

HB 616 -- EDUCATION COMMON CORE STANDARDS INITIATIVE

SPONSOR: Bahr

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Downsizing State Government by a vote of 8 to 4.

This bill prohibits the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and nullifies any actions already taken. Any state education standards adopted and implemented must have the approval of the General Assembly.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill removes the common core standards from Missouri schools. Common core is a consortium of states that is trying to develop a one size fits all approach to learning standards, one common core of knowledge that all citizens should have. Common core is not the best curriculum for the state and the standards have been misrepresented to Missouri officials. The quality of the common core standards are extremely low and they amount to educational neglect, and it is part of a larger structure that threatens student and teacher privacy, as there are 400 suggested data points for collection, such as health conditions of the student, family income range, and religious affiliation.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Bahr; Anne Gassel, Missouri Coalition Against Common Core; Bill Evers, Hoover Institute; Emmett McGroarty, American Principles Project; Jane Robbins, American Principles Project; Zeev Wurman, Hoover Institute; and Sandra Stotsky.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the state constitution gives the State Board of Education the authority for updating state education standards. These standards level the playing field for children who have to move from school district to school district through no fault of their own. The standards allow a local district to implement locally adopted standards if it so chooses and gives it local control over its curriculum. These standards have been well vetted.

Testifying against the bill were Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Carolyn Nixon, Willard R-2 School District; Barbara Reys, University of Missouri; and Department of Higher Education.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the common core specifies that the state can add up to 15% of standards, but it cannot further modify the standards. Whatever the state adds to the standards would not be included in the assessment testing.

Testifying on the bill was Gretchen Logue, Missouri Coalition Against Common Core.