

CAPITOL REPORT – WEEK 10

MARCH 8, 2024

Weekly Overview: On Monday and Tuesday of this week, Senator Bill Eigel (R-St. Charles) was noticeably absent from the chamber. Sunday evening while at home, Sen. Eigel had what has been described as a choking incident which required him to go to the hospital. Despite the Senator's absence, the Senate went on with business as usual and was able to give first round approval for three measures. A bill making clarifications to legislation passed last session creating a property tax credit for seniors, a bill dealing with eviction proceedings, and another measure putting back into law several provisions of [HB 1606](#) which had been thrown out by the Supreme Court due to violations of the Single Subject Clause all received Senate approval.

There was a vitriolic dustup in the Senate on Tuesday as the Senate debated a bill about ceremonial namings and holidays sponsored by Senator Greg Razer (D-Kansas City). The debate devolved into shouting match as Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrenton) attacked Razer over the issue of transgender healthcare. Razer, an openly gay legislator, opposed an amendment last session that would ban gender affirming care to minors. After the screaming match subsided as a result of a call to order by President Pro Tem Caleb Rowden, the bill was laid over to the Informal Calendar.

On Wednesday when Sen. Eigel returned to Session - things returned to what has become the norm. The Senate once again found itself bogged down and unable to function. Only two hours into the day's session the Majority Floor Leader had already had enough and abruptly adjourned for the day. Up until that point, Senators Eigel and Moon had held the floor discussion their desire to put an end to the State's personal property tax on vehicles. When the Senate went into session on Thursday, they gave final approval to nine pieces of legislation sending them to the House for their consideration. To date, the Senate has sent ten bills to the House this session.

This week the House held morning and afternoon sessions and plowed through a number of their priorities, as you will read about in this report. This change usually does not take place until after the Legislative Spring Break, but the push to get their version of the budget out of the House and to the Senate caused this divergence. It is rumored that the House will have very limited floor activity next week to ensure that the House Budget Committee has enough time to get the budget bills amended and voted out of committee. The House had initially planned on getting the budget bills to the Senate before the Legislative Spring Break, but that timeline is no longer realistic as Spring Break begins upon adjournment next Thursday (March 14th).

In the news...

- House Ethics Committee Chairwoman Hannah Kelly (R-Mountain Grove) rebuffed an attorney representing House Speaker Dean Plocher after attorney Lowell Pearson attempted to remain in a meeting that was being closed for confidential purposes. The Committee is investigating several allegations of wrongdoing by Rep. Plocher involving reimbursements for conferences, and a relationship with a vendor desiring to do business with the House. The Ethics Committee is expected to issue a report of its findings, however, there is no date for public release of the report.
- In the “never a dull moment at the capitol” category, the House Special Committee on Public Policy conducted a hearing on a bill that would create penalties for engaging in an adult cabaret performance in a location where the performance could be viewed by minors. Two men, Maxi Glamour and Autumn Equinox, appeared in opposition to the bill fully dressed in performance garb and argued that drag performances are not sexual in nature. The Committee is expected to vote on the measure next week.
- A March 1st press release from Governor Mike Parson’s office indicates that, during the month of February, he granted 36 pardons, and approved three commutations of sentences. The release indicates that he denied 63 clemency applications. Parson has received criticism for his commutation of Britt Reid’s sentence for his DUI conviction in an accident that left a young Kansas City girl with brain injuries. Reid, who is the son of Kansas City Chief’s Coach Andy Reid, served less than half of a three-year incarceration sentence.
- On Monday, the Department of Economic Development announced Unilever will expand its facility in Jefferson City, investing more than \$80 million to add operations capabilities for the production of Liquid I.V. The company previously announced a separate \$25 million investment for its Jefferson City facility in January.
- Missouri veterans who have been exposed to toxins and similar risks can now go directly to VA healthcare without applying for VA benefits. Veterans exposed during military service, were assigned to certain duty stations in Southwest Asia or parts of Africa and veterans deployed in support of certain operations after September 11th are all qualified for this healthcare access.
- On Wednesday, the United Auto Workers announced more than 30% of non-union workers at the Troy Toyota plant signed union authorization cards. It marks the first Toyota plant in the country to do so. The union says Troy workers received a pay increase after workers for the Big Three automakers went on strike last year, but non-union workers are still making \$4 less than unionized workers.

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Budget Update

State Budget Director Dan Haug announced that net general revenue collections for February 2024 grew 18% compared to those for February 2023, from \$703.5 million last year to \$830.3 million this year. The net general revenue collections for 2024 fiscal year-to-date increased 1.3% compared to February 2023, from \$8.31 billion last year to \$8.42 billion this year.

Also, this week the House dedicated floor time debating [HB 2016](#), sponsored by Representative Cody Smith (R-Carthage). This is the emergency supplemental bill which would backfill funding from the Governor's Discretionary Fund to support the deployment of 200 National Guardsman and 22 Missouri High Patrol Officers. After considerable debate, the House passed the bill by a 122-12 vote, and it was sent to the Senate for further consideration.

It is expected that the House budget mark-up process will begin next week as Representative Cody Smith has previously stated he would like his committee to finish drafting their version of the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) State Budget prior to spring break. It is expected the chair's committee substitutes will be shared next week and this will be the starting point of the House Budget Committee mark-up process. However, at the time of this report, no hearing has been posted to confirm this.

Meanwhile, the Senate has finished hearing from the various departments on the New Decision Items (NDIs) and governor recommendations this week. The Senate Appropriations Committee is now at a standstill and waiting for the House to finish crafting their version of the budget. As a reminder, the Missouri State FY25 Budget must be completed by the Constitutional deadline of May 10th.

Alternative Therapies

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1830](#), sponsored by Representative Aaron McMullen (R-Independence). The bill seeks to provide \$2 million to go towards a clinical trial on the efficacy of using alternative medicines and therapies, including, but not limited to, the use of psilocybin for the medical treatment for veterans and mental health disorders. Specifically, for patients that are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, treatment-resistant depression, substance abuse disorders, or who require end-of-life care. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to narrowly tailor the bill to apply only to veterans with qualifying conditions. Additionally, as the bill is drafted, the program is within the MO Department of Social Services, the committee substitute moved the program to the MO Department of Mental Health. Finally, the committee substitute increased the funding for research grants from \$2 million to \$3 million, expanding the financial resources available for studying psilocybin's therapeutic potential, and provided clean-up language throughout the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Ambulance District Boards

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 2458](#), sponsored by Representative Chris Dinkins (R-Lesterville). Currently, any ambulance district board member is required to attend a training session within 12 months of taking office or he or she will not be compensated for attending meetings and will be prohibited from running for reelection until the board member completes the training. The bill modifies this provision by requiring all members of the board of directors of an ambulance district to complete three hours of continuing education for each term of office. Additionally, each ambulance service licensed under Chapter 190, RSMo, must identify a

member to serve as the ambulance service administrator and must also comply with the training requirements. Finally, the bill outlines conditions and terms where the Department of Health and Senior Services may terminate an ambulance service license.

Ambulatory Surgical Center Modifications

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2808](#), sponsored by Representative Kent Haden (R-Mexico). The bill modifies the definition of “ambulatory surgical centers” to clearly identify the various kinds of surgical centers. Specifically, the bill seeks to separate birthing centers from centers which provide surgical procedures that do not require hospitalization and the duration of services will not exceed 24 hours. New Birth Company provided supporting testimony. Missouri Academy of Family Physicians and Missouri State Medical Association provided opposing testimony regarding the tiers of regulation and the provision regarding patient records. The Department of Health and Senior Services, Missouri Society of Anesthesiologists, Missouri Ambulatory Surgery Centers, and Missouri Nurse Anesthetists Association provided informational testimony regarding the need for clear definitions and the regulatory powers of the department over the various ambulatory surgical centers. Those testifying for informational purposes also stated stakeholders are continuing to meet to work out compromise language.

Background Checks

The House Professional Registration Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1800](#), sponsored by Representative Ron Copeland (R-Salem). The bill requires boards, state agencies, committees, commissions, and the Supreme Court of Missouri that choose to conduct background checks on applicants, submit fingerprints to the Missouri State Highway Patrol. The fingerprints and required fees will first be sent the Missouri State Highway Patrol central repository, then be forwarded to the FBI and the Missouri State Highway Patrol will notify the respective entities of the applicant’s criminal history or lack thereof. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which removes the mandate from the Division and Alcohol and Tobacco Control, added clarifying definitions for “MO HealthNet provider” and “MO HealthNet services,” adds clarifying definitions for “appraisal management services” and “appraisal management company,” and adds audiologists, speech-language pathologists, audiology aides, bail bond agents, mortgage loan originator and volunteers for the Department of Natural Resources to the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

Broadband Development Council

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1813](#), sponsored by Representative Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal). The bill establishes the “Broadband Development Council.” Additionally, the bill establishes the responsibilities of the council and specifies it to be made up of 21 members. Finally, the bill requires the council to establish a contract for university-based research. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which eliminates the sunset on the “Uniform Small Wireless Facility Deployment Act.” Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Building Permit Reform Act

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 2282](#), sponsored by Representative Tony Lovasco (R-O’Fallon). The bill establishes the Building Permit Reform Act, which creates guidelines and protections for homeowners seeking to update and maintain their homes. Additionally, the bill

restricts political subdivisions from requiring a homeowner to acquire obtain a license, certification, or professional registration before requesting a building permit for certain activities. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 99-38 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Candidacy Filing Deadlines

The House dedicated floor time Thursday to revisit [HB 1604](#), sponsored by Representative Hinman (R-O’Fallon). Currently, the filing period for candidates, unless otherwise specified, is from the 17th Tuesday prior to the election through the 14th Tuesday prior to the election. The bill moves the filing period by one week, from the 16th Tuesday to the 13th Tuesday prior to the election. The bill also provides that if the 13th Tuesday is a holiday, the next day will be the last day of filing. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 144-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Candidate Financial Interest Statements

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2146](#), sponsored by Representative Peggy McGaugh (R-Carrollton). Currently, governing bodies of political subdivisions with general operating budgets in excess of \$1 million are required to file financial interest statements with the Missouri Ethics Commission. The bill alters this by requiring governing bodies to submit an attestation to the Commission if the operating budget is expected to exceed \$1 million. Additionally, the bill requires election authorities and other entities to submit to the commission a list of those required to submit financial interest statements within two days of the closure of candidate filing. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which requires a list of candidates be submitted to political subdivisions two business days after the filing date closes and made a technical change. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Cannabinoids – Intoxicating

The House Committee on Crime Prevention convened Thursday afternoon to revisit [HB 1781](#), sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green). The bill establishes the “Intoxicating Cannabinoid Control Act”, which provides specific definitions critical to the regulation of “intoxicating cannabinoids” and requires that all products containing intoxicating cannabinoids be classified and regulated as marijuana under Article XIV of the Missouri Constitution. During committee discussion, Committee Chairman Lane Roberts (R-Joplin) stated a lot of new information has come to light and he wanted to conduct another hearing before progressing the legislation. The sponsor informed committee members that we are dealing with the only product in Missouri that is an intoxicating product, however, it is not regulated at all. The MO Police Chief Association supported the bill and highlighted that law enforcement continues to battle an illicit drug battle and allowing unregulated products, that are packaged to be deceitful is an ongoing battle and the majority of these products are being smuggled. The MOCannTrade Association also supported the bill, stating agencies cannot regulate without licensure and there is already a framework in place to regulate these products. Additionally, information was provided highlighting the original intent of the Farm Act and deregulating hemp, informing committee members of the congressional record of the 2018 Farm Bill. Specifically, congress did not intend to legalize intoxicating substances for consumption, their intent was to legalize industrial hemp for agricultural purposes only.

The Petroleum and Convenience Store Association loosely opposed the bill as they believe there needs to be oversight, testing, and regulation of these products. However, all retailers not just dispensaries should be able to sell these hemp derived products and stated these products are federally authorized. The Association also provided a proposed committee substitute aligning the majority of the regulations with marijuana, with DHSS oversight. Additional opposing testimony was provided by MO Hemp Trade Association, MO Smoke Free, various hemp farmers, and producers of the unregulated products, stating removing these products would hurt small businesses and provided an overview of profit and sales.

