



## CAPITOL REPORT – WEEK 14

APRIL 11, 2024

**Weekly Overview:** This week was fairly lackluster in the Missouri Senate with one major exception. On Tuesday, the Senate spent 12 hours debating a House bill that would prohibit public funding of abortion facilities and affiliates (Planned Parenthood), including Missouri Medicaid funding. The debate became bogged down as Democratic Senator Tracy McCreery introduced an amendment that would amend the definition of “unborn children” to exclude human embryos created through in vitro fertilization prior to successful implantation in the uterus. Democrats held the floor for hours attempting to get a vote on the amendment, which ultimately was rendered moot when the bill handler (Senator Mary Elizabeth Coleman) withdrew the underlying Senate substitute and offered a new substitute. The new substitute was third read and passed by a vote of 23-10 along party lines. The significance of passage of this bill is that it prohibits MO Healthnet funds from being used for Planned Parenthood health services, an issue that inevitably would be the subject of heated debate as the Senate prepares to debate [SB 748](#). That bill removes the sunset provision relating to federal reimbursement allowance taxes and is the funding mechanism for Ground Ambulance, Nursing Facility, Medicaid Managed Care Organization, Hospital, Pharmacy and Intermediate Care Facility for the Intellectually Disabled.

The House did not meet on Monday so that members could experience the eclipse. They made up for lost time by perfecting eleven bills on Tuesday and Wednesday. They met for a brief 20 minutes on Thursday and did not Third Read and pass those bills.

Senator Bill Eigel, a member of the Freedom Caucus, fired a warning shot at Senate leaders for taking up House bills for floor debate as the House has sat on the Senate legislation relating to initiative petition reform for the last seven weeks. This could portend problems for next week.

### *In the news...*

- Missouri flag designer Marie Watkins Oliver will be honored with a bust in the Hall of Famous Missourians in the State Capitol. The Cape Girardeau woman, who died in 1944 at the age of 90, is being honored more than a hundred years after she designed the state flag which was adopted by the legislature in 1913.
- This week Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey joined with six other Republican Attorneys General in a lawsuit to block President Joe Biden’s latest attempt to provide student loan debt relief to over 30 million Americans. The lawsuit alleges that Biden overstepped his authority in forgiving loans and takes issue with the projected costs.
- The House Ethics Committee investigation of Speaker Dean Plocher met three times this week as some news outlets report an escalation of activity. The committee has met for weeks looking into allegations that he improperly used his position to provide a contract to a company outside of the normal bid process, that he improperly fired a whistleblower, and that he filed false expense reports for travel. Chairwoman Hannah Kelly has not indicated when a final report will be issued.

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## **Budget Update**

Although the House may temporarily be finished crafting the FY2025 budget, the Senate's work is just beginning. Senator Lincoln Hough (R-Springfield) has announced no committee hearings or negotiations will take place on the budget until [SB 748](#), which renews the sunset on the Federal Reimbursement Allowance (FRA), has passed out of the Senate. The FRA funds a large percentage of Missouri's Medicaid budget and Senator Hough has publicly stated this is necessary to craft a truly balanced budget.

In the spirit of compromise, the Senate dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon and late into the evening, debating [HB 2634](#), sponsored by Representative Cody Smith (R-Carthage) which prohibits public funds being expended to any abortion facility, or affiliate or associate thereof, including for MO HealthNet reimbursement. The Senate handler, Senator Mary Elizabeth Coleman (R-Arnold) offered a substitute which removed the emergency clause. Senator Tracy McCreery (D-St. Louis) offered an amendment which would exempt in vitro fertilization, which led to an 11-hour filibuster of the bill. Ultimately, the original substitute was withdrawn, and a new compromised substitute was offered, which restored the emergency clause. Once modified, the Senate passed the bill by a 23-10. The bill now will return back to the House for further consideration.

Now that [HB 2634](#) has passed through the Senate, many are hopeful that the FRA will not be blocked or amended to include the controversial planned parenthood language. Once the FRA has passed, the Senate is expected to begin crafting their version of the FY2024 budget. As there are only five weeks of session left, rumblings have already started that the budget may need to be completed during a special session as the Constitutional deadline of May 10<sup>th</sup> may not be achievable.

## **Anti-bullying Policies**

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday evening to debate [HB 1715](#), sponsored by Representative Tricia Byrnes (R-Wentzville). The bill requires DESE to develop a model policy to address bullying and school discipline. Additionally, the bill requires school districts to implement bullying-response and discipline protocols in a way which restricts punishment as a result of zero tolerance policies for victims of or defendants of victims of bullying and implements programs which educate students on strategies to overcome the negative effects of bullying, helps students develop social skills, cultivates a student's self-worth and self-esteem, and teaches the student assertive and effective self-defense. Finally, the bill requires school administrators to provide a monthly report on incidents of bullying and any resulting disciplinary referral or action and requires a governing body of a school district to establish criteria for the acknowledgement of students who deploy non-confrontational or non-physical steps to avoid or resolve conflict. During debate, the bill was successfully amended to require schools to address treatment for not only the bullied but also the bully and clarifies the immunity provisions. After considerable debate, the House provided the first of the two necessary provisions.

## **Beginning Farmer**

The House Agriculture Policy Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 2418](#), sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler). Currently, an individual owner of farmland who sells all or a portion of land to a "beginning farmer" is allowed a tax deduction from his or her gross income. The bill broadens the scope of who is allowed a tax deduction on gross income to now include

firms, partners, corporations, partnerships, shareholders in S Corps and members of an LLC. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 17-0 vote.

### **Blind Pensions**

The House Pensions Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2585](#), sponsored by Representative Yolanda Young (D-Kansas City). Currently, any notice sent to an applicant or recipient of Blind Pensions Funds must be sent by certified mail. This bill removes that requirement and allows notices to be sent by the US Postal Service. After brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2675](#), sponsored by Representative Yolanda Young (D-Kansas City). Currently, to remain eligible to receive a pension from the Blind Pension funds, a recipient must present certification of no usable vision to the Department of Social Services every five years. This bill changes the number of required years for a reexamination certificate to seven. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which made technical corrections and corrected a drafting error which deleted a current section of statute. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

### **Cannabinoids**

The House Committee on Crime Prevention convened Thursday morning 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, Representative Barry Hovis (R-Whitewater) offered a committee substitute to establish a framework and standards for hemp products to allow for testing, packaging, etc of hemp products and to allow for continued distribution, sets an age cap, and includes penalty provisions. Lastly, the substitute establishes fees and licensing and provides DHSS the authority to oversee and establish. Ultimately, Representative Hovis’ intent with the substitute is to allow businesses that are currently selling these products the ability to continue to keep selling. After considerable discussion, the committee failed to adopt the proposed committee substitute by a 7-16 vote and voted the bill out of committee with no changes by a 15-8 vote.

