

CAPITOL REPORT – WEEK 15

APRIL 18, 2024

Weekly Overview: The usual game of legislative chicken began in earnest this week. The game features a standoff between the House and Senate to see which chamber can make the other pass its priority bills. The game began over [HB 2634](#) which the Senate sent to the House for final approval last Wednesday. The bill, which would ban any state moneys from going to Planned Parenthood, was passed by the Senate last week after a 12-hour filibuster by Senate Democrats. The passage of [HB 2634](#) is supposed to appease the Senate Freedom Caucus and ease the passage of the renewal of the federal reimbursement allowance (FRA), a self-tax on hospitals and nursing homes that draws down additional federal money to the tune of \$4 billion. Funding of the state's budget is not possible without the reauthorization of the tax. Senate Budget Chair, Lincoln Hough has said that he will not bring up the budget for debate until the FRA bill has passed the Senate.

The demand of Senate Leadership was for the House to approve the Senate changes and send the bill to Gov. Parson for his approval. Monday of this week, House leadership made it clear that they would pass [HB 2634](#) on their own timeline and not one dictated by the Senate. This statement was not well received and resulted in the Senate not doing anything on Monday and Tuesday and the House, in turn, did very little floor activity.

House leadership, in the meantime had been focused on mustering enough votes to pass [SB 727](#), the omnibus education bill sent to the House earlier this month. As of Wednesday they still could not secure the 82 votes needed to pass the measure. The bill includes provisions that would 1) increase beginning pay for teachers from \$25,000 to \$40,000; 2) boost to state aid to public schools who have a five-day work week; 3) make a major alteration to the school district foundation formula by using a metric of weighted enrollment to determine the "weighted average daily attendance"; 4) make changes to the MOScholars Program that requires the State Treasurer to post certain information on-line; 5) increase in the cap on tax credits that fund Educational Assistance Organizations from \$50 million to \$75 million per year; 6) make available Empowerment Scholarship Accounts to students statewide; 7) increase funding to provide voluntary Pre-K to students who qualify for free and reduced lunches; 8) allow public charter schools in Columbia, 9) allow for differentiated placement of teachers on the salary schedule to increase compensation in order to recruit and retain teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas or schools, as the terms "hard-to-staff schools" and "hard-to-staff subject areas, and 10) changes the name of the "Urban Flight and Rural Needs Scholarship Program" to the "Teacher Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program" and makes substantive changes to provisions in the scholarship program.

On Wednesday, the Senate took up for debate [HB 2287](#) a bill making changes to the virtual schools program. The Senate added several provisions to the bill hoping to make it more

palatable for the House to pass both [HB 2287](#) and [SB 727](#). Additionally, the Senate took up and passed [HB 1751](#), a bill that addresses future solid waste disposal area permits. Passage of this bill finally resolves a two-year fight regarding a proposed landfill in Cass and Jackson Counties. The bill was able to pass because the City of Raymore was able to buy the land on which the proposed landfill was to be developed.

Thursday morning the House Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed both [SB 727](#) and [HB 2287](#); sending them to Governor Parson for his approval. The passage of these two pieces of legislation were major victories for the education reform proponents. Notably, the House did not take final action on the bill defunding Planned Parenthood leaving us all wondering if the Senate will or won't take up the FRA bill next week. The budget is due on the Governor's desk by Friday, May 10th and the Senate has yet to hear any budget bills in committee. There are four weeks remaining in the session.

In the news...

- *Missouri Independent* reports that three initiative petition drives are on track to collect adequate signatures to be placed on the ballot. The measures would legalize abortion, legalize sports wagering and raise the minimum wage. The newspaper reports that approximately \$10 million has been raised for passage of the three initiative petition campaigns, two of which (sports wagering and abortion) are constitutional amendments and one (minimum wage) is a statutory change. Proponents of the abortion amendment have raised about \$5 million.
- Legislation that would shield Bayer from lawsuits over the Roundup herbicide received first round approval by the House this week. The debate, both pro and con, was bipartisan in nature. Bayer inherited the Roundup headache when it purchased Monsanto in 2018. The final vote on the bill by the House is expected next week.
- Rep. Hannah Kelly (R-Mountain Grove), Chair of the House Ethics Committee, took aim at Speaker Dean Plocher in a Facebook post this week. She said that “The confidentiality of the committee was compromised as the Speaker was aware of events in our closed hearings almost immediately, and when he became concerned by the potential content of the report he turned to his proxies to attack me in the “press” and via social media in an attempt to impugn my reputation.” Kelly also said “Unfortunately, because of the efforts by the Speaker to threaten witnesses, block our investigation, and prevent this process from reaching its natural conclusion, there is nothing more that can be done.” The committee released a report, which was rejected by the committee by a 6-2 vote which had recommended a formal letter of disapproval for Plocher, that he hire an accounting expert to handle his expense reports and he refrain from retaliation against anyone who participated in the investigation.