Career Literacy

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2794](#), sponsored by Representative Gretchen Bangert (D-Florissant). The bill requires that students in the eighth grade complete a career assessment, meet with a guidance counselor, and develop a personal plan of study or individual career and academic plan. Additionally, the bill repeals the "Career Readiness Course Task Force" which was dissolved in 2019. The sponsor's intent is to provide students with all relevant information regarding entering the workforce. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Career Tech Certificate Program

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday to debate [HB 1569](#), sponsored by Representative Ann Kelley (R-Lamar). The bill establishes a Career-Tech Certificate program. Beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, any student who has met the qualifications for the A+ Scholars Program shall qualify for reimbursement for the costs associated with tuition, books, or fees associated with completion of an eligible certificate program from a public or private postsecondary institution, vocational school, community college, or certified training provider approved by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. Eligible programs include certificate or degree programs conferred by approved institutions of higher education for employment as a certified nursing assistant (CNA), certified medical technician (CMT), commercial driver's license (CDL), level 1 medication administration aide (L1MAA), and certified insulin administrator. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted which combines the bill with [HB 2326](#), [HB 2415](#), and [HB 2313](#) to increase the range of awards for recipients of the access Missouri scholarship for two-year colleges to a minimum of \$500 and maximum of \$1700 the range for public four-year universities and the state technical college to a minimum of \$1750 and maximum of \$3500 in total. Additionally, the substitute requires any public community college, college, or university to develop a policy to provide college credit for any enrolled student who receives a 4 or higher on an international baccalaureate (IB) examination and for the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development to develop a grant program for eligible students pursuing a certificate, associates, or bachelor's degree in an approved STEM program. The bill was further modified when Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler) successfully amended the bill to tie the cap to the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant to the CPI. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Cemeteries

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2672](#), sponsored by Representative Richard West (R-Wentzville). The bill adds the definition of "human and pet cemetery" to current statute, which would allow for the creation of cemeteries in which both human remains, and the remains of other creatures could be interred and memorialized at the discretion of the lot holder. The

Associated Cemeteries of Missouri provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Central Bank Digital Currency

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1676](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Matthiesen (R-O’Fallon). The bill defines “central bank digital currency” and prohibits any state agency from accepting or requiring the use of central bank digital currency. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-2 vote.

Child Custody – Military Parents

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1494](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City). The bill establishes the Uniform Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act, which seeks to establish guidelines for a divorced active military parent(s). After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by consent by an 11-0 vote.

Collegiate Course Credit Transfer Procedures

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 1075](#), sponsored by Sen. Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). Beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, the bill requires the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to increase the number of transferable credits from 42 to 60 credit hours for lower-level requirements of a degree program, rather than for academic credit only. Additionally, the bill requires public institutions of higher education in the state to recognize the transferred credits of a community or junior college student as satisfactory toward completion of the general education requirements of the receiving institution. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which establishes an advisory committee comprised of representatives of each two- and four-year public university in the state to develop a list of 60 transferrable credits which are applicable to the majority of general education courses for shared degree programs across universities. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Commercial Transactions

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2780](#), sponsored by Representative Justin Hicks (R-Lake St. Louis). The bill makes several updates and modifications to commercial statutes. Specifically, the bill prohibits public entities from accepting payments using any central bank digital currency, modifies definitions for central bank digital currency and updates the Uniform Commercial Code. Additionally, the bill makes hybrid transactions subject to the Uniform Commercial Code and defines hybrid transactions. Finally, the bill modifies when and how a person has control of electronic document of title, modifies when a purchaser has control of security entitlements and modifies definitions of secured transactions. The Missouri Bar, the Uniform Law Commission, Missouri Bankers Association and Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines provided supporting testimony stating these updates are necessary to comply with federal law and allow for interstate transactions to take place. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Contracts with Public Entities

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1724](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Falkner (R-St. Joseph). Due to unintended consequences with legislation that was passed in 2019 relating to Industrial Revenue Bonds. Prior to 2019, IRB projects were exempt from mechanical liens due to government ownership, which caused issues for

subcontractors and in 2019, language was amended to require payment bonds for IRB projects in order to protect subcontractors. The bill removes the IRB payment bond requirements, provides an option to governmental entities to require a payment bond or consent to the filing of mechanical liens, and eliminates personal liability for employees and elected and appointed officials of a government entity for decisions made by a governmental entity requiring the payment of bonds. St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce, St. Joseph Economic Partnership, Missouri Economic Development Financing Association, Missouri Municipal League, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Missouri Economic Development Council provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Coroner Training Standards

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2777](#), sponsored by Representative John Voss (R-Cape Girardeau). Currently, the Coroner Standards and Training Commission is responsible for establishing training standards, by rule, relating to the Office of County Coroner. The bill requires these standards be set by the Commission by January 1, 2025.

Additionally, the bill requires the training include equivalent training that is required to be licensed as an emergency medical technician and death investigation training that certifies individuals in the practice of death investigation. The sponsor is seeking to provide standard training guidelines for coroners in the state to avoid errors during death investigations. Several private citizens and current coroners provided both supporting and opposing testimony. The Missouri Coroners and Medical Examiners Association and Missouri Coroner Standards and Training Commission provided informational testimony regarding current training practices of coroners.

County Hospital Investments

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1665](#), sponsored by Representative Tara Peters (R-Rolla). Currently, the board of trustees of any hospital may invest up to 15% of their funds, that are not required to meet their obligations or for the hospital operations, into any mutual funds in the form of an investment company, a variety of stocks, bonds, and money-market investments. The bill removes the percentage restriction for investment purposes and deletes language relating to a mutual fund in the form of an investment company. Phelps Health provided supporting testimony. No other testimony was presented to the committee.

County Officials

The Senate dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [SB 1363](#), sponsored by Senator Crawford (R-Bufferalo). The bill includes several provisions relating to county officials. Specifically, upon the approval of the salary commission, the bill allows counties to increase coroners' salaries. Additionally, the bill allows county corners that fill the slot of sheriffs to receive that salary, allows salary commissions to amend the base salary schedule, allows county collectors to conduct tax sales via electronic media, allows county auditors to audit and examine claims, excludes the Boone County sheriff from the current salary schedule, and changes statutes concerning public administrators. During debate, Senator Karla May (D-St. Louis) successfully amended the bill to clarify a St. Louis City sheriff shall be required to hold a valid peace officer license within two years of being elected as sheriff and also clarifies the annual salary for a sheriff shall be no less than \$50 thousand dollars a year. Once modified, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes. The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 1363](#). After no further debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 25-8 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

CTF Medical Alert System

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1155](#), sponsored by Senator Angela Mosley (R-Florissant). The bill creates the Christian Taylor Ferguson ("CTF") Medical Alert System to aid in identifying and locating a missing endangered person, including children, who are missing under unexplained, involuntary, or suspicious circumstances and who are believed to be in danger due to a medical condition that requires immediate care, medication, or treatment. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Distribution of Controlled Substances

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1996](#), sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green). The bill modifies existing statute governing the offense of distribution of a controlled substance within 2,000 feet of a public or private elementary, vocational, or secondary school or school bus, within 1,000 feet of any public or designated park, or within any public or governmental assistance-provided housing. The bill expands the statute to define the distribution of controlled substances to individuals on these premises if the receiving individuals is below the age of 22 as a Class A felony. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted that changed the age from 22 to 21 to make it uniform with existing statutes. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 6-2 vote.

Driving Privileges (Commercial)

The House Transportation Infrastructure committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2304](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Knight (R-Lebanon). This bill seeks to add verifications of an individual's eligibility for a driver's license. The Department of Revenue must verify the driver's eligibility for a license through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. The Department of Revenue provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Early Childhood Education Program Funding

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 1486](#), sponsored by Representative Brenda Shields (R-St. Joseph). The bill proposes to change provisions governing state funding for early childhood education programs. Currently, a maximum of 4% of a school district's total enrollment of free and reduced-price lunch students may be counted as eligible in the calculation of state aid and the state adequacy target the district receives per pupil prior to beginning Kindergarten. The bill removes this maximum and instead proposes to fund every child between ages 3 and 5 who attends an early childhood program provided by a public or charter school district and meets the qualifications for free and reduced-price lunch in the year prior to beginning kindergarten at an amount equal to the state adequacy target. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 102-43 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Earnings Tax

The House Economic Development Committee met Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2464](#) and [HB 2460](#), sponsored by Representatives Steve Butz (R-St. Louis) and Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). The bills are identical and seek to exempt from the city earnings tax all taxpayers whose income

is at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. During bill presentation, the sponsor informed committee members that the median income level is \$50,000 in the City of St. Louis and the tax cut would benefit the city. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to combine both bills into one legislative vehicle. Additionally, the committee substitute includes language ensuring the bill does not apply to Kansas City. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-4 vote.

Education Plans – Parental Consent for Modification of Plans

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1663](#), sponsored by Representative Tara Peters (R-Rolla) and [HB 2113](#), sponsored by Representative Philip Oehlerking (R-Ballwin). The bills are similar and propose requiring written parental consent for any modification of a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that differs more than 25% from the originally agreed-upon IEP as approved by a student's IEP team and parent or guardian. [HB 2113](#) increases the threshold to a 30%. Missouri Disability Empowerment (MODE), numerous parents, Kids Win Missouri, and the Special School District of St. Louis provided supporting testimony.

Election Integrity and Media Provisions

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday to debate [HB 2628](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). The bill defines “deceptive and fraudulent deepfake” and “synthetic media.” Additionally, the bill prohibits the use of synthetic media against candidates 90 days prior to an election unless a disclaimer is included with the message. During the bill’s progression, substitute language was adopted adding [HB 2603](#), which establishes the “Caller ID Anti-Spoofing Act.” Additionally, language was removed regarding the liability of broadcasting stations and penalty provisions were added. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Election Reform

The Senate Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [SJR 78](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). Upon voter approval, the resolution provides that only citizens of the United States over the age of 18 who are residents of Missouri and of the political subdivision in which they offer to vote are entitled to vote at all elections. Additionally, the resolution specifies that all elections shall be by paper ballot and voters are limited to one vote for each issue on the ballot. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

Election Reform

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HJR 104](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). Upon voter approval, this resolution seeks to modify several provisions regarding elections in Missouri. Specifically, the resolution requires the use of paper ballots or ADA approved machines, removes ranked choice voting from primary elections, requires all voting machines used in an election to be tested and certified before their use, and requires voting machines to keep a permanent paper record for election audits. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 9-4 vote.

Electrical Corporations Deferrals

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1422](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). The bill was filed as a replacement to [SB 1247](#) and is in response to the pressing need for reliable baseload power.

The bill seeks to modify definitions and allows the use of plant and service accounting (PSA), which makes it possible to get back full investments made into utility projects. Additionally, the bill provides utilities a depreciation of 100% of expenses, instead of 85%, and extends the sunset date from December 31, 2028, to December 31, 2035. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated he worked closely with the PSC and removed controversial sections, including predetermination process, and the construction work in progress financing provisions. Evergy, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Ameren MO, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Hunt Midwest supported the bill. Sierra Club, Consumers Council of MO, MO Industries Consumers, and a state public advocate opposed the bill.

Emergency Medical Services

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 1340](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). The bill requires ambulance district boards of directors to complete three hours of continuing education for each term of office and failure to do so will result in a loss of office. Additionally, the bill requires each ambulance district to arrange for an audit of the district's records and accounts every three years by a certified public accountant and make the results available to the public on the district's website or otherwise freely available by other electronic means. Missouri Ambulance Association, Cox Health, Cole County EMS provided supporting testimony stating the legislation is an attempt to deliver better services and ensure ambulance districts are run effectively and safely. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Professional Counselors

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 1284](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill modifies the licensure processes for professional counselors. Specifically, the bill requires the Division of Professional Registration to provide electronic access to licensure applications within 15 business days and allows graduates to receive provisional licensure until the Division can fully review the applications. Burrell Health, Preferred Family Health provided supporting testimony stating the behavioral health counselor shortage could be alleviated by shorter licensure times. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Employer Liability

The House Insurance Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1531](#), sponsored by Representative Cyndi Buchheit-Courtway (R-Festus). The bill specifies if an employer is found to have not followed OSHA, state regulations, or direct orders of the Division of Worker's Compensation which result in the death of an employee, that employee's family is entitled to an increase in the death benefit of at least 25% but no more than 50%. Additionally, the bill increases the maximum funeral benefits, increases the amount of liability for tort claims that may be purchased and allows punitive damages, if clear definitive proof of violations is found. Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys and several family members of deceased workers provided supporting testimony. Missouri Intergovernmental Risk Management Association provided opposing testimony regarding the allowance of punitive damages against municipalities.

Employment Security

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2034](#), sponsored by Representative Bruce Sassmann (R-Bland). The bill establishes the "Employment Security Program Integrity Act of 2024" to establish methods to ensure identity verification and outlines the responsibility of companies regarding new hires and their wages.

During discussion, substitute language was adopted which establishes a path for potential employers to notify the Division of Employment Security who fail to appear for job interviews and an investigation to ensue for those applying for benefits. Additionally, HB 2081, which establishes three new tax credits for engineers and business entities which hire engineers, was added to the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-1 vote.

