



# Duval County Legislative Delegation

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CLAY YARBOROUGH

**MINUTES  
LOCAL BILL PUBLIC HEARING  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2019  
1:00 P.M.  
117 W. DUVAL STREET, COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Chair Fischer called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. followed by the invocation and the pledge.

Members Present: Senators Bean and Gibson; Representatives Byrd, Daniels, Davis, Duggan, Fischer and Yarborough. A quorum was present.

Chair Fischer handed the gavel over to Vice Chair Daniels so that he could speak as the Sponsor of J-1. Vice Chair Daniels then spoke to the agenda of the meeting and stated that one amendment had been filed for the bill. There was then an explanation of the underlying bill followed by a discussion to clarify the process of debate and Delegate's questions. Chair Fischer made a motion to adopt the substitute amendment with a second by Representative Duggan. There was an 8-0 voice vote in favor of adopting the substitute. Chair Fischer followed up by explaining the new version of bill which creates a referendum in Duval County for the voters to vote on whether or not they would like to have an elected superintendent.

The Delegation then moved into the question section on the bill as amended. Senator Gibson asked about term limits, the superintendent campaign process, and required educational background. Representative Davis asked about the special election on page 2, lines 26-31; reasons the bill was filed; and public opinion. Next, Representative Duggan brought up the wording of page 2 and suggested cleaning up the language. Stephen Durden from Office of General Counsel clarified that the bill as drafted references the general election and the word special, on line 27, doesn't create a special election. Representative Davis made a motion to remove the word special from page 2, line 27, with a second by Representative Byrd. There was an 8-0 voice vote in favor of removing the word.

They resumed the question portion of the meeting and Senator Gibson followed up with questions about the school board and superintendent relationship. Next, Representative Davis asked about the reasoning behind this avenue to achieve an elected superintendent. Senator

Gibson then asked the Sponsor what problem this bill is trying to solve. That concluded the question portion of the meeting. The meeting then moved into the public comment portion.

Speakers:

Lori Hershey, School Board Member- Presented 3 different resolutions in opposition of the bill and spoke to reasons why a superintendent should be appointed. She then responded to multiple questions by the Delegation

Carolyn Smith- Spoke in opposition of the bill and explained why a superintendent should be elected

Susan Aertker- Opposed the bill and questioned the legality of the bill

Senator Bean motioned to waive the time limit for Council Member Carlucci with a second by Representative Duggan. There was an 8-0 voice vote in favor of suspending the time limit.

Councilmember Matt Carlucci, Jacksonville City Council Member- Talked about how well the current school district is doing and doesn't agree with changing the current system. He was asked about the city council resolution which was in opposition to the local bill and he stated how it ended in a tie.

Karen Droege- Opposed the bill because she wants a superintendent who is focused on running schools and not focused on running a campaign

Theodore Hornoi-Centerwall- Spoke against the bill and spoke to what an elected superintendent might look like

Larry Zwain- Opposed having an elected superintendent and about his worries about the continuity of the office during election cycles

Marion Tischler- Opposed the local bill and supports the current direction of the school superintendent

Nancy Powell- Urged the Delegation to withdraw the bill

Lanelle Phillmon- Spoke in opposition of the bill and mentioned the loss of accreditation back when the superintendent used to be elected

Cindy Pearson- Supports the current system and opposes the bill

Bonnie Hendrix- Asked the delegation to vote no on J-1 so that the superintendent doesn't have to focus on elections

Senator Bean motioned to waive the time limit for Council Members with a second by Vice-Chair Daniels.

Councilmember Joyce Morgan, Jacksonville City Council- Spoke in opposition of the bill because politics is not the answer to improving the schools

Warren Jones, School Board Member- Spoke to the superintendent selection process and how the school board looks for the most qualified person, opposed the bill

Ashley Smith Juarez, School Board Member- Talked about the strides made over the past 10 years by the appointed superintendents and asked that the Delegation vote no on the bill

Darryl Willie, School Board Member- Opposed the bill and supports the current appointment structure

Elizabeth Andersen, School Board Member- Does not think that this bill is good policy and urged the Delegation to oppose the bill

Amanda Everett- Opposed the bill because she believes the process should be nonpartisan and should not discourage those who cannot afford to campaign

Theresa Rogers- Submitted the Duval County Council of PTAs resolution in opposition to the bill

Paul Ryder- Opposed the bill because of the failings of the past and because the school district is currently thriving

Speakers Not on the Agenda:

Eunice Barnum- Questioned the constitutionality of the current process and lauded the current superintendent

Ed Pratt-Dannals- Spoke on the issues with having an elected superintendent and supports the current model. Touched on the possible issues between elected superintendents and employees

Daniel Henry- Concerned with the lack of implementing language and that the bill would essentially fire the current superintendent

David Bruderly- Stated that elections of superintendents are partisan and take up all of the superintendent's time, opposed the bill

Wendy Collins- Concerned with a qualified superintendent not having enough money to win an election, opposed the bill

Terrie Brady- Represents Duval Teachers United and supports an appointed superintendent and asked for the bill to be withdrawn

A recess was held from 3:25- 3:44. The meeting was called back to order and went into the debate portion of the meeting.

Debate:

Senator Bean- Agreed to give it a chance but has a concern with there not being a total consensus on the bill

Representative Davis- Opposed the bill and is concerned with the timing of the bill; sees the superintendent as an educational leader and not as a member of a particular party

Senator Gibson- Opposed the bill and was upset about how divisive the bill has been among the Delegation and urged the sponsor to withdraw the bill

Representative Yarborough- Shares the concern that the bill does not have total agreement but will vote yes so that Duval county voters can make the decision

Representative Duggan- Shares the same sentiments as other Delegates and is comfortable with the voters deciding

Representative Byrd- Stated that there were some good arguments but he trusts the people and the will of the voters

Vice Chair Daniels- Will vote up on the bill today and hopes to sit down with the school board members but unsure of how she will vote once in Tallahassee

Closing- Chair Fischer- Hoped to clarify that the bill is about letting the voters decide; it does not make the decision to have an elected superintendent. Argued that it is already a political appointment and this proposal just allows people to choose if they want the school board or people to make that appointment. Closed by asking for everyone's support and agreed to work with the stakeholders.

Vote:

Yeas: Senator Bean, Representative Byrd, Representative Daniels, Representative Duggan, Representative Fischer, Representative Yarborough

Nays: Senator Gibson, Representative Davis

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

This is not a verbatim transcript but a summary of the proceedings. A recording is on file in the Delegation office and posted online on the Delegation website.

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