### **Civil Reform Omnibus**

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [HB 2064](#), sponsored by Representative John Black (R-Marshfield). The bill expands and adds mental health court to the list of treatment court divisions. The bill allows any circuit court to establish mental health courts in an effort to provide an alternative for the judicial system to dispose of cases that stem from a mental health disorder or co-occurring disorder. During previous committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to create an omnibus bill and include the amended version of [HB 1886](#), which modifies provisions relating to judicial proceedings. In addition, the bill also includes language that requires internet service providers to block access to obscene websites and requires users to confirm they are not minors. During debate, the sponsor offered an amendment which would have added provisions regarding Jaxx’s Law, age verification to access sexually explicit material online and provisions regarding qualified spousal trusts. Ultimately, the amendment’s provisions proved too controversial, and the sponsor withdrew the amendment. The House then provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

## **Clean Water Commission**

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1419](#), sponsored by Senator Doug Beck (D-St. Louis). The bill modifies the membership requirements of the Clean Water Commission. Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, MO Rural Crisis Center, Conservation Federation, MO River Bird Observatory, MO Coalition for the Environment, MO Municipal League, Conservation Federation, MO Sierra Club, an attorney, and several private citizens supported the bill and informed committee members that the bill restores accountability and highlighted that the way the current statute is drafted limits and narrows who could serve. No opposing testimony was presented.

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2853](#), sponsored by Representative Paula Brown (D-Hazelwood). The bill is the House companion bill to SB 1419, highlighted above. Committee discussion and testimony mirrored the Senate hearing.

## **Collaborative Practice Arrangements**

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1773](#), sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green). Currently, APRNs can be in collaborative practice arrangements with a collaborating physician if certain requirements, including geographic proximity, are maintained. The bill removes the geographic proximity requirement. Additionally, the bill allows APRNs, who are not certified registered nurse anesthetists, to not need collaborative practice arrangements when their license is in good standing, and they have had arrangements for a total of 2,000 documented hours. Finally, the bill expands the APRNs scope of practice to include prescribing of pharmacological and nonpharmacological therapies. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which increases the number of documented hours to the equivalent of collaboration with a physician for three years or from 2,000 to 6,000. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-1 vote.

## **Commercial Real Property**

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HJR 126](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). Currently, certain real and personal property are exempt from taxation. Any county that loses revenue as a result of these exemptions can replace such revenue by imposing a tax on commercial real property within the county's border. If a county chooses to impose such a tax, a majority of voters within the county may decrease the newly imposed tax on commercial real property. This resolution allows the governing body of a county to decrease the newly imposed tax on commercial real property. This bill also applies the provisions of Hancock to the newly imposed tax on commercial property. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated his intent with the legislation is to incentive commercial businesses to come to Missouri. The Show Me Institute supported the bill and informed committee members that in 1985 when this commercial surcharge went into the Constitution, the valuation of commercial property in Missouri was about \$28 billion. Today it's about \$135 billion, which is more than double inflation. No opposing testimony was presented.

## **County Official Salary Schedules**

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday to discuss [HB 2897](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Hinman (R-O'Fallon). The bill modifies the minimum base salary amounts for certain noncharter county officials. The bill sponsor stated the Missouri Association of Counties asked him to file the legislation and the purpose of it is to address wage increases for elected officials within

county governments. The bill sponsor also stated salaries for these positions have not been modified since 1997 and that the language does not impact charter counties. The Missouri Association of Counties, the Cape Girardeau County Auditor, the Missouri Counties Treasurers Association, and the Missouri Association of Public Administrators testified in support. A private citizen opposed the legislation.

### **Credit Union Examinations**

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider [HB 2886](#), sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler). The bill requires the Director of the Department of Commerce to assess how well a subject credit union meets the needs of its entire community, with the results presented in a confidential written report. The results must also be presented to the public in a written report. Additionally, the information must be presented for specified geographical areas and must have a rating that is one of four levels: outstanding; satisfactory; needs to improve; and substantial noncompliance. Finally, credit unions with "needs to improve" or "substantial noncompliance" ratings must submit a written corrective action plan. Missouri Bankers Association and the Missouri Independent Bankers Association provided supporting testimony. Infuse Credit Union, Riverways Credit Union, Arsenal Credit Union, and a state public advocate provided opposing testimony.

### **Cryptocurrency**

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HCR 60](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters). This resolution recognizes the emerging role of Bitcoin and encourages state retirement agencies to explore the potential of digital-asset ETF's. Satoshi Action Fund provided supporting testimony. Missouri State Employee Retirement System provided informational testimony regarding how bitcoin is relative to stocks and bonds. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Digital Mining**

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1050](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill creates new provisions relating to digital mining. Satoshi Action Fund, and the Build Asset Management supported the bill. The MO Sierra Club, and Consumers Council of MO opposed the bill.

### **Driver Education Program**

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1688](#), sponsored by Representative Rodger Reedy (R-Windsor). The bill will require the State Board of Education to create a driver education program for grades 10-12. It will cover things like safe driving habits, avoiding distractions, and what to do during a traffic stop. The bill will not prohibit schools from offering additional driver education courses. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

### **Drug Trafficking**

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [HB 2576](#), sponsored by Representative David Casteel (R-High Ridge). Currently, trafficking drugs in the first degree is a class B felony if the person knowingly distributes, delivers, manufactures, or produces, or attempts to distribute, deliver, manufacture, or produce more than 10 milligrams of fentanyl. The bill modifies the amounts of fentanyl

and the corresponding criminal penalty increases. After considerable debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

### **Early Childhood Education Program Funding**

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Tuesday morning to discuss [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. Aligned, the Missouri NEA, the Children's Trust Fund, the Economic Development Corporation of Greater Kansas City, Quality Schools Coalition, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kids Win, and Missouri Council of School Administrators provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Earnings Taxes**

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee convened on Thursday morning to discuss [SB 993](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). Current law authorizes the cities of St. Louis and Kansas City to levy an earnings tax on the income of residents and nonresidents performing work in the city, with a rate not to exceed 1%. For all tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2025, this act provides that the rate of tax imposed in St. Louis City may be reduced over a period of years. Each reduction shall be by 0.1% and shall only occur if the amount of annual revenue received, as defined in the act, in the previous fiscal year is greater than the amount of annual revenue received in the fiscal year immediately previous to such fiscal year by at least 3%. No supporting testimony was presented to the committee. The City of St Louis Policy Director provided opposing testimony stating this would have a negative fiscal impact on city services and public safety services.