The committee then turned its attention to discuss [HB 2614](#), sponsored by Representative David Casteel (R-High Ridge). The bill is identical to [HB 2034](#), highlighted above. Opportunity Solutions Project provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Eviction Moratorium

The Senate dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [SB 895](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill prohibits any Missouri county, municipality, or political subdivision from imposing a moratorium on eviction proceedings unless specifically authorized by state law. Additionally, the bill requires all transfers of title of real property for rental properties with outstanding collectible judgements to be filed in the circuit court within thirty days after transfer of title. During debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to provide a technical change. Once modified, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes. The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 895](#). After no debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 25-8 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Externships – Career and Educational Experience

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1945](#), sponsored by Representative Brenda Shields (R-St. Joseph). The bill removes a sunset on the educator career and educational experience externship program to allow the Department of Economic Development, Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to jointly operate a voluntary vocational, career and technical externship program for professional educators to experience, participate in, and gain knowledge of the available career pathways, educational requirements, and emerging fields of study available to high school students entering college or the workforce in Missouri. Aligned, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Missouri NEA, the Kansas City Public Schools, and the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) provided supporting testimony stating the bill allows educators to gain valuable career and education pathways knowledge to inform students of available opportunities to meet Missouri's workforce demands. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Family Trust Companies

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2798](#), sponsored by Representative Michael O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). The bill modifies the statutes on family trust companies to transfer administration and enforcement from the Secretary of State's office to the Division of Finance within the Department of Commerce and Insurance. The bill also: (1) Describes the process for the initial registration of a family trust and validates those family trust companies and foreign family trust companies that are in good standing as of August 28, 2024; and (2) Adds compliance with Section 362.1030, RSMo, to requirements for foreign family trust companies. Paul Vogel with Vogel Law Office and the Missouri Bankers Association provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Fire Protection Services

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 879](#), sponsored by Senator Doug Beck (D-St. Louis). The sponsor presented on his proposed committee substitute which authorizes municipalities within St. Louis County to submit to the voters of the City a proposal to authorize the governing body to impose a property tax no more than \$.25 per \$100 assessed valuation, to provide fire protection services. Additionally, upon voter approval, the bill allows the governing body of any fire protection district, to ask for a sales tax up to a maximum of 1% on all sales, to reduce any property tax imposed by the district up to 50%. However, the property tax must be imposed for the purpose of providing fire protection services. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Firearm Disposal

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2693](#), sponsored by Representative Tony Lovasco (R-O'Fallon). The bill specifies that a firearm in State custody shall not be destroyed unless the firearm has been offered for sale to the public in the same manner as surplus property, with public notice of the sale; and has not been purchased after being offered for sale to the public on at least two separate occasions at a price of one cent. The Western Missouri Shooters Alliance and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Firearms – Anti-Red Flag Gun Seizure Act

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 998](#), sponsored by Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). This act establishes the "Anti-Red Flag Gun Seizure Act" which provides that any federal order of protection or other judicial order issued by a court to confiscate any firearm, firearm accessory, or ammunition from any law-abiding citizen shall be considered an infringement on the people's right to keep and bear arms. Western Missouri Shooters Alliance provided supporting testimony. Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and the City of St Louis provided opposing testimony stating gun laws are already lax in Missouri and this can only lead to an increase in gun violence.

Governing Body Meeting Requirements

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2206](#), sponsored by Representative Richard West (R-Wentzville). By July 1, 2025, the bill requires political subdivisions to adopt a meeting speaker policy to allow for public comments and prohibits a political subdivision from banning or removing individuals from a meeting. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to provide the definition of “regular meeting”, to ensure the bill applies only to formal meetings where votes are being considered. Additionally, the committee substitute removes provisions relating to peace disturbances, and clarifies that nothing in the bill requires a person to be charged with a crime in the event they are accused of disturbing the peace. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 6-2 vote.

Hazing

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee met Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1443](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Smith (R-Dora). The bill seeks to modify the offense of hazing to prevent an individual from being found guilty if the individual is the first to call 911 or campus security

to report a need for medical assistance. Citing drinking at universities has become a prevalent bad habit and the intent of the legislation is to save lives. During committee discussions, committee members expressed support for the intent of the legislation, however expressed concern with potentially removing liability from bad actors. Two representatives from the Mizzou Greek Alliance supported the legislation and informed committee members the intent of the legislation is to incentive calling for help and highlighted the story of MU freshman Daniel "Danny" Santulli that ended up in the hospital after alcohol hazing at a "pledge father reveal" at the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, and is now unable to walk, talk, or see because other students were fearful of punishment and did not call 911. The legislation as filed, does not preclude criminal action or any actions from a university. Sarah Love a senior at MU and part of Associated Students of the University of MO also supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Health Benefit Plan Cost-Sharing

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 1628](#), sponsored by Representative Dale Wright (R-Farmington). The bill provides that when calculating an enrolled patient's overall contribution to an out-of-pocket max or any cost-sharing requirement under a health benefit plan, a health carrier or pharmacy benefits manager must include any amounts paid by the patient enrolled or paid on behalf of the enrolled patient. The provisions only apply to high-end drugs and not generic medications unless no higher-end medication is available for the purpose intended. A lengthy discussion where committee members asked the vote to be delayed until next week due to a number of language changes which are still being negotiated occurred. This request was denied, and the committee passed the bill by a 9-2 vote.

Healthcare Omnibus

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2413](#), sponsored by Representative Tara Peters (R-Rolla). The bill repeals provisions relating to required notice provided to patients upon their completion of a mammogram. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which created an omnibus healthcare bill. Specifically, the bill now includes:

- [HB 1879](#), regarding partner therapy;
- [HB 1979](#), modifies blood tests for pregnant women to include additional testing;
- [HB 2190](#), continuous coverage of self-administered hormonal contraceptives and,
- Added language regarding victims of sexual assault need to obtain care at hospitals with an emergency department or a referral must be made to a qualifying hospital for care.

Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 9-0 vote.

Higher Education

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2650](#), sponsored by Representative Willard Haley (R-Eldon). The bill modifies provisions relating to the department of higher education and workforce development, Changes throughout the bill include changing the "Division of Workforce Development in the Department of Economic Development" to the "Office of Workforce Development in the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development" to reflect the current governance. The bill also changes the currently named "Show-Me-Heroes" program to the "Missouri Heroes Connect". The bill repeals the following statutes relating to: The "Career Readiness Course Task Force", Graduate students teaching assignments, The "Missouri Guaranteed Student Loan Program" and the "Lender of Last Resort

Revolving Fund", The "Vietnam Veteran's Survivor Grant", The "Marguerite Ross Barnett Competitiveness Scholarship Program", The pilot project "International Economic Development Exchange Program and the Advisory Council", Higher education faculty hiring practices, The "Advantage Missouri Program", The "Missouri Youth Service and Conservation Corps Act" and the "Youth Service and Conservation Corps Fund". After no discussion, the committee passed the bill consent with a 13-0 vote.

Highway Sign Omnibus

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 2279](#), sponsored by Representative Cheri Toalson Reisch (R-Hallsville). The bill requires that the population of the city be included on city limit signs. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted to add [HB 1694](#) which prohibits road signs honoring those who have killed or attempted to kill law enforcement; [HB 2100](#) which requires MoDOT to install signs to honor Congressional Medal of Honor recipients; [HB 2324](#) which waives the outdoor advertising fee and biennial inspection fee for certain signs and [HB2414](#) which requires MoDOT to erect and maintain signs designating the Ozark Highlands Region. The bill was further modified when the sponsor successfully amended the bill to specify city limit signs will be placed on state highways only. Additionally, the bill was further amended by requiring dynamic highway signs not be distracting to drivers and use the least amount of characters necessary and excludes specified banners and signs that can be seen from roadways from the "outdoor advertising" definition. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 96-40 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Hospital Collaborations

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 789](#), sponsored by Senator Greg Razer (D-Kansas City). The bill mandates that no hospital district board of trustees shall approve any agreement to partner or otherwise collaborate with any health care system operated by an institution of higher education that is located outside of Missouri for the purpose of providing health care services to Missouri residents unless the agreement is first submitted to the voters of the district and approved by two-thirds of votes cast. This bill is in response to the University of Kansas Medical System desire to take over the Liberty Hospital system. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-3 vote.

Hospital Pricing Transparency

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1212](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). The bill bars hospitals not in compliance with federal hospital price transparency laws on the date that items or services are purchased from or provided to a patient from initiating a collection action against the patient for a debt owed for those items or services. Additionally, the bill provides a civil remedy for patients. Missouri Century Foundation provided supporting testimony stating 34% of Missouri hospitals are not compliant with current federal hospital price transparency laws. Missouri Hospital Association, BJC, Mosaic Healthcare, SSM Health and Mercy Hospital provided opposing testimony stating federal pricing laws are always in transition and being repealed or updated so it is virtually impossible for hospitals to remain in compliance 100% of the time.

Human Trafficking

The House dedicated floor time Monday to revisit [HB 1706](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Myers (R-Warrenton). The bill establishes the "Counter Human Trafficking Task Force." The Task Force will be chaired by the Attorney General and hold an initial meeting before September 27, 2024.

Additionally, the Task Force shall collect information on existing counter human trafficking resources and provide legislative recommendations on what resources and tools are needed to stop human trafficking and shall submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly on or before October 31st of each year. Finally, the bill requires the Board of Nursing to oversee that nurses receive the correct training, raised the restitution limit to \$10,000 per identified victim. During bill progression, the bill was successfully amended to ensure the Executive Director of the Missouri Office of Prosecution Services was on the task force. After brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 143-1 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Human Trafficking

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2688](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Myers (R-Warrenton). The bill establishes a twenty-year statute of limitations for certain trafficking offenses. Additionally, the bill creates an "aggravating circumstance" for human trafficking offenses and adds additional penalties of up to five years imprisonment. The bill establishes the "Council on Human Trafficking" within the Department of Public Safety and develop plans related to providing victims of human trafficking with services, provide training and seek solutions to human trafficking. Finally, the bill allows those convicted of prostitution to seek expungement of the record. Gateway Alliance Against Human Trafficking and Missouri Network Against Child Abuse provided supporting testimony. Two private citizens provided opposing testimony regarding the statute of limitations.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2215](#), sponsored by Representative Chris Brown (R-Kansas City). The bill establishes the Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment and Recovery Act, which creates a fund to reimburse facilities that provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy to veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, and it is to be used to conduct studies on the use of alternative therapies for these conditions. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Income Taxes – Corporate Phase Out

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1029](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). The bill seeks to eliminate the corporate income tax incrementally over a period of five years, to be fully eliminated by calendar year 2029.

Associated Industries of MO, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the bill and stated that lower taxes provide an incentive for businesses to want to move to Missouri. The MO NEA, and the MO Budget Project opposed the bill.

The committee then turned its attention towards [SB 823](#), sponsored by Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). The bill seeks to reduce the corporate income tax rate to 2.25% and provides additional 0.5% reductions for every \$50 million collected. Associated Industries of MO, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the bill and stated that lower taxes provide an incentive for businesses to want to move to Missouri. The MO NEA, and the MO Budget Project opposed the bill.

Inflationary Assessment Growth Rate

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1668](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Matthiesen (R-O'Fallon). Currently, new revenue that any political subdivision can gain from reassessed value of property is limited to three different factors: actual assessed value; consumer price index (CPI); and 5%, whichever number is less. The bill seeks to move that 5% cap to 3% of new revenue that can be gained by the value of reassessed value. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented. The MO Association of Counties provided informational testimony and cautioned committee members from implementing too many tax policy issues at one time and highlighted current county processes.

Insurance Company Investigation Record Confidentiality

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1348](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill addresses the Department of Commerce & Insurance's handling of documents provided by insurance companies as part of market conduct investigations and specifies that certain confidentiality provisions shall also apply to records used in market conduct investigations and actions. The bill specifies regulated entities shall have at least 30 business days to submit any record or material requested by the Department of Commerce and Insurance, and records maintained beyond the required retention period shall not be required to be produced with certain exceptions. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which changed it from 30 business days to 30 calendar days and exempts the Division of Consumer Affairs from the timeline. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Insurance Data Security

The House Insurance Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2316](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Hardwick (R-Dixon). The bill establishes the Insurance Data Security Act to keep policy holder data secure. The bill requires licensees to implement an information security program in keeping with the size and complexity of the licensee and the scope of its activities, specifying standards for risk assessment by licensees. Additionally, the bill further requires certain oversight of "third-party service providers" and requires incident response plans as part of information security programs and contains annual reporting and document maintenance provisions. Finally, the bill also specifies procedures and standards for investigation of cybersecurity events, as well as requirements to notify regulators, consumers, other insurers, and insurance producers as detailed in the bill if certain cybersecurity events occur. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which excludes entities with less than 12 employees and gross less than \$50,000 per year. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Insurer Payments to Health Care Providers

The House Insurance Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2400](#), sponsored by Representative Bishop Davidson (R-Republic). The bill specifies the time frames and notices that health carriers and prepaid dental plan corporations must follow when submitting, acknowledging, requesting, and paying claims. It also outlines the penalties and interest for late or unpaid claims. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which delays the effective date to January 1, 2025. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Internet Safety – Harmful Material to Minors

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1993](#), sponsored by Representatives Sherri Gallick (R-Belton). The bill requires commercial websites with more than 33 1/3% of material that is deemed harmful to children, to verify that those accessing the site are 18 years of age or older. Additionally, the bill imposes a civil penalty for damages if a minor is harmed. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which added [HB's 1426](#), [1855](#) and [2157](#), as the bills are identical, to create one legislative vehicle. Additionally, language was adopted which entitled those users, whose data was compromised, to a \$20,000 minimum award from the website/database owner. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-5 vote.

