

HCS HB 554 -- SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

SPONSOR: Wright (Engler)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Special Committee on General Laws by a vote of 10 to 0.

Current law contains permission to reduce the number of days in the school calendar because of inclement weather during school year 2000-2001 and waiver of the requirement to schedule make-up days in 2001-2002. This substitute makes those reductions applicable to the 2002-2003 school year and waives the required two-thirds make-up for 2003-2004. The substitute also removes existing language that permitted districts in 2000-2001 to use a previous year's attendance figures under certain conditions relating to school closure for inclement weather.

The substitute contains an emergency clause.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the quality of learning declines severely as more make-up days are scheduled because neither teachers nor students are focused on instruction. If a district's make-up days extend past the time when colleges begin, a teacher's ability to attend courses necessary for professional advancement is hampered. The inclement weather exceptions were placed into statute two years ago, for just one year, and the substitute now resembles the bill the House passed in 2001 to address that year's bad snowfalls.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Engler; Missouri State Teachers Association; and Missouri National Education Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Becky DeNeve, Senior Legislative Analyst