### **Education Services (Special)**

The House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education convened on Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2696](#), sponsored by Representative Kathy Steinhoff (D-Columbia). Currently, children enrolled in a Kindergarten program within a public school district are tested for certain developmental delays or disabilities and assigned an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or enrolled in a therapy program with parental consent. The bill proposes to extend services for children enrolled in a preschool program, or who are above the age of 3, and are receiving services for a developmental or learning delay and have been categorized as "a young child with a developmental delay" through the child's first grade year or until they reach the age of 7. During discussion, a substitute was adopted which removes language defining the maximum services as through the first-grade level year, and instead simply defines the maximum service period as until the child reaches the age of 7. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 16-0 vote.

### **Education Stabilization Fund**

The House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1758](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Pollitt (R-Sedalia). The bill proposes to

establish an "education stabilization fund" within the state treasury subject to appropriation by the General Assembly. For any fiscal year revenue collections fall below the consensus calculation estimate on which the appropriation for public education is based, the Governor may transfer funds to the foundation formula. Additionally, the fund is restricted to a balance of no more than ten percent of the previous fiscal year appropriation to the formula. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 15-0 vote.

### **Election Reform**

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [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 a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

### **Electric Plant Closure**

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [HB 1753](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Pollitt (R-Sedalia). The bill creates provisions for the closure of electric power plants and allows multi-generation construction to be done outside of the state if it is connected to the grid in the regional transmission organization (RTO) of which the generation is a member. During debate, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to provide cleanup language, added a definition of "unexpected or unplanned event," requires adequate electric transmission lines be in place before closure and clarifies the process for third party negotiated settlements. Once modified, the House provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

### **Employment Law Local Ordinance Preemption**

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday evening to discuss [HB 2866](#), sponsored by Representative Sherri Gallick (R-Belton). This is the House companion bill to [SB 1066](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington) and prohibits local ordinance from regulating, enacting, or enforcing any employment law provisions which exceed current state law such as minimum wage, hours worked and employment considerations. The sponsor seeks to ensure small and large businesses may thrive without undue governmental interference and ensure businesses may fully rebound from the pandemic. Missouri Restaurant Association, American Hotel Lodging Association, Associated Industries of Missouri, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony stating this would provide clarity for local municipalities regarding their authority to regulate employment law and similar legislation has passed in other surrounding states. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Eviction Moratoriums**

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2062](#), sponsored by Representative Chris Brown (R-Kansas City). The bill prohibits any county, municipality, or political subdivision from imposing or enforcing a moratorium on eviction proceedings unless specifically authorized by state law. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

### **Family Trust Companies**

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1482](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill simply moves the regulatory authority of the Missouri Family Trust Company Act from the Secretary of State's office to the Missouri Division of Finance. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

### **Firearm Disposal**

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [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. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which exempts out firearms which have been determined by the court to have been used in a crime and clarifies the prices firearms may be sold is not only \$.01. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-5 vote.

### **First Degree Murder Trial Procedures**

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday evening to consider passage of [HB 2468](#), sponsored by Representative Bishop Davidson (R-Republic). Currently, in a criminal prosecution for murder in the first degree, the court must instruct the jury that, in the event it cannot reach a consensus on punishment, the court may assess punishment including death. The bill repeals that provision and instead the court must instruct the jury that, in the event a consensus on punishment cannot be reached, the default will be life imprisonment. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 11-3 vote.

### **First Responders**

The House Committee on Crime Prevention convened Thursday morning to discuss [HJR 134](#), sponsored by Representative Jamie Burger (R-Benton). Upon voter approval, the resolution proposes to amend the Constitution by adding the offense of assault against a first responder, which a person commits if he or she attempts to kill or knowingly causes or attempts to cause serious physical injury to a first responder. Additionally, the resolution also proposes to add to the Missouri Constitution provisions related to line of duty deaths for first responders a claim for compensation for a first responder killed in the line of duty must be filed by survivors of the deceased with the Division of Workers' Compensation no later than one year from the date of the first responder's death. The MO Ambulance District Association provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Geospatial Advisory Council**

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1039](#), sponsored by Senator Steven Roberts (D-St. Louis). The bill will establish the Missouri Geospatial Advisory Council within the Office of Administration. The group will assist and advise the state in ensuring availability, implementation, and enhancement of a statewide geospatial data infrastructure. Greater STL Inc., MOSERS and MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented supporting testimony stating that there is work that is underway in STL and this bill brings a tremendous opportunity to build on that work and this group would provide the means to pursue those opportunities.

## **Health Care Services Payments**

The House Insurance Policy Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1943](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Christ (R-St. Louis). The bill establishes “The Honest Billing Act” which requires a hospital’s off-campus outpatient facilities to apply for a national provider identifier (NPI) for the purposes of billing and allows health carrier services to refuse payment without this identifier. The sponsor stated his intent is to prevent hospital systems from acquiring private practices and charging additional hospital fees to patients. Americas Health Insurance Plans, Missouri Insurance Coalition and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield provided supporting testimony stating this practice at the federal level is costing millions to Medicaid and Medicare and numerous states have filed similar legislation. Missouri Hospital Association and Rayus Radiology provided opposing testimony stating this could have costly consequences for patients as the cost to acquire individual NPIs is time consuming and costs \$750 per application.