Jackson County Assessor

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HJR 68](#), sponsored by Representative Dan Stacy (R-Blue Springs). Currently, the Missouri Constitution requires all county assessors, except the Assessor of Jackson County, to be elected officers. Upon voter approval, this resolution eliminates that exemption. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 116-10 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

John Donaldson Day

The Senate Progress and Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1417](#), sponsored by Senator Barbara Washington (D-Kansas City). This bill will make February 20th John Donaldson Day to recognize the late Negro League Baseball player and his contributions to his community. The Negro League Baseball Museum provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Judiciary Salaries

The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SJR 71](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). This proposed constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, provides that the administration of justice shall include levying costs and fees to support salaries and benefits for sheriffs, prosecuting attorneys, and circuit attorneys. After no debate, the Senate passed the resolution by a 25-7 vote. The resolution now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Juvenile Proceedings

The House Judiciary Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2640](#), sponsored by Representative Richard West (R-Wentzville). The bill seeks to modify and update existing statutes that were not addressed when Missouri enacted Raise the Age regarding holding youths in adult facilities. Specifically, the bill would update the motions to modify when youths are transferred from adult facilities to juvenile facilities. Additionally, if a juvenile who has been certified as an adult and is awaiting trial is ordered to be released from an adult jail following a transfer order and is subsequently detained on a violation of the conditions of release or bond, the juvenile must return to the custody of the adult jail. Finally, the bill prohibits minors convicted of felonies from possessing firearms. The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association provided supporting testimony and stated the statutes must be updated to ensure juveniles are certified and processed fairly. The Missouri State Public Defender and Missouri Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys provided opposing testimony regarding the provision barring minors convicted of felonies from possessing firearms as adults as there is no expungement process for juvenile records.

Keep Your Ground Act

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 989](#), sponsored by Senator Jill Carter (R-Granby). Under current law, if self-defense is found to be a justified defense in a criminal case, it does not remove civil liability. The bill repeals this provision and establishes the "Keep Your Ground Act" which states no individual shall be held civilly liable for damages resulting from conduct found to be justified. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 3-1 vote.

Land Bank

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday to debate [HB 2065](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Owen (R-Springfield). The bill is the House companion to [SB 750](#), sponsored by Senator Lincoln Hough (R-Springfield). As communities are faced with growing numbers of vacant or abandoned properties, the bill seeks to provide a tool to municipalities by utilizing a land bank system. Specifically, after a qualified period of time of ongoing delinquent taxes, communities are allowed to purchase those properties and sell them in order to get the properties back onto the tax rolls. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted to require notices to be published electronically and publish notice in local publications. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

License Plate Advisory Committee

The House Transportation Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2746](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill modifies the duties and makeup of the license plate advisory committee. Specifically, the bill removes the Director of the Department of Transportation and the executive director of the State Historical Society of Missouri. Additionally, the bill requires the committee to adopt more than one type of design and color scheme for license plates and requires all plates have "SHOW ME STATE" on them. The Department of Revenue provided informational testimony regarding the license plate issuance process and how new plates are tested and asked the deadline to be extended to 2027.

Licensing – Afterschool Programs Providers

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1928](#), sponsored by Representative Jamie Gragg (R-Ozark). The bill modifies the definition of a licensed childcare provider to include providers serving school-age children at any licensed facility. The sponsor stated that the bill would remove a requirement for licensed childcare providers serving school-age children to operate only within a school building, which fails to take into account licensed facilities that provide after school programs to school-age children at park facilities, community centers, or other approved locations. There was some confusion on what the committee sub would do and after some back and forth the amendment and bill sponsor requested that the sub be voted down and the bill be passed as is. After the lengthy discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 9-0 vote.

Licensing – Naturopathic Physicians

The House Professional Registration Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2446](#), sponsored by Representative Doug Richey (R-Excelsior Springs). The bill establishes the "Naturopathic Physicians Practice Act" and seeks to define the terms, scope, and requirements for the practice of naturopathic medicine. Former Representative Catherine Enz, several naturopathic physicians provided

supporting testimony stating this legislation has been approved in 22 other states and they are simply seeking a regulatory framework to begin. Missouri State Medical Association and several internal and family physicians provided opposing testimony stating the language is too far reaching and the amount of training naturopathic physicians receive is in no way comparable to that of an M.D. and could compromise patient care.

Licensing – Professional

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 817](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). The bill provides that any person with at least 3 years of work experience in an occupation or profession in another state that does not use a license to regulate that occupation or profession may submit an application for licensure in Missouri. Additionally, the relevant oversight body shall require applicants to take a profession-specific exam. If a license is issued, it shall be a one-time, non-renewable temporary license for two years. Finally, upon the temporary license expiring, the person shall be required to apply for a permanent license. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Loan Modifications

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 835](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). This bill updates two provisions relating to lending. First, it repeals an existing prohibition against parties agreeing in writing to any rate of interest, fees, and other terms and conditions in connection with any loan of less than \$5,000 secured by real estate used for agricultural activity. Second, the bill permits lenders to charge consumers for the cost of a credit report or reports. Finally, the bill repeals a provision enacted in 1883 that requires description of a woman's status as "wife" when executing a notary's certificate of acknowledgement form in the course of a real estate transaction with her husband. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which added [SB 1292](#) regarding municipal deposit uniformity. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

Long-Term Care – Administration of Medications

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 2525](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Stephens (R-Bolivar). Currently, the law allows for nurses, technicians, or nurse's aides to administer certain medications, including insulin, in long-term care facilities. The bill adds additional medications approved to be dispensed by certain staff, as long as they are prescribed by a physician. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 11-0 vote.

Making a False Report

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee met Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 1653](#), sponsored by Representative Lane Roberts (R-Joplin). The bill modifies the offense of making a false report. After brief committee discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 18-5 vote.

Military Honor Detail

The House Committee on Veterans convened Tuesday morning to consider [HB 1988](#) sponsored by Representative Phil Amato (R-Arnold). Currently, when requested by the commander of any recognized veterans' organization, military commander, or by any friend or relative of a deceased person or the director of a funeral home for any deceased person who served in the Armed Forces of the United States during a time of war or is otherwise entitled to military honors at the person's burial, internment or memorial service, the Adjutant General must order the appropriate requested uniformed honor detail to

attend and render the appropriate services or request and coordinate the appropriate detail with a recognized veterans' organization. The amount paid to the veterans' organizations is determined by the Adjutant General. This bill removes the authority to determine the amount of compensation from the Adjutant General and instead makes the amount \$200 dollars for each military honor performance. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which increases the fee for death certificates and places those fees within the Funeral Honors Fund for the National Guard and restores the Adjutant General's authority to determine the amount of compensation. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Missouri Geospatial Advisory Council

The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 1039](#), sponsored by Senator Steven Roberts (R-St. Louis). The bill establishes Missouri Geospatial Advisory Council within the Office of Administration. The council will be charged with assisting and advising the state in ensuring the availability, implementation, and enhancement of statewide geospatial data infrastructure common to all jurisdictions through research, planning, training, and education. During previous debate, Senator Bill Eigel (R-St. Charles) amended the bill to remove several provisions of the bill, reducing the board simply to an advisory board instead of having any authority. After no further debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 24-8 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Missouri Southern State University Mission

The House Higher Education Committee convened on Wednesday evening to consider passage of [HCR 50](#), sponsored by Representative Cody Smith (R-Carthage). The bill proposes to expand the mission of Missouri Southern State University to include health and life sciences and immersive learning experiences. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 9-0 vote.

Mo Bucks

The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 736](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 1803](#), sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington) and raises the aggregate amount the state treasurer may invest in linked deposits with a cap of \$1.2 billion. The current cap is \$800 million. The bill also changes the calculation basis from "dollars" to "percentages". During previous debate, the bill was amended to include [SB 735](#), which creates and modifies provisions relating to gold and silver, and also prohibit the state treasurer from accepting payments using central bank digital currency. After no further debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 24-9 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Motor Fuel Tax

The House Transportation Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2072](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill modifies provisions relating to the motor fuel tax exemption. Currently, motor fuel is exempt from fuel tax, and an exemption and refund may be claimed by a taxpayer if the tax has been paid and no refund has been previously issued. These exemptions and refunds are currently issued on a fiscal year basis. The bill seeks to align the exemptions and refunds based on the tax year and would allow a person to apply for a standard/flat refund in the amount of \$30 for the 2024 tax year, \$45 for the 2025 tax year, and \$60 for the 2026 tax year. Additionally, the bill also authorizes a taxpayer to donate the motor fuel tax refund to a tax-exempt nonprofit entity by providing the entity with all required documentation and a signed statement indicating that the nonprofit is entitled to the taxpayer's refund. Lastly, the bill establishes the "Motor

Fuel Tax Fund of 2021", to include all refundable revenue collected to be deposited. Any money in the Fund not refunded to a motor fuel purchaser within the required time will remain in the Fund and be subject to appropriation by the General Assembly for road and bridge projects for state-owned infrastructure. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which ties the amount of the refund to the CPI and will be adjusted each tax year. Any additional funding not claimed by refund will be distributed to rural and other road projects and not placed in the Motor Fuel Tax Fund. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-3 vote.

Motor Vehicle Registration

The House Transportation Infrastructure committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2096](#), sponsored by Representative Bob Bromley (R-Carl Junction). The bill would allow drivers with a vehicle aged up to five years old to be able to pay for vehicle registration up to five years. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Motor Vehicle Registration (Biennial)

The House Transportation Infrastructure committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2097](#), sponsored by Representative Bob Bromley (R-Carl Junction). The bill would allow individuals to obtain a two-year registration on their vehicle. The Missouri department of Revenue provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Mutual Insurance Companies

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1359](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). This is the Senate companion bill to [HB 2524](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Knight (R-Lebanon). The bill establishes the "Protecting Missouri's Mutual Insurance Companies Act" and establishes standards regarding reinsurance coverage and company examinations. The bill exempts Missouri mutual insurance companies from acquiring or carrying reinsurance greater than adequate reinsurance and unlimited reinsurance would be optional. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

Non-Compete Employment Covenants

The House Special Committee on Small Business convened Monday evening to discuss [HB 2787](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). The bill establishes the "Uniform Restrictive Employment Agreement." Specifically, the bill seeks to address employment covenants and ensure Missouri is enforcing non-compete covenants equally to other states. The sponsor stated the intent is to create uniformity in contract law nationwide and 23 other states have enacted some of the provisions within the bill. The Uniform Law Commission provided informational testimony regarding the background of the Uniform Law Commission and how the model legislation has been introduced in other states. The Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided opposing testimony stating there are already statutes addressing this issue and this would add an entirely new regulatory framework to non-competes that would be costly to implement for businesses. No supporting testimony was presented to the committee.

Nonprofit Safety and Security Task Force

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee met Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1557](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schwadron (R-St. Charles). The bill establishes the MO Task Force on Nonprofit Safety and Security and is tasked with studying and making recommendations on the

security needs of nonprofit organizations at elevated risk of terrorist attacks in Missouri. Additionally, the bill establishes the "Supplemental Nonprofit Safety and Security Fund" to be used to defray costs of security enhancements or measures, for eligible nonprofit organizations. Jewish Federation of St. Louis supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Nontraditional Students in Education

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 819](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). The bill removes a requirement for parents to submit a declaration to homeschool to the county recorder or residing school district superintendent. Additionally, the bill removes an authorization for school attendance officers to investigate violations of compulsory school attendance laws and establishes a "Family Led Educational Experience" or FLEX school. Under the definition of FLEX, no public school or state agency may refer to a student participating in virtual instruction, FLEX program instruction, or who participates in an educational program receiving state funding as a "homeschool student" or prohibit any FLEX or virtual instruction program student from participation in a resident district school-sponsored activity, athletic team, or extracurricular club or event. The sponsor said he was considering removing or modifying the FLEX program language and was in conversation with the Missouri school athletic association to do so. A private citizen provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

School Curriculum – Civic Engagement and Constitutional History

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 918](#), sponsored by Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). The bill prohibits any public school district from using private, state, or federal funding to adopt curriculum which enshrines the pillars of the 1619 Project or concepts of Critical Race Theory. Additionally, the bill prohibits the implementation of training for teachers or staff which seeks to assign blame on individuals of a certain race or ethnicity for events occurring in the past, create projects or assignments which require students to engage in political activism or activity in support of or opposition to a particular social or political ideology, party identity, or social policy or discuss a topic of political ideology or social identity through particular lenses as part of a classroom discussion. Finally, the bill requires school districts to adopt age-appropriate curriculum for social studies courses in grades Kindergarten through twelve which emphasizes civic knowledge and participation through an understanding of the founding documents of the United States. The Missouri Branch of the NAACP, the Missouri NEA, the Missouri AFT, and three private citizens provided opposing testimony. No supporting testimony was presented to the committee.

