

HB 2232 -- SAFE SCHOOLS ACT

SPONSOR: Ross

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 7 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules-Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 8 to 3.

This bill requires any school district authorizing an employee to carry a concealed firearm to post a notice stating that "Under Missouri law, this school and its staff are authorized to meet threats to student safety with deadly force if necessary." School districts with no employees authorized to carry a concealed firearm shall send a written notice to the parent or guardian of any student enrolled in the district that describes the district's authority to authorize designated employees to carry concealed firearms and indicates that the district has not exercised such authority.

Before hiring a former employee of a school district or charter school, school districts and charter schools are required to contact the school that previously employed the former employee and request information regarding the employee. Schools must disclose to any public school inquiring about a former employee information about the former employee regarding any violation of the school's published regulations relating to abusive behavior toward a student. Records relating to such a violation may not be closed under provisions of law permitting the closure of meetings, records and votes, except that any information individually identifying a student shall be considered a closed record.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 555 (2017).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill will prevent teachers who engage in inappropriate contact with students that does amount to criminal behavior from resigning from their position and taking a position with a new school that has no knowledge of the incident.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Ross.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that there has to be some sort of due process to determine that the employee actually engaged in inappropriate behavior before that behavior is reported to a new or potential employer. Employees do have rights and want to ensure that innocent teachers are not prohibited from working because of rumors. Opponents are also concerned about kindergarteners and other young children having to go to schools with signs about guns.

Testifying against the bill were American Federation of Teachers-

Missouri and the Missouri National Education Association.