

Missouri Capitol Report

March 4, 2022

Weekly Overview: This week marked the end of bill filing marking the end of the introduction of new pieces of legislation. Lawmakers filed 2281 this session.

When the Legislature adjourns next Thursday, members will begin their week long Legislative Spring Break. Normally, at this time in session dozens of bills have passed out of their originating chamber and the committees in the opposing chamber are beginning to hear those bills in committee. This year however, the Senate has only sent two bills to the House.

There were high hopes this week that the Senate would build off of the successes of last week and pass more bills on to the lower chamber. Those hopes, however, were quickly dashed as once again the Senate got caught up in legislative tactics and personal attacks. Personalities collided so badly that once again on Thursday they adjourned without even having approved the journal – normally a perfunctory act. Looking forward to next week we are not expecting the Senate to be very productive.

The House on the other hand has been chugging along like usual...

In Brief...

- On Monday, Governor Mike Parson announced that he has selected Paula Nickelson to serve as the Acting Director of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, effective immediately. Nickelson was already working in the EMS Division within the Department.
- The Department of Economic Development (DED) announced Tuesday that Missouri has been awarded a \$42.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for broadband expansion. The funds received through the NTIA's Broadband Infrastructure Program will be used for projects benefiting more than 13,000 households in 12 Missouri counties: Boone, Butler, Jasper, Lincoln, Livingston, Marion, McDonald, Monroe, Pulaski, Shelby, St. Charles and St. Louis.
- This week, Missouri State Treasurer Scott Fitzpatrick requested an emergency MOSERS Board of Trustees meeting to prevent the future purchase of Russian securities and to discuss the strategic divestment of existing Russian holdings. As of last Friday, MOSERS holds approximately \$13 million in Russian securities within funds worth over \$1 billion as part of its Global Emerging Markets allocation.

- Pension funds around the world are starting to review their investments in Russia's energy, banking and mining sectors in the wake of the country's invasion of Ukraine. Other states have started selling their holding; however, it is proving to be more complicated than expected. Some financial-services providers are backing away from Russian securities, preventing investors from buying and selling ruble-priced stocks and bonds traded inside and outside Russia. Pension funds hoping to sell holdings that trade on the Moscow Exchange had to shelve those plans this week after Russia's central bank shut the exchange down Monday.
- The MO Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development released their MO Monthly Jobs Report this week. According to the report, Missouri's non-farm payroll employment increased from December 2021 to January 2022, and the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased by one-tenth of a percentage point. Employment, seasonally adjusted, increased by 9,100 jobs over the month, with job gains in both goods-producing and service-providing industries. The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in January 2022, down from the annually revised 3.9 percent in December 2021. Over the year, there was an increase of 86,200 jobs from January 2021 to January 2022, and the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased by 1.2 percentage points, from 5.0 percent in January 2021 to 3.8 percent in January 2022.

Budget Update

The House Budget Committee convened this week to have committee questions regarding HB 20 answered and to hear HJR 92, sponsored by Representative J. Eggleston. The Sub-Committees also met this week and began the mark-up process to make recommendations to the full Budget Committee.

HB 20

This is the supplemental appropriations bill containing the majority of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Representative Doug Richey (R-Excelsior Springs) focused his inquiries on the state's IT systems. Specifically focusing on the state's lack of ability to have a single-entry portal for citizens to access services throughout the state. He wants to ensure there is a plan in place and no system expenditures are outdated or redundant. Members also followed up on the capital improvement projects for municipalities, colleges, universities, and community colleges to ensure the funding for those projects remains intact.

Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education and Workforce Development

The House Sub-Committee on Appropriations-Education convened on Thursday morning to make recommendations to the full Budget Committee. The recommendations are as follows:

- \$350,000 for Independent Living Centers and Sheltered Workshops (This funding was found by reducing the core of the Virtual Schools Program)
- \$4.5 million for Access Missouri Financial Assistance Fund (This funding was found by reducing the Dual Credit Scholarship Program core)

- \$100,000 for Missouri Scholars and Fine Arts Academies (This funding was found by reducing the GEER II DESE Federal Emergency Relief Fund)
- \$450,000 for the commissioning of a study of higher education performance funding and higher education efficiency, institutional missions, and reforms (This funding was found by reducing the GEER II DESE Federal Emergency Relief Fund)
- \$250,000 for School Safety Training Grants Program to include the hiring of school counselors to provide students with mental health services pertaining to suicide and other behavioral health needs (This funding was found by reducing the Center for National Pandemic Resiliency core)

Senate Floor Activity...

Literacy and Reading Instruction

The Senate dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate SB 681, sponsored by Senator Cindy O’Laughlin (R-Shelbina). This legislation changes the make-up of the Missouri Advisory Board for Educator Preparation (MABEP) and allows schools to apply to the State Board of Education for innovation waivers to align literacy and reading instruction with regular classwork. During debate, the sponsor offered substitute language to include literacy assessment requirements, creates an evidence-based instruction reading fund, and creates a literacy advisory council and outlines the makeup of the council. During debate, Senator Lauren Arthur (R-Kansas City) further amended the substitute, to move the effective date to January 1, 2023. Senator O’Laughlin then modified the substitute to provide technical changes. Once modified, the Senate adopted the modified substitute and provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

House Floor Activity...