Office of Election Crimes and Security

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 724](#), sponsored by Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). The bill creates the Office of Election Crimes and Security within the MO Secretary of States Office. The sponsors' intent with the legislation is to provide an on-call audit task force to investigate any suspected election fraud and create a voter fraud hotline for reporting. During committee discussion, Senator Sandy Crawford expressed concern with providing the task force with subpoena power and suggested including some guardrails to prevent any abuse of power. The Opportunity Solution Project supported the bill. The MO Voter Protection Coalition, and the ACLU opposed the bill and informed committee members that in theory they support the expansion of the Secretary of State providing investigations, however expressed concern with

concurrent jurisdiction between the MO Attorney General and local prosecutors. The MO Secretary of States Office provided informational testimony and informed committee members that there is already a hotline number provided and the Office investigates every complaint. Additionally, it was stated the MO Secretary of States Office has established rules and has a voter protection unit within the Office. The MO Association of County Clerk and Election Authorities also provided informational testimony and highlighted the potential political conflict with subpoena power and advocated the need to taking an independent approach.

Opioid Overdose Response Kits on College Campuses

The House Higher Education Committee convened on Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1997](#), sponsored by Representative Doug Mann (D-Columbia). The bill requires each two- or four-year public university in the state to have a campus-designated location for opioid overdose response kits and requires the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Senior Services, to develop a training protocol for freshmen students attending each university on the safe and proper use of opioid overdose emergency response kits, including medication such as Narcan. The CDC Foundation provided supporting testimony stating the bill would help protect college students who accidentally consume a laced product or overdose on an opioid. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Outdoor Advertising

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1008](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill exempts signs displayed by a landowner who also owns a business that is advertised on the sign from the current \$200 outdoor advertising fee and biennial inspection for certain highway signs. The bill also includes language clarifying that the landowner is exempt from fees if they are the permit holder of the sign and own the business advertised on the sign. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Paint Recycling Program

The Senate Commerce, Energy and the Environment committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 936](#) sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). This bill sets up a program for the disposal and recycling of unused paint. Recycling companies would be allowed to set up the program with DNR approval and oversight, set up collection sites with retailers and responsibly dispose of used paint. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to modify definitions, includes a provision relating to the incorporation of a paint assessment fee, and also provides an annual report to be provided to the general assembly. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

PBM's

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 1627](#), sponsored by Representative Dale Wright (R-Farmington). The bill addresses payments for prescription drugs. The bill specifies that certain provisions of law pertaining to pharmacists and pharmacies shall not be construed to prohibit patients' ability to obtain prescription services from any licensed pharmacist or pharmacy. The bill specifies that health carriers or pharmacy benefits managers cannot discriminate against a covered entity, as defined in the Public Health Service Act, or a pharmacy licensed under Chapter 338 with which a covered entity has contracted to dispense 340B drugs on behalf

of the covered entity. The sponsor's intent with the bill is to provide transparency in pricing and allow patients to obtain lower costs for prescriptions. Missouri Pharmacy Association, numerous independent pharmacists and Missouri Hospital Association provided supporting testimony stating transparency in pricing and the rebates occurring only help patients and PBMs drive independent pharmacies out of business. Pharmaceutical Care Management Association, AFL-CIO, Missouri, and Kansas Laborers District Council provided opposing testimony stating labor relies on PBMs to negotiate lower costs for their members and it is not possible to go out and individually negotiate the price for each drug needed.

Peer Review Committees

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee met Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1952](#), sponsored by Representative Bennie Cook (R-Houston). The bill would place licensed providers of emergency medical services under the provisions of the health care professionals' statutes for purposes of liability and other disclosures made by peer review committees. The Director of EMS with Cox Health, Fire Service Alliance, MO Ambulance Association, Melville Fire District, and the Ambulance District Association supported the bill, stating responders' liability ends at the hospital doors but that is not necessarily where care ends. The MO Association of Trial Attorneys opposed the bill and stated the bill is restricting patient information.

Pesticide Labeling

The Senate Agriculture, Food Production, and Outdoor Resources Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1416](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill allows the existing process in place under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) to be sufficient to satisfy any requirements for labeling. Bayer Cropscience, MO-AG MFA, MO Corn Growers Association, MO Soybean Association, Person-Fordyce Farms, MO Farm Bureau, and the MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided supporting testimony. The MO Trial Attorney Association, MO Coalition for the Environment, along with two private attorneys provided opposing testimony.

Pharmacy Services Insurance Coverage

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 751](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill contains provisions relating to insurance coverage of pharmacy services. Specifically, health carriers and pharmacy benefits managers (PBM) shall not impose any penalty, impediment, differentiation, or limitation, regardless of whether the participating provider obtains the drugs from an in-network provider for medically necessary clinician-administered drugs. Additionally, the bill specifies that health carriers or pharmacy benefits managers cannot discriminate against a covered entity, as defined in the Public Health Service Act, or a pharmacy licensed under Chapter 338 with which a covered entity has contracted to dispense 340B drugs on behalf of the covered entity. Finally, the bill requires health carriers and PBMs providing coverage for a reference product or biological product that is biosimilar to the reference product to provide coverage for the reference product and all biological products that have been deemed biosimilar to the reference product, with the same scope, extent, and amount of the required coverage. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Power Generation

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 757](#), sponsored by Senator Cindy O'Laughlin (R-Shelbina). This bill mandates that utilities must have equal or greater reliable generation capacity when

closing power plants. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to require an electrical corporation to compare the relevant regional transmission operator's average of the summer and winter accredited capacity. Additionally, the committee substitute requires adequate electric transmission lines shall be in place and the replacement reliable electric generation shall be fully operational concurrently with the closure of the existing electric generating plant. Lastly, the committee substitute allows reliable electric generation to be constructed outside the state if it is connected to the electric grid of the regional transmission operator of which the electrical corporation is a member. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-2 vote.

Prenatal Testing

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1260](#), sponsored by Senator Elaine Gannon (R-DeSoto). The bill seeks to modify prenatal testing. Currently, health care providers draw and test a pregnant woman's blood at or soon after her first prenatal exam for syphilis, hepatitis B, or other similar diseases. The bill requires, with consent, an additional blood draw at 28 weeks of pregnancy and includes hepatitis C and HIV and requires the tests be approved by the FDA. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecology, St. Louis Children's Hospital and Missouri State Medical Association provided supporting testimony stating additional testing can lead to healthier outcomes for mother and child. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care Facilities

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1975](#), sponsored by Representative Melanie Stinnett (R-Springfield). Beginning August 28, 2025, the bill bars prescribed pediatric extended care facilities without a license from the Department of Health and Senior Services. Additionally, the bill defines "prescribed pediatric extended care facility." The Department of Health and Senior Services, the Special Learning Center and Kids Win Missouri provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Prescription Drug Coverage

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2267](#), sponsored by Representative Tara Peters (R-Rolla). The bill provides that a health carrier or pharmacy benefits manager (PBM) shall not impose any penalty, impediment, differentiation, or limitation on participating providers for providing medically necessary clinician-administered drugs, regardless of whether the participating provider obtains the drugs from an in-network provider, including refusing to approve or pay, or reimbursing less than the contracted payment amount. The language also prohibits health carriers and pharmacy benefits managers from discriminating against covered entities or pharmacies that participate in the 340B drug pricing program and requires health insurers and PBM's to cover biosimilar products. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which added definitions of "third-party logistics providers" and "wholesale drug distributors" for the purposes of clearly identifying approved purchasers and includes those purchasers who have been previously offered a discount. Additionally, third-party logistics providers and wholesale drug distributors were added to the list of those who cannot restrict the acquisition of 340B drugs. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Prescription Drugs and FQHC Payments

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 978](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield) and [SB 1035](#), sponsored by Senator Doug Beck

(D-St. Louis). The bills are identical and prohibit health carriers and pharmacy benefits managers (PBM) from discriminating against a federally-qualified health center (FQHC) or a specific pharmacy in several specific ways with concerning the provision of 340B drugs, including with respect to reimbursement amounts, imposition of additional terms and conditions, interference with choice, identification, and refusing to contract with a FQHC or specified pharmacy for reasons other than those specified in the bill. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which combined both bills to create one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Prisoner Per Diem

The House Corrections and Public Institutions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2558](#), sponsored by Representative Justin Sparks (R-Wildwood). The bill requires the Department of Corrections to reimburse counties or St. Louis City for the days a person spent in custody at a per diem rate to not exceed \$37.50 per day. Additionally, the bill repeals the current process for counties and St. Louis City to request reimbursement for the number of days an individual spent in a county or city jail. Missouri Association of Counties and St. Louis County provided supporting testimony stating this would simply streamline the process by which counties are reimbursed by the Department of Corrections and the \$37.50 is in current statute, although counties are only being reimbursed \$22 per day by appropriation. The Department of Corrections provided informational testimony to answer specific questions regarding the reimbursement process. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Property Assessment - Residential

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1009](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Cierpiot (R-Lee's Summit). Currently, all residential real property is assessed at 19% of true value. The bill reduces the assessment value to 15% incrementally by reducing the assessed value by 1% every two years until calendar year 2030. No supporting testimony was presented. The MO NEA opposed the bill and stated that residential taxes is what provides for schools. The Boone County Assessor provided informational testimony and informed committee members that the majority of revenue goes towards public schools and highlighted the various amounts Boone County, along with surrounding areas could potentially lose if the bill went into effect. It was also stated, jurisdictions would look to other areas to recoup any lost revenue.

Protest or Demonstration Damages

The House Insurance Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2218](#), sponsored by Herman Morse (R-Dexter). The bill specifies any person who organizes or sponsors a protest that results in property damage, blocks an interstate or highway, blocks an emergency vehicle, and the blocking of such vehicles causes damage to persons or property, shall be held liable for such damages. The sponsor indicated he is unsure if he would prefer the penalty be civil or criminal. Committee members expressed concerns the definitions are too vague and the bill needs a tighter focus. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Public Education – Parents Bill of Rights

The House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2160](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). The bill requires school districts to post the salaries, compensation, and benefits of public-school districts on the Missouri Accountability Portal and requires school districts to provide parental access to review curriculum. Additionally, school districts are required to provide annual parental authorization for student

participation in athletics, extracurricular, or classroom-related field trips, requires governing boards of school districts to provide a public comment period during public meetings and requires school districts to promptly notify families of an incident of criminal activity on a campus or building or threat to the safety of students. Finally, the bill outlines certain penalty provisions for a school district's failure to comply with provisions of the bill and prohibits a school district from compelling any school employee or student to adopt or affirm any theory, belief, or idea that an individual of any race, national origin, ethnicity, or color is inherently better than, less than, or responsible for actions committed in the past against any individual of an opposite race, national origin, ethnicity, or color. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which made technical changes to the bill and excluded school-sanctioned pep rallies or co-curricular events during the school day from requiring parental consent annually, and added a provision allowing school districts to recoup the cost of defense attorney fees in the event the district was found to be in compliance in any legal challenge within one year of an initial complaint being filed with DESE. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-5 vote.

Public Employee Retirement Systems

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 2431](#), sponsored by Representative Barry Hovis (R-Whitewater.) The bill modifies provisions relating to the board of trustees for the Missouri Local Government Employees' Retirement System (LAGERS). Currently, the board consists of 3 employer members, 3 worker members, and one civilian trustee. As the Lagers program has grown with time, retirees now represent a large portion of their members, and the bill seeks to add a retired member. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted which removed the provisions regarding times of service, clarifies the CPI used is determined by the LAGERS board, clarifies the extent of Sunshine Law compliance, narrowed the provision regarding the scope of closing old funds, and removed obsolete provisions. The bill was further successfully amended by Representative Barry Hovis (R-Whitewater) to exempt monies received from judgements and civil actions for emergency responders if the payout received is for a higher rank. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 141-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Public Notices - Digital

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2328](#), sponsored by Representative David Casteel (R-High Ridge). The bill provides that any notice required by law to be published in a newspaper can be published in a newspaper or on the Secretary of State's website. The Secretary of State must develop procedures for submission of the notices and create a specific page on its website that will contain all the notices in a searchable format. The sponsors intent with the legislation is to provide local municipalities the ability to choose how they would like to provide public notices. During committee discussion, committee members expressed concern with internet availability in rural areas. No supporting testimony was presented. The Benton County Enterprise, Clinton Daily Democrat, the MO Press Association opposed the bill and informed committee members that the majority of people turn to their local newspapers for information, not state public websites. Additionally, it was stated that newspapers are archived. The MO Secretary of State Office provided informational testimony and stated essentially the way the bill is drafted could promote bad actors, and also overwhelm the Office.