## **Healthcare Omnibus**

The House Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2824](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Stephens (R-Bolivar). Currently, it is illegal to sell, purchase, or dispense ephedrine, phenylpropanolamine, and pseudoephedrine (used to make methamphetamine) within a 30-day period in any total amount greater than 7.2 grams. This bill will change that number from 7.2 to 9 grams. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which added [HB 1723](#), sponsored by Representative Aaron Crossley (D-Independence), which is identical, to create one legislative vehicle. Additionally, several other provisions were added to create a healthcare omnibus. Specifically, the bill now includes:

- [HB 2458](#), which modifies provisions regarding ambulance district boards.
- [HB 1421](#), which modifies provisions regarding telehealth services.
- [HB 2824](#), which modifies the number of certain drugs that may be sold or dispensed to an individual in a 30-day period.
- [HB 2552](#), which establishes provisions relating to allergy prevention and responses in childcare facilities.
- [HB 1723](#), which creates provisions relating to dialectical behavior therapy.
- [HB 1733](#), which creates provisions relating to referrals to assisted living facilities; and,
- [HB 2525](#), which modifies provisions relating to the administration of medications in long-term care facilities.

Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

## **Healthcare Prior Authorization**

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [HB 1976](#), sponsored by Representative Melanie Stinnett (R-Springfield). The bill allows health providers that have achieved 90% prior authorization approval for healthcare services during a 6-month evaluation period, to not be required to submit prior authorization for the 6 months following that evaluation period. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

## **High School Athlete Compensation**

The House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education convened on Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2562](#), sponsored by Representative Kurtis Gregory (R-Marshall). The bill extends eligibility for a high school student athlete to earn compensation for the use of the Name, Image,

or Likeness, if they have signed a letter of intent with an accredited university or college and intend to participate in athletics sponsored by the signing institution. Additionally, the bill allows student athletes who attend public schools in the state to use their image or likeness as identified by the high school they attend for the purpose of negotiating compensation with a college or university. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which clarifies that coaches, athletic recruiting personnel, or university marketing professionals can interact with high school students who reside out of state in order to negotiate on behalf of state universities and defines specific examples of activities when a Missouri high school student can utilize a public university resource to promote their own Name-Image-Likeness for compensation. Additionally, the substitute adds language regarding liability and compensation for violation of NCAA protocols for NIL, either by the university or by the student. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-2 vote.

### **Higher Education Access**

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1569](#), sponsored by Representative Ann Kelley (R-Lamar). 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 in the House, 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 bill now 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, and ties the cap of the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant to the CPI. The Missouri NEA, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Council on Public Higher Education, Independent Colleges and Universities of Missouri, and Economic Development Corporation of Greater Kansas City provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Highway Patrol Salaries**

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2701](#), sponsored by Representative Ron Copeland (R-Salem). Currently, the salary schedule report prepared by the Superintendent of the State Highway Patrol must include a comparison of the three largest police departments in Missouri. The bill requires the report to also include a comparison of the salaries and benefits of police officers employed by the law enforcement agencies in surrounding states to ensure parity. Missouri State Troopers Association provided supporting testimony stating Missouri is slipping in the rankings versus the nine surrounding states in starting pay. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

## **Hydrant Inspections**

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 982](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). The bill repeals the annual testing requirement of hydrants and instead would allow for scheduled testing every five years. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

## **Insurance Licensure Education**

The House Insurance Policy Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2250](#), sponsored by Representative Michael Johnson (D-Kansas City). The bill seeks to establish a career and technical program for insurance licensure through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The sponsor is seeking to provide an additional career path for students without incurring college debt. Missouri Insurance Coalition and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

## **Judicial Proceedings Omnibus**

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [HB 1886](#), sponsored by Representative Rudy Veit (R-Wardsville). The bill, as originally filed, modifies numerous provisions regarding civil and judicial proceedings. Specifically, the bill includes the following:

- expands the circumstances under which an LLC may be dissolved.
- establishes an alternative dispute resolution process.
- changes the definitions of "adult" and "child" as they relate to actions under Chapter 455, RSMo.
- establishes the "Missouri Electronic Wills and Electronic Estate Planning Documents Act" which specifies that an electronic will is considered a will for all purposes of the law of this state and that any written estate planning document may be executed electronically.
- specifies that certain estate planning documents that were executed during the period between April 6, 2020, and December 31, 2021, during which a state of emergency existed due to COVID-19.
- establishes the "Uniform Interstate Depositions and Discovery Act" and the "Uniform Public Expression Protection Act".
- establishes procedures for such special motions to dismiss.
- and clarifies court staff duties during guardianship and conservatorship proceedings.

The provisions of this bill apply to the will of a decedent who dies on or after August 28, 2024, and to each other written estate planning document signed or remotely witnessed on or after August 28, 2024. Lastly, the bill includes provisions pertaining to juror fee, and qualified spousal trust language. After brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

## **LAGERS Board of Trustees**

The Senate dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to debate [SB 898](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Sullivan). The bill modifies the LAGERS board of trustees by replacing the employer trustee with a retiree trustee, expands the definition of employer trustee to allow for executive level trustees, removes the specific requirements for their annual meeting and election procedures and amends the quorum requirement to a simple majority. During floor debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to include [SB 1267](#), which modifies the definition of "earnable compensation" as used by the Police Retirement System of St. Louis and [SB 1286](#), which modifies provisions relating to limitations on working after retirement for members of the Public School Retirement System and the Public Education Employee Retirement System. Additionally, the substitute includes language to protect public retirement systems by the closure of records by an investment fiduciary. During debate, Senator Doug Beck (D-St. Louis) amended the bill to include [SB 877](#) which allows members of the Public School Retirement System of

Missouri who have 32 or more years of creditable service, regardless of age, to have their retirement allowance calculated using a multiplier of 2.6%. Once modified, the Senator provided its first of two necessary approval votes. The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 898](#). After no further debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 31-1 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

### **Land Bank**

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [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. Missouri Association of Realtors, Missouri Municipal League, St. Louis County, Municipal League Metro St. Louis, Restore SGF, City of Springfield and Empower Missouri provided supporting testimony stating this would allow for delinquent and derelict properties to be renovated and returned to local communities for productive use and possibly address the ongoing housing shortage in Missouri. Missouri County Collectors Association provided opposing testimony regarding the decision-making process for which land parcels would be in the land banks and having to place advertisements every thirty days is costly and burdensome.

