

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

**FILE NUMBER:** H.F. 329

**DATE:** February 21, 2012

**Version:** Second engrossment

**Authors:** Bills and others

**Subject:** Prohibiting the use of public resources for advocacy

**Analyst:** Lisa Larson, 651-296-8036

This publication can be made available in alternative formats upon request. Please call 651-296-6753 (voice); or the Minnesota State Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TTY) for assistance. Summaries are also available on our website at: [www.house.mn/hrd](http://www.house.mn/hrd).

---

### Overview

The Minnesota attorney general issued an opinion in 1966 advising school districts that any use of school district resources, including money, materials, facilities, and employee time, to advocate for a particular outcome in an election or on a ballot question was a misappropriation of public resources. The attorney general wrote that "public funds entrusted to the board belong equally to the proponents and opponents of the proposition, and the use of the funds to finance not the presentation of facts merely but also arguments to persuade the voters that only one side has merit, gives the dissenters just cause for complaint." School districts are permitted to impartially place facts before voters and expend public funds to do so.

- 1 Prohibitions on political activities by public school employees.** Directs school boards to develop and implement policies to ensure that district employees do not use publicly funded resources to: advocate or defeat a candidate for political office; advocate for passing or defeating a referendum question; or solicit funds for a political purpose. Declares that such policies must not prohibit district employees from engaging in political activities except when performing employment-related duties or officially representing their employer. Declares that such policies must not prohibit using public funds to disseminate information about a local ballot proposition if the information is factual and does not advocate for or against the proposition. Requires school districts to make the policies readily accessible in paper or electronic format.

Makes this section effective immediately.