Public Safety Omnibus

The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 754](#) sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). The bill as originally filed, establishes Max's Law, which would increase the penalty for assaulting a law enforcement animal by making it a class a misdemeanor if the animal is injured, a class e felony if the animal is severely injured, and a class d felony if the assault results in the animal's death. During the bill's progression through the committee process, the bill was modified to reflect [SB 189](#) (2023), which was TAFP'd and then vetoed by the Governor. Specifically, the bill now includes [SB 841](#), modifies provisions relating to funding for the Office of Public Defender; [SB 887](#), modifies provisions relating to certification of juveniles for trial as adults; [SB 765](#), establishes a conviction review unit; [SB 861](#), modifies provisions relating to expungement; [SB 746](#), modifies provisions relating to eligibility for parole; and [SB 760](#), modifies provisions relating to the critical incident stress management program. During previous debate, the sponsor offered a floor substitute to further amend the bill to include [SB 1070](#), establishes a statewide task force focused on addressing cyber-crimes and stalking; [SB 788](#), creates "Blair's Law"; and [SB 901](#), establishes "Valentine's Law" which creates the offense of aggravated fleeing a stop or detention of a motor vehicle. After no further debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 23-10 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Public School Medical Mandates

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1807](#), sponsored by Representative Kurtis Gregory (R-Marshall). Beginning in the 2024-25 academic year, this bill prohibits school districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education from requiring any employee or student to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or gene therapy treatment to be physically present at any events, premises, or facilities. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which removes private schools and institutions of higher education from the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Public School Retirement System

The House Pensions Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2469](#), sponsored by Representative Marlon Anderson (D-St. Louis). The bill applies only to teachers within the St. Louis Public School Retirement System and seeks to provide a one-time supplemental payment of up to \$2,000. Missouri Retired Teachers Association, numerous retired teachers and Safety in St. Louis provided supporting testimony stating teachers in St. Louis have not received a COLA adjustment in over ten years. A retired teacher from Cole County provided opposing testimony stating COLAs are not included in teacher pensions. PSRS of City of St. Louis provided informational testimony regarding the background of the retirement system and the average payout of retirement.

Public School Retirement Systems

The House Special Committee on Education Reform convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2156](#), sponsored by Representative Philip Oehlerking (R-Ballwin). The bill relates to the public-school retirement system. The legislation proposes to expand the members of the public-school retirement system to include two additional members nominated by the Missouri Charter Public School Commission and increases the number of votes of commission members to 7 for a majority. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which changes the election process of the commission to allow members of the public-school retirement system to develop a process for the nomination and

election of two members representing charter public schools. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Public School Statewide Assessments

The House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1851](#), sponsored by Representative Paula Brown (D-Hazelwood). The bill changes provisions governing the statewide assessment system for public schools. Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, the proposal requires the State Board of Education to identify and recognize a minimum of two national accrediting agencies from which schools can be accredited by and requires school districts to develop a measurement of student achievement based on student engagement, authentic student experiences, and model units based on high-quality curriculum and competency. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which defines "grade level equivalence" to show a student's mastery of standards and establishes performance-level descriptors of advanced, proficient, grade-level, basic, and below grade-level for the purpose of classifying a student's level of mastery of subjects. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-1 vote.

Public Service Commission Members

The House Agriculture Policy Committee convened on Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2832](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill). Currently, the Public Service Commission consists of five members appointed by the Governor, with advice and consent of the Senate. The bill increases the number of members to seven, with not more than one from each Congressional district. In addition, at least one member must have experience in finance, one member must have experience in the utility sector, and two members must have been engaged in farming. Missouri Farm Bureau, Missouri Cattlemen's Association, District Commissioner for Calloway County and Missouri Corn Growers Association and dozens of farmers and landowners provided supporting testimony stating rural Missourians are not fairly represented on the PSC and landowners are often taken advantage of due to PSC rulings. Missouri Energy Development Association and Spire Missouri Natural Gas provided opposing testimony.

Public Universities – Conferring Degrees

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Thursday morning to discuss passage of [SB 749](#), sponsored by Sen. Lincoln Hough (R-Springfield). The bill removes a provision limiting the conferring of post-graduate degrees or first-professional degrees in dentistry, optometry, engineering, pharmacy, chiropractic, podiatry, osteopathic or internal medicine, or veterinary medicine by public colleges and universities to only the University of Missouri or those engaged in a collaborative agreement with the University of Missouri. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 8-2 vote.

Radioactive Waste Investigation Fund

The House Conservation and Natural Resources Committee convened Monday evening to consider passage of [HB 1673](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Matthiesen (R-O'Fallon). Currently, the General Assembly can transfer up to \$150,000 to the Radioactive Waste Investigation Fund to be used by the Department of Natural Resources to investigate concerns of exposure to radioactive waste. This bill specifies that the investigation may include collection of soil, dust, and water samples from the area. The bill also increases the amount of money the General Assembly can transfer to the fund from the Hazardous Waste Fund to \$300,000. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted

which requires the Department of Natural Resources to identify and prioritize the sites that need investigation. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Railroad Crossings

The House Transportation Infrastructure committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2636](#), sponsored by Representative Chris Dinkins (R-Lesterville). This bill requires that drivers stop at a railroad grade crossing when an electric or mechanical device or a human flagman warns of the approach of any on-track equipment or the approach of the on-track equipment is plainly visible. Brotherhood of Maintenance Way Employees provided supporting testimony. Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys provided opposing testimony. The Missouri Railroad Association testified for informational purposes regarding the appropriated funds in last year's budget to make upgrades to railroad crossings across the State.

Regional Planning Commissions

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1986](#), sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington). Currently, state funds allocated for the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council and the Mid-America Regional Council are limited to \$65,000. The bill increases the amount to \$130,000. Similarly, the maximum amount of state funds that can be allocated for the following regional planning commissions is increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000 each: South Central Ozark, Ozark Foothills, Green Hills, Bootheel, Mark Twain, Southeast Missouri, Boonslick, Northwest Missouri, Mid-Missouri, Kaysinger Basin, Lake of the Ozarks, Meramec, Northeast Missouri, Harry S Truman, MO-Kan, Pioneer Trails, and Southwest Missouri. During discussion, substitute language was adopted to which corrected East-West Gateway Coordinating Council to the correct name East-West Gateway Council of Government. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 14-1 vote

Reinsurance Contract Disposition

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 834](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). This bill relates to the disposition of reinsurance contracts reinsuring policies of life or health insurance or annuities issued by insurers that have been placed into conservation, rehabilitation, or liquidation, with terms governing continuation or termination of such contracts. The bill also addresses a guaranty association's election to assume the liquidated insurer's rights and obligations under reinsurance contracts and a receiver's continuation of policies of life or health insurance or annuities issued by an insolvent insurer. During discussion, a substitute was adopted which corrected a drafting error. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Renewable Natural Gas

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee met Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 829](#), sponsored by Senator Caleb Rowden (R-Columbia). In 2021, legislation was passed to promote investments in renewable natural gas (RNG) by creating the Renewable Natural Gas Program which allowed gas corporations to recoup the costs for RNG projects. To date, the program has not been able to be fully implemented. The bill seeks to modify the program by directing the PSC to promulgate rules and spread the costs of the project across the rate base. Summit Natural Gas, Liberty Utilities, Spire MO, MO Natural Gas Association, and Ameren MO supported the bill. The MO River

Bird Observatory, MO Sierra Club, Consumers Council of MO, and a state public advocate opposed the bill.

The House Utilities Committee met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2193](#), sponsored by Representative Mike O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). Committee discussion and supporting testimony mirrored the Senate hearing. No opposing testimony was presented.

Rental Property – Local Government Ordinances

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 2385](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). This bill prohibits local governments from requiring private property owners to accept Section 8 vouchers. During debate, Representative Aaron McMullen (R-Independence) successfully amended the bill to include a prohibition on municipalities from being able to limit property owners' use of credit scores and background checks, imposing security deposit caps and giving tenants' rights of first refusal. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 103-33 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Restaurant Meals Program

The Senate Progress and Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [SB 973](#), sponsored by Senator Angela Mosely (D-St. Louis). This bill establishes a program that will give elderly, homeless or disabled SNAP recipients the option to use their benefits at private restaurants that contract with the Department of Social Services so that they can buy hot meals intended for immediate consumption. Only certain limited menu items will qualify, and they will be priced at concessional prices. American Rescue Plan, Empower Missouri, Operation Food Search and Kansas City Healthy Kids provided supporting testimony stating that many SNAP recipients are not able to prepare meals by themselves and this program will be very helpful for them, and it will not increase the amount of benefits simply give flexibility. The Red Circle provided informational testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Rock Island Trail Development

The House Conservation and Natural Resources Committee convened Monday evening to discuss [HB 1554](#), sponsored by Representative Bruce Sassmann (R-Bland). This bill specifies that the Department of Natural Resources must not use less than 10% of any money appropriated for the development of the Rock Island Trail State Park to address adjacent landowner concerns, including fencing, crossings, drainage, safety, and security. Friends of Rock Island Trail State Park and the former Mayor of Rocheport provided supporting testimony stating the legislation would help ensure landowners receive just and fair compensation for their properties. Several private citizens provided opposing testimony stating no state funding should be spent on the development of this trail and there was concern with ongoing railroad easements. Lewis Rice Law Firm, Missouri State Parks, Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Division of Tourism and Economic Development for the City of Herman provided informational testimony regarding the history of the project and the current status of the project.

Rural Access to Capital

The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 802](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill establishes the "Missouri Rural Access to Capital Act" and creates tax

incentives for investing in businesses located in rural areas. The tax credits are equal to the percentage of the fund investment, with no more than \$16 million dollars in total combined tax credits authorized per year. The bill specifies that investments and investors cannot be alien, a foreign entity or foreign-owned entities, or a foreign government. After no debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 19-14 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Rural Healthcare Professional Grant Program

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss of [HB 1925](#), sponsored by Representative Herman Morse (R-Dexter). The bill requires the Department of Health and Senior Services to establish a grant program of up to \$20,000 for ten health care professionals that agree to reside and practice in a rural county. The sponsor stated the language specifically places the professionals in priority order of primary care physicians, dentists, registered nurses, psychiatrists, and chiropractors. Missouri Academy of Physician Assistants, Missouri Independent Colleges, Missouri Academy of Family Physicians, MSMA, Missouri Nurses Association, St. Luke's Health System, Cox Health, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, JCMG, Missouri Rural Healthcare Clinics and Missouri Chiropractic Physicians Association provided supporting testimony suggesting the professional priority list be adjusted to include physician assistants, assistant physicians and APRNs and consider removing the residential requirement from the bill. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

SALT Parity Clean-up

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1250](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 1912](#), sponsored by Representative Mike McGirl (R-Potosi) and seeks to provide clarifications and clean-up language for the SALT Parity Act ([SB 931](#)), which was signed into law in 2022. The SALT Parity Act allows certain S corporations to receive a tax credit for income earned in another state in an effort to retain existing businesses and attract new ones and also establishes the SALT (State and Local Tax) Parity Act, which allows businesses to elect to be taxed at the entity level and permits business income to be taxed to the entity itself instead of being taxed to its individual owners. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 3-1 vote.

Sanctuary Cities

The House Special Committee on Small Business convened Monday evening to consider passage of [HCR 47](#), sponsored by Representative Herman Morse (R-Dexter). The resolution urges Congress to pass legislation prohibiting sanctuary cities. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-2 vote.

School Antibullying Policies

The House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2630](#), sponsored by Representative John Black (R-Marshfield). The bill expands the definition of 'harassment' to include bullying and the use of racially motivated epithets and exclude self-defense under certain circumstances. The bill also requires school districts to have in place a protocol for investigations and reporting of bullying allegations, including a requirement for school districts to report the allegations and findings of an internal investigation to law enforcement and the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education and includes a provision disciplining school district personnel or administrators who fail to report allegations or instances of bullying, including license revocation.

During discussion, substitute language was adopted which added [HB 1715](#), which requires DESE to develop a model policy to address bullying and school discipline. Additionally, the substitute removes a proposed financial penalty to school districts for failure to comply. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 14-1 vote.

School Curriculum – Cursive Writing

The House Special Committee on Education Reform convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1502](#), sponsored by Representative Gretchen Bangert (D-Florissant). The bill requires school districts to provide instruction in cursive writing by the end of a student's fifth grade year, including an assessment of competency in reading and writing of cursive. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill consent by a 7-0 vote.