### **Land Reclamation**

The House Economic Development Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2720](#), sponsored by Representative Lisa Thomas (R-Lake Ozark). Currently, excavations for the purposes of land improvement where excess minerals that cannot be used on-site are removed from the site and are not crushed, screened, or subjected to other means of beneficiation are not required to obtain a surface mining permit. This bill would allow the minerals to be subjected to beneficiation. The bill would also repeal the requirement that the site not be designated as a surface mine by the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated that Lake of the Ozark has a little bit of topsoil and then a lot of rock so they have an issue quite frequently due to current statute, which says you cannot take the rock that you're you are taking out of a site and resize that on site. Otherwise, you will require additional permits. The bill simply would allow additional work to be done on site to resize rock so that it doesn't have to be taken to another location and have that work done, which would also allow for less traffic and less damage to roads because things would be done all in one place and it also minimizes some federal overreach which would require additional permits should you do some of that work on site. The presiding commissioner of Camden County supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

### **Lottery Revenues to Veterans**

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HJR 74](#), sponsored by Senator Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City). Upon voter approval, the resolution changes the allocation of state revenues derived from the conduct of all gaming activities from solely for the public institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education to now 90% appropriated for the public institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education and 10% to the administration of the Missouri Veterans Commission. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated his intent with the

resolution is to provide a significant and sustained revenue source for the Missouri Veterans Commission. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

### **Maintenance Orders**

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday evening to consider passage of [HB 2851](#), sponsored by Representative Greg Sharpe (R-Ewin). The bill creates differing levels of spousal maintenance orders. Specifically, the bill creates “bridge” levels which are applicable to marriages of two years or less, “rehabilitative” levels which are applicable to marriages lasting at least 7 but no more than 17 years and “durational” levels which are applicable to marriages lasting at least 17 years. Additionally, the bill specifies the criteria the courts must follow when determining maintenance orders. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which removed duplicative language and removed the cohabitation language. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-7 vote.

### **Manufacturing Recruitment**

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [HB 1480](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Christ (R-St. Louis). The bill establishes a tax credit for up to 20% of a capital investment in property made by a qualified manufacturing company for up to five years. The capital investment must equal at least \$1 billion and create 500 or more jobs in Missouri. The total amount of tax credits issued annually may not exceed \$200 million. Additionally, the language includes a 10-year sunset, clarifies that the employment is based on full time workers, and bases the tax year to fiscal year instead of calendar year. During debate, the bill was successfully amended to require preference be given to Missouri citizens for the first 150 jobs created and U.S. companies which relocate back from foreign adversarial countries, including China. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

### **Marriage and Divorce Proceedings**

The Senate dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [SB 767](#), sponsored by Senator Holly Thompson Rehder (R-Sikeston). Currently, no marriage license shall be issued in Missouri for individuals under 16 years of age or issued when one party to the marriage is under 18 years of age and the other party over 21 years of age. Additionally, no marriage license shall be issued if any party to the marriage is under 18 years of age without parental consent. The bill repeals those provisions, and no marriage license shall be issued in Missouri for individuals under 18 years of age. During debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to include [SB 864](#), which modifies provisions relating to costs and fees in a divorce proceeding. Senator Rick Brattin (R-Belton) then amended the bill to require a court order for custody to include a provision that custody orders shall be enforceable by sheriffs. Senator Lauren Arthur (D-Kansas City) also amended the bill to include [SB 744](#), which modify the factors taken into consideration when awarding custody to parents. Once modified the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes. The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [SB 767](#). After no further debate the Senate passed the bill by a 31-1 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further debate.

### **Maternal Health Care Education**

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2654](#), sponsored by Representative LaKeySha Bosley (D-St. Louis). The bill requires insurance coverage for childbirth education classes. Additionally, the bill establishes the “Doula Reimbursement Act” which allows doulas to be reimbursed under MO HealthNet and from health benefit plans. Finally, the bill

establishes the services the services they may provide and specify they are not allowed to engage in the practice of medicine. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which more narrowly defined the services doulas may provide and the reimbursement process from health benefit plans. Additionally, the substitute bars doulas from encouraging patients to have or participate in abortion procedures outside of licensed medical advice. Once modified, the committee failed to pass the bill by a 6-7 vote.

### **Media Literacy, Critical Thinking & Appropriate Online Behavior**

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1311](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Greene), which requires DESE to develop a two-year "media literacy and critical thinking" pilot program in five to seven school districts across the state beginning in the 2025-26 school year with the purpose of promoting student's ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and participate in all forms of media with an emphasis on appropriate online behavior. The St. Louis Holocaust Museum and Learning Center provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Medical Records**

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2221](#), sponsored by Representative Marlon Anderson (D-St Louis). This bill prohibits health care providers from charging a fee for medical records for use in supporting an application for Workers' Compensation, Veterans, or Disability benefits. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Military Medal Program**

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Pensions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1496](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City). The bill establishes the Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel and Operation Allies Refuge Program. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

### **Military Personnel Tuition**

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1832](#), sponsored by Representative Aaron McMullen (R-Independence). The bill clarifies that certain military service personnel, their spouses, and their unemancipated children under 24, Missouri National Guard members, and any individuals serving in the reserves, be considered Missouri residents for the purposes of any undergraduate or graduate degree program in Missouri institutions of higher education. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Missouri Homeowners Association Act**

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday to discuss [HB 2270](#), sponsored by Representative Philip Oehlerking (R-Ballwin). The bill establishes the "Missouri Homeowners Association Act". During bill presentation, the bill sponsor stated the intent of the bill is to streamline statutes and create a standardization relating to the over 500 homeowners' associations in the state. A community manager, several Missouri homeowners, and St. Charles Century Management testified in support. The St. Louis Home Builders Association, homeowner advocates, the Missouri Bankers Association, the Missouri Independent Bankers Association, and the American Resort Development Association testified in opposition.

