ALIGNED
22052 W. 66th Street • Suite 200
Shawnee, KS • 66226

(913) 484-4202
WeAreAligned.org

MISSOURI CAPITOL UPDATE

February 3, 2022

Weekly Overview: What was predicted to be a long and grueling week, with nights consumed with hours of Senate floor debate over redistricting, was quickly cut short due to impending weather. As all eyes turned to the weather channel, House and Senate Leadership canceled the rest of the week and out of an abundance of caution sent everyone home Tuesday afternoon.

The Senate is scheduled to convene at noon on Monday at which time they are expected to take up the congressional redistricting map. This sets the stage for another bitter battle between Senate leadership and members of the Senate conservative caucus. The battle over the maps focuses on how the districts are structured and to what extent the district is republican or democrat. The current map pushed by leadership is a 6-2 map that conservatives say is not strong enough and are pushing for a 7-1 leaning republican map.

Filing for the August 2022 Primary Election opens on February 22, 2022 and closes on March 29, 2022. Ideally, the maps would be passed and sent to the governor before filing opens.

In brief…

- On Monday, Attorney General Eric Schmitt announced his Office has begun filing motions for temporary restraining orders in his lawsuits against school districts illegally enforcing mask mandates. The Missouri Attorney General's Office filed suit against 45 school districts for continuing to enforce mask mandates. The Office filed motions for temporary restraining orders in the lawsuits against Columbia Public Schools, St. Charles R-VI, and Ferguson-Florissant, with more on the way. The motions ask each court to issue a temporary restraining order and halt the mask mandate at each respective school.

- The Missouri Senate refused to confirm Donald Kauerauf as director of the Department of Health and Senior Services on Tuesday, which bans him from the position for life. The Senate Gubernatorial Appointments Committee voted to confirm a slate of Governor Parson's nominations but declined to take a vote of Kauerauf's appointments. Kauerauf had to be confirmed by this Friday in order to remain in the job, per a provision of the Missouri Constitution that any appointed made in the interim must be confirmed within 30 days of the Senate convening. All other interim appointments made by Parson that were under the same timeframe were allowed to be withdrawn.

- On Wednesday evening, Governor Mike Parson accepted the resignation of Department of Health and Senior Service Director Don Kauerauf. Governor Parson has temporarily appointed Richard Moore to lead the Department of Health and

Senior Services (DHSS) as Acting Director. Richard serves as General Counsel for DHSS. The Governor will further evaluate the state's options in the coming days.

- The Senate did confirm two of Governor Parson's nominees: former Representative Becky Ruth was confirmed as the Missouri Child Advocate in the Office of Child Advocate for Children's Protection and Services and former Senator Jamilah Nasheed was confirmed as a member of the Missouri Parole Board.
- Close to a billion dollars is coming to the St. Louis region to improve shipping and environmental habitats along the Mississippi River. The federal funding, allocated in the bipartisan infrastructure bill passed last year, pays for a new 1,200-foot-long lock at Lock and Dam 25 about an hour north of St. Louis. In addition to money for the new 1,200-foot lock, Congress allocated $97.1 million to restore a fish passage at Lock and Dam 22 near Hannibal back to what it was like before the lock and dam system was constructed. If successful, both multimillion-dollar projects could serve as blueprints for similar ones at five locks and dams on the Mississippi north of the St. Louis area under the corps Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program.

- According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, COVID testing remains a very important tool in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is continuing to offer free community testing events. The latest information can be found here.

Budget Update…

The House Budget and Senate Appropriations continued to hear from the departments on the Governor's budget recommendations for FY2023. The weather created a shortened week and has delayed the presentations from five of the departments. The Senate heard from the departments of Agriculture and Conservation and the House heard from the departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and the remaining divisions within the department of Social Services. Below are some of the highlights from these presentations:

Elementary and Secondary Education

Commissioner Margie VanDeven stated the budget reflects the same priorities as last year: dealing with circumstances caused by the pandemic, day-to-day education operations and reimagining education. VanDeven said her organization continues to study the impact of the pandemic on students and the workforce. She estimated 15% of students in kindergarten through 12th grade and first- and second-year teachers haven't experienced a typical school year. She also reported the youngest and most vulnerable students were adversely affected by pandemic school closings and remote learning when it released the **2021 Missouri Assessment Program results.** Finally, she pleaded with the committee to move on HB 3014, which contains $2.1 billion in federal COVID-19 funds for DESE to distribute to the state's school districts. There were no questions from the committee following her presentation.

Social Services Divisions

The remaining divisions housed within the department of Social Services are the Support Division, Family Support Division, Children's Division, and Youth Services. The Division of MO HealthNet made their presentation to the committee last week. Committee members questioned division directors for over an hour regarding improvements made to improve the oversight over youth residential facilities. This includes background checks, software upgrades, and increased staff. Another area of interest included IT improvements, particularly the single-entry portal for those wishing to receive or already receiving state benefits, as RFPs are going to be issued for multiple projects to update and manage the large amounts of data the department receives and processes. Due to the impending weather, the committee cut the presentation short and will finish the department presentation next week.

In Committee This Week…

Governing workforce development in elementary and secondary education
The House Workforce Development Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss HB 2171, sponsored by Representative Rick Francis (R-Perryville). Currently, Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) are optional. This bill requires students to develop an ICAP which must be reviewed annually, by school personnel and the student's parent or guardian. The ICAP must now include a declaration of a student's postsecondary plan. Additionally, the bill requires students in public and charter schools to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before being eligible for a certificate of graduation. The MO Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provided supporting testimony and informed committee members that ICAP legislation is a department priority. Additional supporting testimony was provided by MO Association of School Administrators, University of Central MO, Council on Public Higher Education, MO Department of Higher Education, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Aligned, MO School Board Association, and MO Career and Technical Education. No opposing testimony was provided.