School District Superintendent Salaries

The House Special Committee on Education Reform convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2344](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). The bill modifies school district superintendent salaries in charter counties. The bill defines "total compensation" to include salary, fringe benefits, and wages of the full-time position being filled and prohibits school district governing boards from approving a superintendent contract which exceeds 5.5 times the approved total compensation of a beginning teacher in the district beginning in the 2025-26 school year. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which exempts school districts who have approved a higher salary schedule by majority vote of district voters. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

School Trainings (Required)

The House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1568](#), sponsored by Representative Ann Kelley (R-Lamar). The bill modifies the number of DESE-required training hours teachers and certain staff must complete each school year to instead require annual training for the first three years of employment before allowing individual school district boards to decide how frequently to require training as appropriate for their individual district thereafter. Additionally, the bill adds active shooter response training to the mandated schedule of training. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which clarifies that the mandated training must occur during compensated staff time. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 15-0 vote.

Self-Storage Insurance

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 927](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill increases, from \$5,000 to \$15,000, the maximum insurance coverage that may be offered by limited lines self-service storage insurance producers and their associates. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Sexual Offenses Involving Children

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HJR 132](#), sponsored by Representative Wendy Hausman (R-St. Peters). The resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to establish the penalty for sexual trafficking of a child in the first degree will result in life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. A state public advocate and a private citizen provide supporting testimony. Dozens of private citizens provided opposing testimony.

Shutdown Orders

The House Special Committee on Small Business convened Monday evening to discuss [HB 2796](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis) and [HB 2874](#), sponsored by Representative Brian Seitz (R-Branson). The bills are similar and establishes the “Protecting Missouri’s Small Businesses Act.” Specifically, the bill defines “shutdown order,” and requires political subdivision which implements a shutdown order which closes businesses at least 21 days must waive business license fees and reduce real and property tax liability. The sponsors noted there is conflicting language within the bill which will need to be removed in a substitute. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Small Wireless Act

The House Utilities Committee met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2501](#) sponsored by Representative Jeff Farnan (R-Stanberry). The bill is the identical to [HB 1995](#), sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green) and repeals the sunset on the Uniform Small Wireless Facility Deployment Act. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated that HB 1995 is currently on the House Consent calendar, and he only filed this bill in case the Senate amends [HB 1995](#). AT&T, the Missouri Municipal League, T-Mobile, the Mo Association of Municipal Utilities, City Utilities, and the Mo Chamber of Commerce provided supporting testimony. No Opposing testimony was presented.

Social Media Safety Instruction and STEM Career Awareness in Schools

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 976](#), sponsored by Sen. Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill requires DESE to develop a model curriculum for school-district instruction on safe social media use and appropriate online behavior to students in grades 6 through 12 and to develop a "STEM Career Awareness Program" to increase awareness of STEM careers and relevant training or education programs for students in grades 9 through 12. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which changes a requirement for school districts to require social media instruction for students to make the instruction optional for school districts and provide flexibility for school districts. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Solid Waste Disposal Area Permits

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 1751](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill). The bill relates to solid waste permits. Currently, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is prohibited from issuing a permit for the operation of a solid waste disposal area designed to serve a city with a population greater than 400,000 inhabitants located in more than one county, if the site is located within one-half mile of an adjoining municipality without its approval. The bill changes the required distances from adjoining municipalities from a half-mile to one mile. After a lengthy debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 112-30 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Special Taxing District

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday to debate [HB 2058](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). The bill includes three provisions. Specifically, the bill seeks to adjust the definition of video service provides to exempt streaming platforms. Additionally, the bill requires community improvement districts to be approved by a 2/3 vote before being established and also

requires 2/3 approval for transportation development districts prior to the construction or funding of any project. Lastly, the bill specifies that if a political subdivision submits a tax proposal for a new or increased tax authorized under a specific statute and it does not pass, the proposal cannot be submitted again for two years following the rejection. During the bill's progression substitute language was adopted to clarify language regarding the election cycle and include a provision to allow a political subdivision to resubmit to voters before two years in the event there is a federal or state declared natural disaster. Additionally, a provision from [HB 1517](#) which requires any new tax levy voted on by the people, have clear and concise ballot language regarding any new tax levies implemented or extended and include any sunset date provisions was added to the bill. During debate, the sponsor attempted to amend the bill which would have removed the two-year moratorium on tax issues following a rejection. Ultimately, the bill was laid over to be debated another day.

Speed Limits

The House Transportation Infrastructure committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1802](#), sponsored by Representative Ron Copeland (R-Salem). The bill decreases the speed limit on county roads that the county commission does not mark with signs indicating the speed limit, from 50 miles per hour to 40 miles per hour. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 8-1 vote.

State Auditor Powers

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 2111](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters). The bill provides that the Auditor may audit all or part of any political subdivision or government entity if, after an investigation, the auditor believes improper governmental activity has occurred. During debate, Representative Deb Lavender (D-Manchester) attempted to amend the bill by requiring 2/3 of the legislature to approve any funds being allowed to earn their own interest rather than automatically returning to General Revenue. Due to a procedural move, the amendment was ultimately sent back. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 145-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

State Auditor Powers

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 1048](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill provides that the Auditor may audit all or part of any political subdivision or government entity if, after an investigation, the auditor believes improper governmental activity has occurred. Additionally, the bill provides the Auditor with subpoena power and allows for the auditing of County Collectors and Insurance Funds. The Office of State Auditor provided supporting testimony stating the subpoena power is necessary and there have been requests from citizens asking for audits of County Collectors but there is no statutory authority to conduct an audit. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

State Contracts for Certain Services

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2314](#), sponsored by Representative Donnie Brown (R-New Madrid). The bill authorizes the Division of Facilities Management, Design, and Construction within the Office of Administration to establish master agreements for architecture, engineering, or land surveying services on an as-needed basis for indefinite projects over a defined period. These agreements, not exceeding \$100,000 per project, are established through a qualification-based selection process outlined in a request for qualifications. During

discussion, substitute language was adopted to fix a grammatical error and to have the master agreements displayed in newspapers. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 15-0 vote.

State Funds Prohibition

The House dedicated floor time on Monday to revisit [HB 2634](#), sponsored by Representative Cody Smith (R-Carthage). The bill prohibits public funds being expended to any abortion facility, or affiliate or associate thereof, including for MO HealthNet reimbursement. After another lengthy debate, the House passed the bill by a 104-49 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

State Highways and Transportation Commission

The House Transportation Accountability Committee met Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2568](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill seeks to modify the structure of the State Highways and Transportation Commission. The sponsors intent with the legislation is to provide more structure and establish a process in the event the Governor does not appoint a member to a vacancy. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which removed the requirement both chambers of the General Assembly vet candidates and requires the members take turns at chairman in order of legislative districts. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-5 vote.

Streetlights

The House Utilities Committee met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2828](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Amato (R-Arnold). The bill allows cities and counties to create a Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) and assess residents for the sole purpose of installing streetlights. The bill also creates the Neighborhood Safety and Crime Prevention Street Lighting Fund in the Department of Economic Development to provide matching grant funds to the cities and counties for streetlights. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Student Associations

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 1518](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Hudson (R-Cape Fair). The bill prohibits public institutions of higher learning from discriminating against a religious student association or denying a religious student association any benefit available to any other student association. After a lengthy debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 100-46 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Summer Camps

The House Judiciary Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2595](#), sponsored by Representative Michael Burton (D-Lakeshire). The bill specifies that any person or organization, regardless of whether they are affiliated with a religious organization, who wants to operate a summer camp must first receive a license to do so from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The parents of a child who drowned at a St Louis County summer camp provided supporting testimony. The Missouri Parks and Recreation Association and an owner/operator of a private summer camp provided opposing testimony. The Missouri Afterschool Network provided informational testimony regarding summer camp operations and opportunities.

Sunshine Law for State Parks Records

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing State Government Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1553](#), sponsored by Representative Bruce Sassmann (R-Bland). The bill adds individually identifiable customer information for visitors who make a camping, lodging, or other shelter reservation for a state park or historic site to the list of records that are exempt from disclosure under the Sunshine law, unless the records are requested by or authorized for release by the visitor. After no committee discussion, the bill was passed consent, by a 9-0 vote.

Tampering With a Judicial Officer

The House Judiciary Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2783](#), sponsored by Representative David Evans (R-West Plains). The bill prohibits eligibility for probation, parole, or conditional release for a person who is convicted of the offense of tampering with a judicial officer or the offense of tampering with a judicial proceeding. The Supreme Court Judicial Conference provided supporting testimony stating court staff have received death threats from offenders. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

TANF Provisions

The House Special Committee on Government Accountability convened Monday at noon to discuss [HB 1560](#), sponsored by Representative Bennie Cook (R-Houston, Texas). The bill modifies the use of TANF, EBT and SNAP to prohibit the purchase of pornography. Additionally, the bill prohibits the use of TANF, EBT and SNAP recipients from using their cards at ATMs or receiving cash back on purchases. Finally, if a recipient violates these prohibitions, they will be disqualified from the program for three months, the second offense will be disqualification for six months, and after a third offense they will be disqualified for five years. Empower Missouri presented opposing testimony stating that these restrictions are already in place at both the state and federal levels and the provisions making TANF cashless is more detrimental than helpful because low-income families depend largely on cash. No supporting testimony presented to the committee.

Tax Appeals (Property)

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2445](#), sponsors by Representative Aaron McMullen (R-Independence). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1001](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester) and seeks to make all county assessments equal. Specifically, the bill allows owners of individual real property that is assessed more than the overall assessment level for the county to appeal their taxes and have their assessment lowered. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to modify the fees that can be recouped from a county from \$1000 to \$2000. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 20-0 vote.

Tax Assessments (Property)

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HJR 78](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Coleman (R-Grain Valley). Upon voter approval, this resolution would limit the amount property taxes that may be increased unless certain conditions are met for raising the assessed valuation. Additionally, the resolution exempts taxpayers who reach the age of 65 from any increases. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to clarify the resolution applies only to residential property, removes the 65-age limit, and requires that the assessor reassess the property at the point of sale. Once modified, the committee passed the resolution by a 17-0 vote.

Tax Credit – Senior Citizen Property

The Senate dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to debate [SB 756](#), sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). Last year [SB 190](#), which authorized a property tax credit on any property taxes on primary residents for people that are 65 years of age or older and eliminated taxes on social security benefits, was signed into law. There was some confusion once [SB 190](#) passed rather if a person had to qualify for and be eligible to receive social security benefits in order to qualify for the tax exemption. The bill seeks to clarify that any person 62 years or older, regardless of if they qualify for benefits, is eligible for the tax exemption. Additionally, the bill clarifies that the tax credit is calculated when an individual turns 62 and the county has also adopted an ordinance adopting [SB 190](#). During debate, Senator Lauren Arthur (D-Kansas City) successfully amended the bill to clarify new construction and improvement shall be increased to reflect the real property tax liability and clarify property tax liability shall be increased in the even a homestead is annexed into a taxing jurisdiction. Once modified, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes. The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 756](#). After no further debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 31-2 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Tax Credit – Sporting Events

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1036](#), sponsored by Senator Greg Razer (D-Kansas City). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 1483](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Christ (R-St Louis) and provides a tax credit to nonprofit organizations, described as "certified sponsors," that are active members of the Sports Events and Tourism Association. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to remove the increase on the cap. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Tax Credits – Benevolent

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1179](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). The bill increases the cap from 50% to 70% on the neighborhood assistance program tax credit and the youth opportunities and violence prevention tax credit. The MO Coalition for Children, and Catholic Charities Arch Diocese of St. Louis supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Deduction – Dollar for Dollar

The House Ways and Means Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 1812](#), sponsored by Representative Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal). The bill would provide MO Taxpayers some relief from paying personal property tax by establishing a dollar-for-dollar tax deduction on MO returns. As drafted, consequentially the language would allow a person to itemize on their federal return and on their Missouri schedule A, which provides the ability to claim a double tax deduction. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to remove the ability to file a deduction on the Missouri schedule A to prevent the ability to claim a double tax deduction. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-3 vote.

Tax Deduction – Unborn Child

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1225](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). Currently, a taxpayer has the ability to claim a \$1,200 exemption for each eligible dependent. The bill would allow a taxpayer to

claim the exemption for each unborn child up to \$2,400 and allows the deduction to be used the year the child was born. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Tax Exemption – Disabled Veterans Property

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [SJR 58](#), sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). Upon voter approval, the resolution expands the current exemption from real property taxes for former prisoners of war with a total service-connected disability to all disabled veterans. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Tax Exemption – Military

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday to debate [HB 1713](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles). Currently, certain military income is tax free. The bill would add military sign-on bonuses to that list of tax-free income. The sponsor stated that there are certain benefits the military uses such as recruiting tools and sign-on bonuses, along with tuition assistance is a few. During debate, Representative Deb Lavender (D-Manchester) attempted to amend the bill by removing the recently enacted tax cuts but, through a procedural move, the amendment was ultimately ruled out of order. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Tax Exemption – Nuclear Security Enterprise

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1388](#), sponsored by Senator Greg Razer (D-Kansas City). The bill authorizes a state and local sales tax exemption for the purpose of constructing a new nuclear security enterprise located in Kansas City. Promontory 150, Greater Kansas City Chamber Commerce, City of Kansas City, South Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Corporation EDC of Kansas City supported the bill. Sierra Club, Mid MO Fellowship of Reconciliation, and state public advocate opposed the bill.