### **MO HealthNet Benefit Eligibility**

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2875](#), sponsored by Representative Chantelle Nickson-Clark (D-Florissant). The bill allows those who have received breast or cervical cancer screenings from private insurance coverage, and otherwise qualify for MO HealthNet benefits, would be extended coverage for treatment under Show-Me Healthy Women coverage within MO HealthNet. American Cancer Society, Cancer Action Network, Susan G. Komen Foundation, Reyes Radiology, Gateway to Hope and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony stating this could ensure seamless treatment for men and women. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **MO Works Program Modification**

The House Economic Development Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2479](#), sponsored by Representative Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal). This is the House companion bill to [SB 1301](#), sponsored by Senator Jason Bean (R-Holcomb). The bill seeks to improve the MO Works Program by making changes to the MO Department of Economic Development to provide the Department more flexibility to attract more businesses to the State. Specifically, the bill removes expiration dates, combines the advanced industrial manufacturing (AIM) zone and the targeted industrial manufacturing enhancement (TIME) zone tax incentives with the MO Works Program, and clarifies the total authorized tax credit cannot exceed \$181 million. The Division of Regional Engagement for the Department of Economic Development provided supporting testimony stating this ensures the MO Works program remains competitive with peer states in the current business climate. Additional supporting testimony was provided by Associated Industries of Missouri, Port KC, Greater St. Louis Inc., Missouri Economic Development Council, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Jefferson City Regional Economic Partnership. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Incentive Program**

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1304](#), sponsored by Senator Nick Schroer (R-O'Fallon). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2453](#), sponsored by Representative Rick Francis (R-Perryville) and modifies provisions relating to motor vehicle financial responsibility. Specifically, last year [SB 398](#) was signed into law which created the Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Enforcement and Compliance Incentive Program within the MO Department of Revenue. The Department is required to create, implement, and make accessible by January 2025 a program to compare vehicle registration information with the financial responsibility information and the original intent was to reduce the number of uninsured drivers. Due to Department backlog and conflicts, the sponsors' intent with the legislation is to remove the January 2025 effective date to allow time for the MO Department of Revenue to update their systems and equipment. Additionally, the bill seeks to remove the 4-point license penalty provisions that was passed in the original bill and includes a sunset on the annual report that is to be completed by the Department on the program. Lastly, the bill seeks to repeal the advisory council that was created, after one year of the program's implementation. The MO Insurance Coalition supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented. The MO Department of Revenue provided informational testimony and provided a brief update regarding the Departments implementation of program.

### **Motor Vehicle Inspections - Dealership**

The House Special Committee on Government Accountability convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2317](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Knight (R-Lebanon). The bill would exempt established dealerships from having to do a prior sell inspection on vehicles that are less than three years old, with less than 40,000 miles. During discussion, substitute language was adopted to reduce to less than 36,000 miles, since that is the minimum warranty coverage provided on a vehicle. Additionally, the committee substitute would allow an established dealership to do their own odometer reading and VIN inspections. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 15-0 vote.

### **Natural Gas Safety Standard Mandates**

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1470](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Cierpiot (R-Lee's Summit). The bill repeals certain provisions relating to maximum penalties for violations of federally mandated natural gas safety standards and provides that the maximum penalties shall not exceed an amount as determined by the Secretary of Transportation of the United States. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 9-0 vote.

### **Natural Resources Revenue Distribution**

The House Special Committee on Government Accountability convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HJR 97](#) and [HB 2272](#), both sponsored by Representative Ron Copeland (R-Salem). [HJR 97](#), Upon voter approval, would require any state department that receives a profit from its management of the state's natural resources to remit a portion of the profit to the county in which the resources are located. [HB 2272](#) is the enabling language that allows state departments that manage the state's natural resources may keep 25% but must distribute the remaining 75% as follows: 50% to be distributed to the county where the resource is located and 25% to be distributed to the school district where the resource is located. The sponsor informed the committee he is open to any changes regarding the distribution process but wants to ensure the local areas benefit from any resource management. County Commission Association, Wright County Commission, Douglas County, Skyline R-2 School District, Texas County Commission, Missouri School Board Association, Shannon County, Missouri Farm Bureau provided supporting testimony stating this allows funding to be directed to local municipalities and school districts who are the most affected by resource management. Conservation Federation of Missouri and a state public advocate provided opposing testimony. Missouri Department of Conservation provided informational testimony regarding the fiscal impacts of the legislation and a basic overview of resource management.

### **Nonopioid Pamphlets**

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2182](#), sponsored by Representative Melanie Stinnett (R-Springfield). The bill requires the Department of Health and Senior Services to develop and publish an educational pamphlet regarding the use of nonopioid alternatives for pain management, including pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments, as well as the associated advantages and disadvantages. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which allows the educational pamphlet to be distributed electronically. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-3 vote.

## **Open Enrollment and Nonresident Transfers**

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1989](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Pollitt (R-Sedalia). The bill allows nonresident pupils to enroll in public school and public charter schools in the state with certain conditions and outlines the procedures and policies necessary to allow students to transfer between nonresident school districts and creates an online portal that would track the number of students who have applied to enroll in accepting districts. Specifically, the legislation would allow students to leave their resident school district to enroll in adjoining districts that opt into the open enrollment program, for a total of up to 3% of the district's student population in the previous year. Transportation would be parents' responsibility, unless the child qualifies for free or reduced lunch or has transportation under an individualized education plan. The bill also establishes a fund to pay for the costs associated with transporting students with specialized needs. Finally, the bill allows any student to participate in open enrollment as long as the transfer does not cause the district to conflict with a provision of an enforceable desegregation court ordered a court approved desegregation plan. Aligned, The American Federation for Children, Quality Schools Coalition, Missouri Century Foundation, and YES! Every Kid provided supporting testimony. The Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City, Equity Education Partnership Action, Missouri NEA, Missouri Council of School Administrators, and Missouri State Teachers Association provided opposing testimony. No supporting testimony was presented to the committee.

## **Paramedic Services (Community)**

The Senate Government Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 1382](#), sponsored by Senator Barbara Washington (D-Kansas City). This is the senate companion to [HB 2627](#), sponsored by Representative Bennie Cook (R-Houston), which requires community paramedic services seeking to serve outside their originating boundaries to have memorandums of understanding with existing emergency service providers to ensure the proper coordination of care. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which added [SB 1340](#), which is identical and [SB 1277](#), which modifies the State Advisory Council on Emergency Medical Services. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

## **Patients First Act**

The House Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2733](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Smith (R-Dora). The bill's purpose is to prohibit discrimination by group health plans and insurance issuers against healthcare providers based on their licensure. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which allows a group health plan or health insurance issuer from establishing varying reimbursement rates based on quality or performance measures and based on skill or licensure. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-3 vote.

## **Prescription Drug Coverage**

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday evening to debate [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. Additionally, the bill defines "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. After little debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

### **Professional License Suspension**

The House Professional Registration Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2699](#), sponsored by Representative Melanie Stinnett (R-Springfield). Currently, if someone who is professionally licensed by the Division of Professional Registration and is delinquent on their taxes, may have their license suspended. The bill repeals this provision. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 9-0 vote.

