

HB 381 with HCA 1 -- HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DEGREE TESTING

SPONSOR: Swan

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Emerging Issues in Education by a vote of 8 to 4.

This bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that any high school equivalency test be administered in a manner that does not discriminate against specified students with a diagnosis that affects learning or with learning disabilities. If an applicant possesses such a condition or disability, the department must administer an individualized test to accommodate the applicant.

Beginning January 1, 2016, the department must offer applicants at least one additional testing option selected by the State Board of Education as an alternative to the HiSET testing program. When selecting the additional test or tests, the board must consider specified criteria.

The board must adopt rules and regulations for a waiver of the fees associated with the examination that must include a sliding-fee scale determined by the department. To be eligible for a financial hardship fee waiver, the applicant must demonstrate that he or she has achieved a minimum passing score on a high school equivalency practice test.

HCA 1: Requires, subject to appropriations, the department to subsidize at least 50% of the examination fee and allows the department to subsidize up to 100% of the fee

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill increases the number of potential test takers by making the examination fee more financially achievable.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Swan; JG Foundation; and Missouri National Education Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.