The House Economic Development Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2710](#) and [HB 2681](#), sponsored by Representatives Chris Brown (R-Kansas City) and Anthony Ealy (R-Grandview). The bills are identical and the House companions to [SB 1388](#), sponsored by Senator Greg Razer (D-Kansas City). Committee discussion and testimony mirrored the Senate hearing.

Tax Payments (Property)

The House Ways and Means Committee met Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2356](#), sponsored by Representative Peggy McGaugh (R-Carrollton). Currently, a township county may not allow taxpayers the option to pay any part of their real and personal property taxes on an annual, semiannual, or quarterly basis. This bill allows township counties the option to pass such an order or ordinance. The MO County Collectors Association supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Rate Reductions (Local)

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1667](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Matthiesen (R-O’Fallon). The bill establishes the “Taxation Oversight and Reduction Act”, which allows a taxpayer to submit a petition to the local election authority with jurisdiction over a political subdivision for the reduction of the political subdivision's property tax rate, excluding any tax rate set to pay for bonds or debt services. The reduction must not exceed 5% of the tax rate. The sponsors intent with the legislation is to create a tool, to allow taxpayers

to reduce a tax levy. During committee discussion, committee members expressed concern with setting the same reduction rates statewide and the potential effects the bill will have on smaller areas. No supporting testimony was presented. The MO Municipal League opposed the bill and stated municipalities are limited on their collections and the aggregated amount adds up, which could greatly affect smaller cities in the event those totals are reduced. The MO School Boards Association also opposed the bill and informed committee members that 60% of Missouri schools are locally funded and any reductions could potentially harm a school's ability to operate. The MO Association of Counties opposed the bill and highlighted the various costs that are associated with elections and highlighted the complexities of signature counting.

Taxation on Vehicles

The House Transportation Infrastructure committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1527](#), sponsored by Representative Cyndi Buchheit-Courtway (R-Festus). This bill specifies that motor vehicles seven years of age or older, based on the model year and used solely for noncommercial purposes, will be assessed at 5% of their true value in money. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee. The Missouri County Assessors Association provided informational testimony regarding the potential large loss of revenue.

Taxes – Sales

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1091](#), sponsored by Senator Karla Eslinger (R-Wasola). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2077](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Smith (R-Dora) and upon voter approval, the bill increases the rate of sales tax from 1% to 1.5%. Additionally, the bill clarifies that all sales tax elections for law enforcement purposes conducted during the November 8, 2022, general election shall be deemed in compliance with state law if the aggregate sales tax rate is not in excess of 1.5%. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to include [HB 2290](#), which would allow the City of Hannibal and City of Moberly to place a ballot measure to the voters to enact a sales tax for public safety purposes. Additionally, the committee substitute authorizes Bates County to impose a sales tax not to exceed 1% for the purposes of supporting the operations of hospital services in the county. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

Taylor Swift Act

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2573](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schwadron (R-St. Charles). The bill establishes the “Taylor Swift Act”, which seeks to address the issue of the unauthorized disclosure of intimate digital images. Individuals impacted may bring a civil action against the person who disclosed the image without their consent. Violators can be charged with a class E felony on the 1st offense and a class C felony on a subsequent conviction. The sponsor highlights past instances when high school students all over the country were bullied and humiliated after their peers shared AI-generated explicit photos of them. Committee members expressed that they would like to see the punishments for violators heavily enforced. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Telehealth

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 931](#), sponsored by Senator Lauren Arthur (D-Kansas City). The bill modifies the definition of “telehealth services” to include audiovisual and audio only services and expands which third-party platforms “telehealth

services” may be provided. Missouri Psychological Association, Missouri Mental Health Counselors Association, National Association of Social Workers-Missouri Chapter, St. Louis Behavioral Medical Center, Missouri Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Missouri Hospital Association, Missouri Academy of Family Physicians and Missouri Association of Rural Health Care Clinics provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Tobacco Product Sales

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2060](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). The bill specifies that the state shall preempt any local laws, ordinances, orders, rules, or regulations enacted by a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the state regulating the sale of tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, or vapor products. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated some local governments have banned certain products, making it impossible for some businesses to proceed and his intent with the legislation is to prevent municipalities from banning businesses and over regulating products. Ware Brands, MO Smoke Free, Kum n Go, the MO Petroleum and Convenience Store Association, and the City of Eureka supported the bill and stated the language provides consistency and predictability for the products being sold throughout the State. The American Heart Association, MO State Medical Association, MO Nurses Association, American Society Cancer Action Network, Springfield Green County Health, MO Association of Local Public Health Agencies, MO Academy of Family Physicians, and the MO Center for Public Health Excellence, opposed the bill and stated the language would preclude all local ordinances and stated any licenses to sell tobacco is provided at the municipal or county level and implementing this law, would move oversight, enforcement, and regulation to the State and ultimately deregulate the tobacco industry. The MO Municipal League provided informational testimony and informed committee members that the bill as drafted prohibits cities from enforcing sales to minors.

Tort Claims Liability Insurance

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1346](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). This bill redefines “purchase” with respect to liability coverage for the state or a political subdivision to refer only to such governmental entity’s direct acquisition of insurance coverage, and not to include any indirect action by contract or otherwise, such as requiring additional coverage or insured status under the insurance policy of another person or entity. This change would permit governmental entities to retain sovereign immunity when they are named as a second insured in relation to work performed by contractors. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Tourism Supplemental Revenue Fund

The House Economic Development Committee met Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2719](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Hudson (R-Cape Fair). In 1993, HB 188 was signed into law, and it created the Division of Tourism Supplemental Revenue Fund for the purpose to maintain the operations of the MO Division of Tourism within the Department of Economic Development and it also created a revenue funding formula. Through this formula, a percentage of growth in tax revenues from tourism related businesses was supposed to be reinvested each year for tourism marketing. The formula went into effect June 1, 1994, and has been reauthorized in subsequent years and in 2013 the General Assembly approved a seven-year sunset, which expired on June 30, 2020. Although the Fund has sunset, it is still in operation and the intent of the legislation is to fix the sunset oversight and allow the

Department to continue utilizing the Fund for tourism marketing purposes. After no committee discussion, the bill was passed consent, by a 15-0 vote.

Uniform Commercial Code Relating to Secured Transactions

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1551](#), sponsored by Representative Bruce Sassmann (R-Bland). The bill modifies a provision of the Uniform Commercial Code relating to secured transactions by changing the definition of "farm products" to include trees. The Missouri Forest Products Association provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Uniform Depositions and Discovery Act

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1452](#), sponsored by Representative Rudy Veit (R-Wardsville). The bill establishes the "Uniform Interstate Depositions and Discovery Act". This bill provides procedures and processes for when a subpoena for discovery or a deposition is submitted in Missouri by a party in a foreign jurisdiction. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Uniform Unlawful Restriction on Land Records Act

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2727](#), sponsored by Representative Cameron Parker (R-Campbell). The bill establishes the "Uniform Unlawful Restriction on Land Records Act" which seeks to replace the current procedure for removing void and unenforceable covenants on real property by landowners. The Community Associations Institute and a state public advocate supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Unlawful Use of Weapons

The House Judiciary Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2492](#), sponsored by Representative David Evans (R-West Plains). The bill adds a juvenile officer or deputy juvenile officer to the list of persons exempt from being charged with the offense of unlawful use of weapons with exceptions. The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Veteran's Omnibus

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1490](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City). According to the bill, except as permitted under federal law, no person can receive compensation for advising or assisting any individual with regard to any veteran's benefits matter. During committee discussion, several bills were added to create an omnibus veteran's bill. Specifically, the bill now includes:

- [HB 1495](#), which tasks the Missouri Veterans Commission with expanding its efforts to prevent veteran suicide;
- [HB 1496](#), which establishes the "Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel and Operation Allies Refuge Program";
- [HB 2215](#), which creates provisions relating to alternative therapies for veterans with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries;
- [HB 2221](#), which modifies provisions for providing copies of medical records.

Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-5 vote.

Video Service Providers

The Senate Commerce, Energy and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 947](#), sponsored by Senator Holly Thompson-Rehder (R-Scott City). The bill modifies the definition of video services; for provisions of law relating to video service providers to include the definition of streaming content. After brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-4 vote.

Virtual Course Program Assessments

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 1049](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill allows any virtual school or program that is part of the Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program to administer any statewide assessment virtually as long as the student being tested is monitored via a camera and proctored at a ratio of 10-1 or lower. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Virtual School Program

The House dedicated floor time Monday to debate [HB 2287](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters). The bill modifies provisions relating to the Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program to add clarification for the required enrollment process of virtual school programs for parents and specify a payment schedule for resident districts calculating attendance of virtual students. During debate, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to specify the calculation by which providers would be paid, require quarterly progress reports be issued for each student and clarify who may access the data used for the quarterly calculations. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 144-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Water Usage

The House Committee on Rural Community Development convened Monday to consider [HB 2669](#) sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R - Butler). [HB 2669](#) relates to water usage and says user information provided by a user using at least 100,000 gallons of water a day to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Geological Survey Division is confidential and cannot be released by the Division to the public or disclosed in response to a records request. Members of the committee expressed concern about transparency. The Missouri Soybean Association, the Missouri Cattlemen's Association and the Missouri Corn Growers Association testified in support. Armorvine testified in opposition. There was no testimony for informational purposes.

Waters of the State Definition

The Senate Agriculture, Food Production, and Outdoor Resources Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 981](#), Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). The bill modifies the definition of "waters of the state" to include various surface and subsurface waters that are adjacent or connected to relatively permanent, standing or continuously flowing bodies of water. The sponsor stated his intent with the legislation is to provide clarity on the definition of waters of the state and simply codify into state law the *Sackett v. EPA* court decision. During bill presentation, the sponsor highlighted he is still working with interested parties to provide further clarity on definitions. During committee discussion, Senator Tracy McCreery (D-St. Louis) expressed concern with the bill and stated the language as drafted removes current ground water protections. The MO Pork Association, MO Cattlemen's Association,

MO Farm Bureau, and MO Soybean Association provided supporting testimony and advocated for the need to provide additional protections for property owners. The Conservation Federation, Jeffery Law Group, Sierra Club, MO Stream Team Coalition, Ike Skelton the Camden County Commissioner, MO Rural Crisis Center, MO Parks Association, and farmers throughout MO provided opposing testimony stating aligning our laws with the federal government by default could provide the federal government regulatory authority and potentially violate the supremacy clause.

Waterways and Ports Trust Fund

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday to debate [HB 2352](#), sponsored by Representative Cindy Buchheit-Courtway (R-Festus). The bill makes several changes to the Waterways and Ports Trust Fund including removal of: the requirement that funds be withdrawn only for the purposes of transportation grants; the requirement that the project be on or adjacent to the navigable rivers of this state; a provision requiring a 20% local match; and, a provision requiring that the project be “selected and approved by the highways and transportation commission, in consultation with the Missouri public ports, to support a statewide plan for waterborne commerce.” Rather than being based on approval by the highways and transportation commission, projects would have to be capable of completion within two years of appropriation of funds by the general assembly, and any unspent funds remaining after two years may be reallocated. During the bill’s progression, substitute language was adopted to allow STL Port Authority to access the funds. The bill was further modified when the sponsor successfully amended the bill to re-insert the requirement that the project improve commerce or terminal and transportation facilities on or adjacent to the navigable rivers of Missouri. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House revisited the bill on Thursday and passed the bill by a 144-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Zero-Cost Adoption Fund

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2547](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Christ (R-St Louis). The bill establishes the "Zero-Cost Adoption Fund Act" and the "Zero-Cost Adoption Fund", which allows taxpayers to claim a tax credit equal to 100% of any qualifying contributions to the fund. Additionally, the total amount of the credit is capped at \$25 million but can be adjusted up to \$75 million after the first year to adjust for inflation. Campaign Life Missouri provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Upcoming Hearings of Interest:

House: <https://house.mo.gov/AllHearings.aspx>

Senate: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/hearingsschedule/hrings.htm>

Chamber Floor Calendars

House: <https://house.mo.gov/Session.aspx>

Senate: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/24info/pdf-cal/cal.htm>

Key Upcoming Dates:

- March 18-22, 2024 - Legislative Spring Break
- March 26, 2024 – Last day of candidate filing
- April 1, 2024 – Easter Break – No Session

- April 2, 2024 – General Municipal Elections
- May 10, 2024 – Last Day to Constitutionally pass the FY 2025 Budget
- May 17, 2024 – Last Day of the 2024 Legislative session
- August 6, 2024 – Missouri Primary Elections
- September 11, 2024 – Veto Session
- November 5, 2024 – Missouri General Elections



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