

MADISON COUNTY
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE
157 N. Main St., Edwardsville, IL 62025 RM 203
Thursday, April 10, 2025
5:00 PM – 5:48 PM

Chairman Palmero called the special meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were:

PRESENT: Jason Palmero, Terry Eaker, Linda Ogden, Shawndell Wilson, Dalton Gray, Alison Lamothe, Denise Wiehardt, Ron Simpson

ABSENT: None

OTHERS: Nicole Burns, Stephanie Singleton, Theresa Morrison, Rob Werden, James Finley, David Livingstone, Liz Happold, Maggie Brueggemann, Christi Dea, Amanda Landers, Eva Landers, Kelly James, Kelsey Staub, Elizabeth Drainer, David Drainer, Amanda Remken, Jay Rensing, Ashley Billings, Jen Rensing, Linda Wolfe

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Member Gray read aloud the Resolution Opposing HB2827: Defending Parental Rights in Education.

Stephanie Singleton, Christi Dea, Amanda Landers, Amanda Remken, and Jen Rensing all spoke about their homeschooling and/or private schooling experiences and opposition to House Bill 2827.

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The following was submitted for discussion and approval:

1. Resolution Opposing HB2827: Defending Parental Rights in Education

Mr. Gray moved, seconded by Ms. Ogden to approve the resolution as presented.

Regional Superintendent of Schools Rob Werden addressed a range of concerns including child neglect and abuse, lack of access to education, homeschooling regulations, and potential government overreach. He emphasized that his role includes oversight of all educational formats—public, private, and homeschool—and expressed his desire for the proposed resolution to be both accurate and meaningful. Mr. Werden noted that he and Member Gray collaborated on revised language and ideas for the resolution. He also shared plans to invite the public to his office to access resources and to deepen his understanding of the homeschooling community. While public schools serve about 40,000 students in the county, the number of private and homeschool students remains unknown.

Mr. Werden and the committee discussed various elements of the resolution that could be refined or expanded. Member Gray acknowledged the difficult, underfunded work of DCFS and pointed out that there are only seven truancy officers for Madison County's 40,000 public school students. He suggested efforts should focus on improving public education before scrutinizing home environments. Gray also commented on the erosion of public trust in the state and advocated for voluntary collaboration and resource-sharing among public, private, and homeschool sectors. Mr. Werden clarified the truancy data.

Member Lamothe thanked her colleagues for revising the original resolution in a timely manner but announced she would be voting in opposition, explaining that none of her constituents voiced opposition to HB2827. She added that her constituents' main concern is the amount of time the county board spends on

non-binding resolutions. Member Lamothe expressed unease about groups opposing HB2827 and what they represent.

Member Eaker supported the use of non-binding resolutions, adding they a valuable tool for expressing the board's stance on issues and making their voices heard.

Chairman Palmero clarified that non-binding resolutions do not appear on ballots for public vote.

The ayes and nays called on the motion to approve resulted in a vote as follows:

AYES: Palmero, Eaker, Ogden, Gray, Wiehardt, Simpson

NAYS: Wilson, Lamothe

MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: - None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Member Lamothe asked where to locate the agendas and recordings on the website.

Mr. Gray moved, seconded by Ms. Ogden to adjourn the meeting at 5:48 PM. *MOTION CARRIED.*

/mds