### **Prosthetic and Orthotic Referrals**

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2115](#), sponsored by Representative Cheri Toalson Reisch (R-Hallsville). The bill allows certified orthotists and prosthetists to see and treat patients without a physician referral. Additionally, the bill requires health insurance providers to meet certain deadlines regarding prior authorizations and reimbursement requests. Ozarks Prosthetics and Orthotics of Mid-Missouri and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony stating reimbursement increases have not occurred in over a decade and the waiting times for referrals can be lengthy. Americas Health Insurance Plans, MO Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, Missouri Insurance Coalition and Missouri State Medical Association provided opposing testimony stating those who need prosthetic devices should always consult with physicians first to ensure the correct prosthetics are crafted and given to patients.

### **Public Employee Retirement Systems**

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Pensions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [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 House 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. Additionally, the bill exempts monies received from judgements and civil actions for emergency responders if the payout received is for a higher rank. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to mirror [SB 898](#), which modifies the LAGERS board of trustees by replacing the employer trustee with a retiree trustee, expands the definition of employer trustee to allow for executive level trustees, removes the specific requirements for their annual meeting and election procedures and amends the quorum requirement to a simple majority. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

### **Public Safety Omnibus**

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 1659](#), sponsored by Representative Lane Roberts (R-Joplin). This bill includes 22 various provisions regarding increasing public safety. Specifically, the bill seeks to modify provisions relating to juvenile offenders, bench warrants for nonmoving traffic violations, wrongful conviction, persistent offenders, armed criminal action, cyberstalking and harassment task force, endangering the welfare of a child, unlawful discharge of a firearm, unlawful possession of a firearm, law enforcement animals, drug trafficking, critical incident stress management program, civilian oversight divisions and the office of the public defender. United States Police K-9 Association, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Missouri Fraternal Order of Police, Missouri Office of Prosecution Services, Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, Missouri State Troopers Association, City of Kansas City, Civic Council of Kansas City, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Social Workers-St. Louis County and Missouri Juvenile Justice Association provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **Redevelopment Authority Land Clearance**

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1466](#), sponsored by Senator Nick Schroer (R-O'Fallon). The bill mandates that in cases where a land clearance for redevelopment authority exercises eminent domain to acquire qualified properties, the authority must compensate the mortgage broker or the mortgage holder for any shortfall between the mortgage amount and the final adjudicated award for the property. During bill presentation, it was stated the bill is still a work in progress and the sponsor is currently working with interested parties to draft proposed changes. No supporting testimony was presented. An attorney with Carmody MacDonald, the St. Louis Development Corporation, Land Clearance Redevelopment Authority in the City of St. Louis, JVL, St. Louis Place Community Association, St. Louis Place, Legal Services of Eastern MO, along with several private citizens opposed the bill and stated the bill would negatively impact areas that need the most help.

### **Rental Property Local Government Ordinances**

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [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 the bill's progression, language was added 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. Missouri Association of Realtors, Lewis Rice Law Firm who is representing an ad hoc group of landlords in Kansas City, Landlords Inc.-Kansas City, Missouri Apartment Association, St. Louis Apartment Association provided supporting testimony stating local governments should not be mandating who landlords should be renting their properties and instead should focus on creating incentive programs for landlords. Kansas City Councilman John Duncan provided opposing testimony and explained the process and the ordinance which was recently adopted in Kansas City. Additional opposing testimony was presented by Empower Missouri, Health Forward Foundation and The Veterans Community Project.

### **Rural Access to Capital**

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [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. Advantage Capital, Southerland Capital and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided supporting testimony stating generating investments in rural areas can be difficult. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

### **SALT Parity Clean-up**

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee met Thursday to discuss [HB 1912](#), sponsored by Representative Mike McGirl (R-Potosi). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1250](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester) 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. The MO Society of CPAs, and the MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

### **Sheriff’s Retirement Fix**

The House Pensions Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SJR 71](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Sullivan). This is the Senate companion bill to [HJR 92](#), sponsored by Representative Barry Hovis (R-Whitewater) and this constitutional amendment, upon voter approval, authorizes the levying of costs and/or fees to support salaries and benefits for law enforcement personnel, including sheriffs and former sheriffs, prosecuting attorneys and former prosecuting attorneys, and circuit attorneys and former circuit attorneys. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

### **Shutdown Orders**

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday evening to debate [HB 2874](#), sponsored by Representative Brian Seitz (R-Branson). The bill establishes the “Protecting Missouri’s Small Businesses Act.” Specifically, the bill defines “shutdown order,” and requires political subdivision which implement a shutdown order that closes businesses at least 21 days must waive business license fees and reduce real and property tax liabilities. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

### **Solid Waste Permits**

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday to discuss [HB 2801](#) sponsored by Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill). The bill places a moratorium on landfill permits until an updated version of the Missouri solid waste management plan is developed. The legislation says that once a detailed site investigation has been approved, the permit process will be held in advance until the Department of Natural Resources develops and publishes a comprehensive solid waste management plan in cooperation with stakeholders, local and state governments, and planning commissions. The bill sponsor stated that this bill is not directly related to the proposed landfill site in south Kansas City. During committee discussion, committee members express concerns with potential litigation at the local and county level. The City of Raymore, and community advocates testified in support of the legislation.

The Pettis County Presiding Commissioner, the National Waste and Recycling Association testified in opposition and expressed concerns with how the language would impact political subdivisions currently engaging with landfill developers and the current flow of waste in the state of Missouri. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources testified for informational purposes and highlighted its 3-year work plan to address updating permitting in the state.

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1751](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill). The bill also 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 no committee discussion, the bill was passed by a 5-0 vote.

### **St. Louis City Firefighter Retirement Systems**

The House Pensions Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1980](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Hinman (R-O'Fallon). This bill relates to the administration of the two firefighter retirement systems serving firefighters in the City of St. Louis and would permit the two systems – the Firemen's Retirement System (FRS) and the Firefighters' Retirement Plan (FRP) – to be administered together, with the same Board of Trustees serving and investing the funds of both systems. After a lengthy discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

### **State Auditor Powers**

The Senate Government Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

### **State Departments Purchasing**

The House Special Committee on Government Accountability convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2803](#), sponsored by Representative Ed Lewis (R-Moberly). The bill allows, with consultation with the Office of Administration, to develop policies which would allow the Department of Social Services and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to purchase services directly from private and public vendors in the State using appropriated funds, covering various services for individuals affected by mental disorders, disabilities, or substance abuse. Feeding Missouri provided informational testimony stating the language regarding “pass through organizations” needs to be narrowed. After brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-5 vote.