Workforce Diploma Program

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to debate HB 2325, sponsored by Representative Jon Patterson (R-Lees Summit). The bill establishes the "Workforce Diploma Program" within the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development to assist students in obtaining a high school diploma and develop employability and career technical skills. During floor debate, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to clarify an adult high school has to offer childcare for children of enrolled students on or off-site, require each student to include a declaration of their postsecondary educational or career/workforce plans as part of the ICAP, and complete a FAFSA as a condition of graduation. Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho) further amended the bill to include language from HB 1856, which creates the Extended Learning Opportunity Act. Once modified, the House provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Substitute Teacher Certification

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate HB 2304, sponsored by Representative Ed Lewis (R-Moberly). This legislation creates a new four-year certification program for those seeking to substitute teach or for former retired teachers seeking to come out of retirement to teach. During floor debate, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to include

language allowing retired teachers to teach again without affecting that teacher's retirement allowance. Once modified, the House provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Belief-Based Student Associations

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate HB 1724, 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. During floor debate, numerous members expressed concerns the bill would limit leadership roles for students. After considerable debate, the House provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Gifted Children

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate HB 2366, sponsored by Representative Brenda Shields (R-St. Joseph). The bill requires that by July 1, 2024, school districts shall establish a state-approved gifted program if 3% or more of the students are identified as gifted. After considerable debate and no modification, the House provided its first of two necessary votes.

In Committee This Week...

Relating to alcohol related Traffic Offenses

The House Crime Prevention Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of HB 1680, sponsored by Representative Mark Sharp (D-Kansas City). This bill requires persons convicted of an intoxication-related traffic offense to use an ignition interlock device for a period of at least six months and removes the requirement that the person have a prior alcohol-related contact. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-1 vote.

Educational Internships

The House Workforce Development Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of HB 2190, sponsored by Representative Mike Henderson (R-Bonne Terre). This bill allows school boards of any school district to purchase insurance contracts to insure against loss for a claim arising out of the sickness, bodily injury, or death by accident of any student injured on school premises or during school-sponsored activities. After brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 8-2 vote.

Statewide Assessments

The House Elementary and Secondary Education convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of HB 2132, sponsored by Representative Willard Haley (R-Eldon). This bill requires that state assessments may not include specific questions or statements regarding race, sex, moral character, and the emergence of slavery was key to the founding of the United States. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-6 vote.

Teaching Permits

The House Elementary and Secondary Education convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of HB 1998, sponsored by Representative Bishop Davidson (R-Republic). This bill allows school districts to issue a district teaching permit for those who do not currently hold a

teacher certification. The bill also outlines a new four-year certification program for those wishing to substitute teach. Finally, the bill includes language for the Troops to Teachers Program. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to include requirements for certification in special needs and highly specialized areas of teaching. Additionally, the substitute requires school districts to disclose the use of federal funds received as a result of COVID-19. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-6 vote.

Social Studies Curriculum

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss HB 1835, sponsored by Representative John Wiemann (R-O'Fallon). The bill identifies particular social studies academic performance standards and learning standards for elementary and secondary education and prohibits the use of sexual orientation, race, gender, or religious affiliation as a basis of discussion or instructional basis for curriculum in social studies courses in elementary and secondary schools in Missouri. No supporting testimony was provided during the hearing. The MO NEA, and PROMO opposed the bill.

Discrimination in Education

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss HB 1484, sponsored by Representative Ann Kelley (R-Lamar). The bill prohibits discrimination in public education and prohibits any public school, including higher education, from requiring gender or sexual diversity training as part of a mandatory course of study. No supporting testimony was provided. PROMO opposed the bill.

Curriculum Materials

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss HB 2189, sponsored by Representative Mary Elizabeth Coleman (R-Arnold). The bill modifies and creates provisions regarding the use of certain training, instructional, and curricular materials in public schools and charter schools. The legislation, as proposed, prohibits the state board of education from promoting a statewide curriculum, requires transparency in continuing education courses for teachers and professional staff, prohibits the award of credit for political or social advocacy efforts among students, and requires local school boards to approve curriculum and instructional materials in a transparent manner. A parent from Wentzville supported the bill. No opposing testimony was provided during the hearing.

Mental Health Awareness Training in Schools

The Senate Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions & Ethics Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss SCR 27, sponsored by Senator Karla May (D-St. Louis). The resolution recognizes the need for mental health awareness training in both public and charter high schools. During bill presentation, the sponsor informed committee members that the significant increase in youth suicides has amplified the need for more mental health training. The KC Public School District, and the National Association of Social Workers spoke provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was provided. Immediately after the hearing, the committee went into executive session to consider passage of the resolution. After brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

Upcoming Committee Hearings

Link to the Senate hearing schedule can be found [here](#).

Link to the House hearing schedule can be found [here](#).

Key Upcoming Dates

- March 8, 2022 – State of the Judiciary
- March 14-18, 2022– Legislative Spring Break
- April 18, 2022 – Easter Holiday – No Session
- May 6, 2022 – State Budget finalized per Missouri Constitution
- May 13, 2022 – Last day of the 2022 Legislative Session per Missouri Constitution
- July 1, 2022 – First day of Fiscal Year 2023
- July 14, 2022 – Last day for the Governor to Sign or Veto Bills
- August 28, 2022 – Date Most Legislation Takes Effect (unless another date is specified)
- September 14, 2022 – Veto Session