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Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee

Legislation Checklist

Bill number: SB 215

Sponsor: COGHILL

Date referred to committee: 3/6/85

Synopsis completed:

Fiscal note:

Further referrals: FINANCE

CONTACTS:

SB 215

Senator John R. (Jack) Coghill
Alaska State Legislature

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M E M O R A N D U M

April 11, 1986

TO: Senator Fahrenkamp

FROM: Senator Coghill

RE: SB 215

*JRC
by Fahrenkamp*

Educational funding is the largest expenditure in the operating budget and justifiably so. We have put a priority on educating our children and the one thing that we can do to keep this as stable as possible is to pass legislation that will insure that school districts will know in advance what funding they will have. Decisions in education have to be made slowly to insure that all ramifications are addressed. This keeps the best interest of the students in the forefront and expediency in the background. The legislature, in not moving this concept forward, is essentially forcing school districts into scurrying around in the summer to revise budgets for the coming school year. This leaves very few options when there is a reduction in funding. Contracts are already signed, maintenance costs are set and this leaves school districts in a bind.

There are two reasons why now is the time to move on this issue. We are all aware of the declining revenue situation and that there is a good chance that it will take several years for the price of oil to come back up. This means that we are looking at reductions in foundation support. Schools usually make curricular plans in terms of years and cycles. They should also be able to make their budgetary plans also in advance. The second reason that this is an opportune time for forward funding is that having an accurate picture of what funding a district could expect would enhance labor negotiations. We use the term "good faith negotiations" but fail to give the districts the information that they need to negotiate monetary consideration in a contract. An analogy that could be used is that of buying a house sight unseen and having to take a cut in pay at the same time.

Senate Bill 215 is an act that will use funds from the undistributed account to forward fund education in a two year cycle. There has been a lot of speculation about using the undistributed account for a myriad of proposals. These proposals have met opposition from those who feel that the money should not be spent at all. We are going to fund education anyway, so why not enhance the planning and budgeting abilities of school districts. Putting the money to use in a forward funding scheme would not spend the money.

There has been criticism of school district for carrying over large sums of money from year to year. Forward funding would eliminate the need for this to happen. This is by no means a panacea for education but it will enable school districts to operate in a more efficient manner and as mentioned before, be able to plan changes in staffing and programs with ample time to involve the community in making the best possible decisions.

I am attaching supportive correspondence that I have received from around the state. This is one issue that school boards, administrators and teachers can all agree upon. I would ask you to join with us and support this much needed legislation.

file SB 215
FEB 3 1986

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Alaska State Legislature

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January 31, 1986

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Fahrenkamp

FROM: Senator Coghill

RE: SB 215

SB 215 is presently in the Senate HESS Committee. I would like you to schedule it for hearing at the earliest possible date.

During this session we will be looking at the funding problems facing education in the state. Teachers, Administrators, and School Boards statewide agree that forward funding will alleviate some of the budgeting problems that our schools face.

Forward funding will enhance the planning capabilities of school districts. Accurate staffing and programatic funding would be based on the figures that the district will be receiving not a guess. Labor issues in negotiation would be dealt with in a more equitable manner because both parties would know the parameters that they are dealing with in the budget.

*Propose
from
Undistributed
Perm Fund*

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

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May, 1988

Copies of minutes listed below were originally included in this file. The minutes are available on the STAIRS database CMPR. In order to save space copies of minutes have not been left in the files.

Mary Van Nimwegen

HESS 4-22-86 1:37pm