

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

**FILE NUMBER:** H.F. 329  
**Version:** As introduced

**DATE:** March 4, 2011

**Authors:** Bills and others

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

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