### **Stored Property**

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 938](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill modifies the requirements of notice for sale by an operator of a self-service storage facility for the sale of personal property of an occupant in default. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

### **Tax (Income) – Private Pensions**

The House dedicated floor time Thursday to debate [HB 2657](#), sponsored by Representative Mike McGirl (R-Potosi). The bill increases an individual's income tax adjustments related to private pensions by increasing from \$32,000 to \$64,000 for married filing combined, \$25,000 to \$50,000 for single, and \$16,000 to \$32,600 for married filing single. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

### **Tax Credit – Jury Duty**

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2776](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Schulte (R-New Bloomfield). The bill allows employers to claim up to 100% of wages paid to an employee, while that employee serves jury duty, minus any amount of compensation remitted to the employer. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-1 vote.

### **Tax Credit – Senior Citizen Property**

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [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](#). Finally, the bill clarifies that new construction and property improvements shall be increased to reflect the real property tax liability and clarifies property tax liability shall be increased in the event a homestead is annexed into a taxing jurisdiction. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted which makes a senior citizen not eligible to apply for this credit if they are currently delinquent in their taxes and included an emergency clause. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 17-6 vote.

### **Tax Elimination (Income)**

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform convened Tuesday to consider passage of [HB 2919](#), sponsored by Representative Bishop Davidson (R-Republic). The bill seeks to eliminate the personal income tax incrementally and as the personal income tax is decreased, sales taxes are increased. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to provide clarifying language by stating the spending cap is 1.5% as opposed to being ambiguously stated, provides that any surplus amount north of \$5 million would be deposited into the tax reform fund, and removes the \$500 million cap on the tax reform fund. Additionally, the committee substitute increases the tax brackets, instead of decreasing by removing the flat tax rate and clarifying that it applies for anything over \$9000. Lastly, the committee substitute eliminates the sales tax language. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-3 vote.

The committee then turned its attention towards [HJR 188](#), sponsored by Representative Bishop Davidson. The resolution is the corresponding resolution to implement [HB 2919](#), highlighted above and upon voter approval, the resolution seeks to impose an appropriation spending limitation and to establish the "Tax Reform Fund" to be used to fund budgetary shortfalls, subject to an appropriation limitation, and allows for certain taxation changes based on revenue triggers. During committee discussion, a

committee substitute was adopted to align the language with the changes adopted above. Once modified, the committee passed the resolution by a 7-3 vote.

### **Tax Exemption – Military**

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Pensions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

### **Tax Exemption – Nuclear Construction**

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [HB 2710](#), sponsored by Representatives Chris Brown (R-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. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

### **Tax Reporting and Appeals**

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2553](#), sponsored by Representative Philip Oehlerking (R-Ballwin). Currently, the State Tax Commission is required to submit an annual report containing a complete account of the Commission’s work, proceedings, and decisions. The bill requires that the report also include information on all real property from each county that is totally or partially exempt from ad valorem taxes. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to include [HB 2445](#), which 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. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 20-0 vote.

### **Taxation**

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee convened on Thursday morning to discuss [SJR 53](#), sponsored by Senator Bill Eigel (R-St Charles). This constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, prohibits total state general revenue appropriations for any fiscal year, as defined in the amendment, from exceeding the level from the previous fiscal year, allowing for growth in an amount equal to the annual rate of inflation plus the annual percentage change in state population. No supporting testimony was presented. The Missouri NEA provided opposing testimony stating fluctuations in the economy directly impact revenues and would negatively impact schools.

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee met Thursday to discuss [SB 1496](#), sponsored by Senator Nick Schroer (R-O’Fallon). The bill modifies several provisions relating to taxation. Specifically, the bill requires the State to provide a payment of \$1,500 to any eligible taxpayer that timely files their tax returns. Additionally, the bill prohibits any tax from being imposed on Missouri taxable income. Lastly, the bill increases the state sales tax rate from 4% to 9% and increases the food tax from 1% to 6%. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

### **Tourism Supplemental Revenue Fund**

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [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 a brief debate, the House passed the bill Consent by a 128-16 vote.

### **Trespass in the First Degree**

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2896](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Amato (R-Arnold). The bill adds when a person knowingly or intentionally enters and refuses to leave the vacant real property or vacant structure of another after having been prohibited from entering or refuses to leave after having been asked to leave the real property by a law enforcement officer to the offense of trespass in the First Degree, which is a class E felony. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which added protections for law enforcement officers by requiring ex parte court orders and adds protections for renters if documentation can be produced proving residency. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

### **Uniform Unlawful Restriction on Land Records Act**

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday evening to consider passage of [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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 14-1 vote.

### **Veterans**

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2883](#), sponsored by Representative Robert Sauls (D-Independence). The bill allows the Veterans Commission to contract with public or private institutions of higher education in this state, or public or private clinics or hospitals, to furnish alternative treatment options for veterans who have been certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, any branch of the United States Armed Forces, or any state-licensed physician as having a traumatic brain injury (TBI) or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Paralyzed Veterans Association, and several attorneys provided supporting testimony. Association of Health Information Outsourcing, BJC Systems, Missouri State Medical Association, and a state public advocate provided opposing testimony.

### **Virtual School Program**

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee convened on Thursday morning to consider passage of [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 course programs for parents and specify a payment schedule for resident districts when calculating attendance of virtual students. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

## **Water Exportation**

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [HB 2153](#), sponsored by Representative Jamie Burger (R-Benton). The bill seeks to limit or ideally eliminate shipping water out of the State of Missouri. Additionally, the bill requires the Clean Water Commission to provide oversight of all applications of water exportation rather than the General Assembly and grandfathers in any current contracts of water exportation. During debate, the sponsor amended the bill to narrow the geographic area water can be shipped for up to 20 miles of the state border via pipelines. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

## **Upcoming Hearings of Interest**

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

*Senate:* <https://www.senate.mo.gov/hearingschedule/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**

- 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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