

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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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 Prohibiting school employees from using public resources for advocacy; endorsing timely and factual information.** (a) Requires school boards to adopt and implement a policy that prohibits district employees and others employed by the district from using district funds or other publicly funded district resources to advocate for electing or defeating a candidate, passing or defeating a ballot question, or passing or defeating pending legislation. Requires the policy to specify intervention strategies and disciplinary consequences of violating the policy and what constitutes permissible employee conduct and employees' duty to report. Makes the policy apply during such times as when an employee performs the duties assigned to the employee under the employee's employment contract with the district and when an employee represents the district in an official capacity. Excludes from the effect of the policy those times when an employee disseminates factual information consistent with the employee's contractual duties. Requires a school board equal access to school facilities to all non-curriculum related groups.

(b) Directs a school board to provide the district's electorate with timely factual information about a pending ballot question.