 would make the adjustment based on the average annual change of Colorado personal income over the last five years.

Thurlow and Crowder say that a rolling average of statewide personal income would be a better measure of the state’s economy. Many economists say that inflation is more arbitrary, and population growth is not related to inflation.

In an interview with Colorado Politics, Thurlow, who supported TABOR in 1992, further explained the reasoning behind HB 1187: “When inflation is low, as it is now, and our economy is good, as it is now, the effect is to ratchet down the amount we spend each year. None of us would do it that way in our personal or business lives.”

Because a change in the formula may increase the amount that the state retains and spends in a given fiscal year, the bill seeks voter approval for the change, as required by TABOR.

Thurlow says the bill offers the chance to revisit TABOR 25 years after its passage and to ensure it operates the way that voters intended when they approved it in 1992. The bill is likely to face an uphill battle to receive a two-thirds majority of both chambers, but it is a discussion worthy of having. If TABOR is not operating in a way that makes the lives of all Coloradoans better, maybe it is time to revisit some aspects of TABOR.

You are the best advocate

It is not too late to join CASB members at the [2017 Winter Legislative Conference](#), Feb. 23-24 in Denver. School board members are the best advocates for their community, and in order to be an effective advocate, you need knowledge, tools and resources. You will receive all of those things when you attend the conference.

CASB Advocacy Tools

- [CASB Bill Tracker](#)
- CASB Legislative Conference Call
Tuesday, March 14 at 8:00 am
Dial 877-240-8466 PIN: 8115970342#
Presentation available at <http://join.me/mattcookcasb>
- CASB Members at Education Committee – [Sign Up Here](#)
- [CASB Days at the Capitol](#)

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