Relating to Child Trafficking and Prostitution
The House Crime Prevention Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss HB 2032, sponsored by Representative Ed Lewis (R-Moberly). Under the current offense of prostitution, a person has an affirmative defense to prosecution that he or she was under 18 and acting under the coercion of an agent at the time of the offense. This bill eliminates that and suggests that any minor under the age of 18 cannot be tried/prosecuted for prostitution. The bill also requires that the person will be placed in protective custody with the purpose of family reunification, if safe, or referral to an agency that rehabilitates minors being trafficked, or both. The bill also adds patronizing prostitution where the victim is under 18 to tier III on the sexual offender registry. MO Kids First and MO Association of Childcare Workers provided supporting testimony and stated that it is their position that if you are under the age of 18 you are not a prostitute but a victim. No opposing testimony was provided.

Relating to Human Trafficking and a proposed Sexual Exploitation Fund
The House Crime Prevention Committee convened Monday at noon to discuss HB 2307 and HJR 114, sponsored by Representative Jeff Coleman (R-Grain Valley). The bill would establish that a $5,000 fine will be assessed and collected in all cases in which a defendant is found guilty of any human trafficking offense. The bill also creates the "Human Trafficking and Sexual

Exploitation Fund" which will consist of proceeds from the human trafficking fines collected. The Fund shall be a dedicated fund and, upon appropriation, moneys in this fund shall be distributed to the county where the human trafficking offense occurred. Upon voter approval, the resolution would exclude penalties and fines collected for human trafficking offenses from being distributed annually to Missouri schools and would allow for the funds to be allocated to the "Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Fund". The MO Human Trafficking Center, and a former State Trooper who served as the Sergeant over trafficking testified in support of the bill. No opposing testimony was provided.

Workforce Diploma Program

The House Workforce Development Committee met in executive session Monday afternoon to consider passage of HB 2325, sponsored by Representative Jon Patterson (R-Lee's 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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 11-0 vote.

Extending Learning Opportunities Act

Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). appeared before the House General Laws Committee Monday evening to present HB 1856. The bill establishes to Extended Learning Opportunities Act and allows students the opportunities to learn outside the classroom for credit. The sponsor's intent with the legislation is to allow a process for discovery and apply students' talents in areas of interests in the job market. Yes. Every Kid, Inc., MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Aligned, Science Coach, and Americans for Prosperity provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was provided.

School Board agenda items

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage on HB 1750, sponsored by Representative Chuck Basye (R-Rocheport). The bill allows registered voters to file a petition with the school board to add agenda items to any school board meeting. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to remove provisions regarding citizen petitions and added language outlining the process by which an item may be placed on the agenda. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 11 -6 vote.

Responsible use of social media

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage on HB 1585, sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). This legislation requires public schools to teach students the responsible use of social media. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 14-3 vote.

School Board Districts

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss HB 1804, sponsored by Representative Rudy Veit (R-Wardsville). This legislation allows certain school districts to be divided into subdistricts and outlines the process for the election of the subdistrict members. The Springfield School District, Missouri School Board Association, and several private citizens provided supporting testimony, and informed committee

members that without geographical representation for larger school districts, an inordinate amount of influence can be placed upon the school board and there is not true representation on the school board. No opposing testimony was provided. The Missouri NEA provided informational testimony.

Shared School District Superintendents
The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened on Tuesday morning to discuss HB 1721, sponsored by Representative Brenda Shields (R-St. Joseph). This legislation allows school districts which enter into an agreement to share a superintendent to receive an additional $30,000 per year in state aid for up to five years. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Missouri School Board Association supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Student Transfer Procedures
The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened on Tuesday morning to discuss HB 1814, sponsored by Representative Brad Pollitt (R-Sedalia). This bill outlines the procedures and policies necessary to allow students to transfer between school districts. The Quality Schools Coalition, Aligned, American Federation of Children, Save Our Kids, Children's Education Alliance of Missouri provided supporting testimony, and advocated when parents are empowered to make choices regarding their children's educations there are better education outcomes. The Missouri NEA, Missouri Association of School Administrators, and St. Clair Arthur II School District provided opposing testimony, and informed committee members that language should be added regarding desired outcomes, anonymous surveys should be offered to parents regarding the reasons for choosing different schools, and there should be an obligation from the receiving district to reimburse for transportation costs. It was also noted this could cause financial hardships for smaller rural schools and create recruiting hardships for extracurricular activities. The Special School District of St. Louis County provided informational testimony.

Gifted Children Programs
The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss HB 2366, sponsored by Representative Brenda Shields (R-St. Joseph). This legislation requires school districts to establish a state-approved gifted program if more than 3% of the students within that district are identified as gifted. The Columbia Public School Gifted Program, Advisory Council on Education for Talented Students, Missouri NEA, and several parents of gifted children provided supported testimony, and informed committee members that students who are gifted are often left behind or teachers are unsure of the means to educate these students. It was also noted not all districts have these programs and there are no options for these students. No opposing testimony was provided.

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

- February 8, 2022 – State of the Judiciary
- February 21, 2022 – Presidents Day – No Session
- March 1, 2022 – Last day to file House and Senate bills
- 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

 # End of Report #