



WEEKLY OVERVIEW: This week, the House and Senate worked a couple long days before breaking early on Wednesday to play in the annual legislative charity softball tournament. This tournament has been around for decades and features teams sponsored by the Senate Pro Tem, the Speaker of the House, and many other legislative rivals. This year the tournament raised over \$11,000 for the Jefferson City Samaritan Center.

This week, the Senate focused most of its attention on passing two pieces of legislation. The first bill would allow Missouri American Water Corporation to charge and collect from ratepayers a surcharge in between rate cases to pay for infrastructure projects. This piece of legislation was quite controversial and took the Senate over eight hours to give the bill its first round of approval before formally sending the bill to the house on Thursday. The second bill was a tort reform measure aimed at changing how insurance companies are allowed to intervene in certain arbitration agreements. This fight between insurance companies and trial attorneys lasted until 6 a.m. Wednesday morning when the bill was Third Read and sent back to the House for its final approval. On Monday of next week, the Senate Appropriations Committee will begin its official markup of the House budget bills.

The House this week worked long days on Monday and Tuesday perfecting over 36 pieces of legislation. One of the more controversial bills that the House worked on this week was HB 920 sponsored by Rep. Baker (R-Neosho). This bill would move the all April Elections to the November Ballot. The highly controversial change was thought to have a possible compromise so that the bill would only move bonding and tax measures to the November ballot. That amendment was defeated and the bill was passed without change. This measure still needs one more vote before it would be sent to the Senate for consideration. The House has now sent 134 bills to the Senate for consideration. This far exceeds the number of bills that the Senate could possibly deal with in the next four weeks.

Major session issues that are still awaiting Senate action are: Federal Reimbursement Allowance (this bill allows for a \$4 billion federal draw down to fund Medicaid), the state budget bills, HB 349 dealing with Education Savings Accounts (vouchers), election reform, initiative petition reform, and the Second Amendment Preservation Act. All of these bills are highly controversial and will take a lot of time to work their way through the Senate. There are four weeks before the constitutionally directed end of session on May 14th.

In the news...

- Representative Rick Roeber (R-Lee's Summit) submitted a letter of resignation to Speaker Rob Vescovo this week. Roeber, who succeeded his late wife, was elected to the House last year amid allegations from his adult children that they were abused and sexually mistreated by him. The House Ethics Committee has been investigating the allegations since January and on Thursday, House Ethics Chairman Travis Fitzwater succeeded in blocking acceptance of the resignation until the Committee has finished its investigation and issued a report. That report is expected to be completed sometime next week.
- On Thursday, Representative Jared Taylor (R-Springfield) announced that the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations would suspend all efforts to collect unemployment overpayments while the legislature works to pass legislation relating to that issue. Taylor told his House colleagues that collection efforts involving approximately 46,000 Missourians who received overpayments will be paused. Rep. Taylor is Chairman of the House Government Oversight Committee which grilled Department leaders earlier this week.
- This week, the House gave first round approval to a bill that would permanently put Missouri on daylight saving account time if three of eight bordering states adopt that time standard. The bill still requires a final vote before being sent to the Senate for consideration.
- *The Missouri Times* reports that Kansas City International Airport has received a \$2.4 million natural gas bill in the wake of the two week long cold spell last February. Negotiations between the City of Kansas City and Texas-based natural gas company Symmetry Energy Solutions continue as the company initially lowered the bill to \$2.1 million.

EDUCATION OMNIBUS: On Tuesday, the House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a public hearing on SB 152, sponsored by Sen. Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). This legislation modifies numerous provisions regarding education. The provisions are:

- Show-Me Success Diploma Program,
- Information to be Published on Department Website,
- Competency Based Education,
- Annexation of School Districts,
- Gifted Education,
- Missouri Education Savings Program,
- Students with Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders,
- Missouri Western State University Governing Board, and,
- Montessori Schools.

The full bill summary may be found here: [SB 152](#)

Testifying in support were representatives from Office of State Treasurer, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Missouri Advisory Council on the Gifted, Missouri NEA, Aligned, and Missouri Education Reform Council. Supporters stated that these measures would allow gifted students to thrive and said that the Show-Me Success Diploma Program would allow students a path to successful careers. It was also noted these programs should have no negative impact on local school districts. Supporting testimony submitted through the online portal included numerous private citizens, and representatives from Yes, Every Kid, Gifted Association of Missouri, and Associated Industries of Missouri.

Opposing testimony submitted through the online portal was a private citizen.

The committee took no further action on the measure.

-End of Report-