

TICUA Policy Update
May 3, 2007

Seeking an Omnibus Lottery Bill

Both the Senate and the House are seeking to combine as many of the lottery scholarship bills as possible into a single omnibus bill that can be agreed upon by all legislators. Senate Education Chair Jamie Woodson introduced her version of an omnibus bill this week. The provisions of her bill will be debated over the next couple of weeks.

The House moved nearly all lottery related bills out of the Higher Education Subcommittee. The House version of an omnibus bill was included in the group. Very little debate or discussion surrounded the bills. Toward the end of the session, the Subcommittee made the decision to simply move all the remaining bills on the calendar to full committee. Consequently, the full Education Committee will debate the merits of each bill in the coming weeks.

House Amends Nursing Board Bill

Representative Gary Odom amended the sunset bill for the Tennessee Board of Nursing making it no longer possible for educators to serve on the Board. The Senate companion bill has already passed the chamber without the amendment. Consequently, if the amended version of the bill passes the House, both chambers will conference to hammer out the differences.

TICUA opposes the amended version citing that it weakens the Board's effectiveness by not including the higher education community. Currently, four of the eleven Board members are higher education representatives.

Administrative Relief with Lottery Unlikely

With limited funds available to make significant changes to the lottery scholarship programs, legislators seem unlikely to address many of the administrative burdens of the programs. Although it has been argued that the changes would also benefit the students, those changes are deemed less attractive than other improvements. Consequently, it is becoming less and less probable that there will be relief from the TELS GPA, hour specific benchmarking, or other requested changes from the financial aid community.

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