

Senate Education Committee

Ava Hawkes 271-4151

HB 152, relative to the apportionment of costs in cooperative school districts.

Hearing Date: April 13, 2021

Time Opened: 11:03 a.m.

Time Closed: 11:15 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ward, Hennessey, Ricciardi, Kahn and Prentiss

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill permits the apportionment formula for a cooperative school district to be subject to review 5 years after an article to continue the current formula was passed.

Sponsors:

Rep. McGhee

Who supports the bill: Representative Kat McGhee, Peggy Gilmour, Jim Belanger, Barrett Christina (NHSBA), Drew Mason

Who opposes the bill: Alexandra Mennella

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of testimony presented:

Representative Kat McGhee – Hillsborough, District 27

- Representative McGhee introduced HB 152.
- This is a simple bill which passed the House Education Committee unanimously.
- The cost of a cooperative school district is divided among participating towns under the apportionment formula.
- Under current law, once a formula has been adopted, it can be revisited or reviewed after five years but no sooner.
- If voters in a cooperative school district opt to change the formula, then it stays in force for the next five years.
- This bill proposes a small change to RSA 195:8, which already calls for apportionment calculations to be revisited every five years, so that the trigger is not solely based on changes, but if the formula stays the same.

- An issue kept coming up, before the town moderator, that if we didn't want to change the formula, we weren't allowed to continue it for five years.
- This is a reasonable change.
- The key word in the statement is "change," as, in some cases, change is not required.
- Senator Kahn asked Rep. McGhee if a town had a warrant article that was decided in 2018, what would be the first year that they could consider the distribution formula.
 - Representative McGhee said it would be five years hence.
 - The intention of the bill is to avoid the often contentious discussions that happen around the formula, if the majority of people at the district meeting feel no change is needed.
 - Town moderators asked that she put this bill in.

Jim Belanger

- In support of this bill.
- Former House member.
- Has 40 years of local government experience.
- There is time required to decide if a co-op does or does not need a change, which requires involvement of more than one town.
- Getting committees together, from all towns involved, to meet and coordinate apportionment takes an awful lot of work and time.
- Often times in the past, folks would simply add one dollar to the apportionment formula to fulfill the change requirement.
- This bill is a no brainer. If something is working fine, don't need to change it.
- Though it appears to be an unwritten procedure, even if there is no warrant article, it still has to come up every five years.
- Senator Kahn asked Mr. Belanger if it explicitly says, in statute, that school districts need to bring this up every five years. He also asked if there is a look-back period.
 - Mr. Belanger said it does not explicitly say that. It is unwritten.
 - Yes, he believes there is a look-back period to allow time for study.
 - Bringing it up every year is ridiculous.