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Budget Update

This week, the Senate dedicated floor time to debate [HB 2016](#), sponsored by Representative Cody Smith (R-Carthage), and co-sponsored by Senator Lincoln Hough (R-Springfield). This is the Emergency Supplemental bill for \$2.2 million to allow for funding the Governor's Executive Order to send Missouri National Guard members and Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers to Texas. After about an hour of debate, the Senate Third Read and Passed the bill by a 30-2 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Governor for final approval. This is the first bill sent to the Governor this session.

Senate Appropriations Chairman Lincoln Hough (R-Springfield) announced the timeline for the Senate to begin the review of the House's proposed FY2025 budget. The Appropriations Committee is expected to convene by next Tuesday to begin the "mark-up" process. This process entails either agreeing with the House position, which eliminates the item for conference, agreeing with the Governor's position, or creating a Senate position, which immediately designates that item for conference. If the process is not completed Tuesday, the committee will convene again on Wednesday. Once the committee mark-up process is complete, it is Chairman Hough's intention to bring the budget bills before the full Senate for debate the following week. This will leave one week before the constitutional deadline for both chambers to negotiate any differences.

Alcohol Purchases

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [HB 2599](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Farnan (R-Stanberry). Currently, an individual that wants to purchase alcohol must present a form of identification (driver's license, military ID, passport, etc.). This bill allows alcohol suppliers to use an optional electronic scanner that verifies the age of the purchaser. Enrollment for this program would require the user to upload their ID for verification. Additionally, the bill requires a vendor to accept other forms of identification and payment. After a lengthy debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Anti-bullying Policies

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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 previous 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 a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 115-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Broadband Internet Expansion Grants

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2142](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). Currently, a taxpayer may deduct from state income tax 100% of any federal grant money received for the purpose of providing or expanding access to broadband internet to areas of the state that lack access. This bill expands the deduction to include state or local grant money and limits the deduction only to money dispersed for this express purpose. Missouri Broadband Providers, Brightspeed, Missouri Electric Co-ops and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Business Development

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 894](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Fulton). The bill establishes provisions relating to the promotion of business development. Specifically, the bill creates the Regulatory Sandbox Act which provides small businesses creating innovative products in all industries a way to waive or suspend certain regulations for two years by applying to the Regulatory Relief Office created within the Department of Economic Development. The bill also eliminates the Small Business Fairness Board because they have not had a quorum or the capability to meet over the past ten years. Additionally, the bill includes the Right-to-Start Act, which requires the Commissioner of Administration, in conjunction with the Office of Entrepreneurship, which is established by the act, to file a report with the General Assembly making recommendations on improving access and resources for new Missouri businesses that have been in operation for less than three years and also creates the Office of Entrepreneurship to promote policies and initiatives to support growth in Missouri. Cicero Action, Opportunity Solutions Project, NFIB, Kansas City Tech Council and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided supporting testimony. A state public advocate provided opposing testimony.

Candidate Filing Dates

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1604](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Hinman (R-O'Fallon). Currently, the filing period for candidates, unless otherwise specified, is from the 17th Tuesday prior to the election through the 14th Tuesday prior to the election. The bill moves the filing period by one week, from the 16th Tuesday to the 13th Tuesday prior to the election. The bill also provides that if the 13th Tuesday is a holiday, the next day will be the last day of filing. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Career and Educational Experience Externships

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday morning to debate [HB 1945](#), sponsored by Representative Brenda Shields (R-St. Joseph). The bill removes a sunset on the educator career and educational experience externship program to allow the Department of Economic Development, Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to jointly operate a voluntary vocational, career and technical externship program for professional educators to experience, participate in, and gain knowledge of the available career pathways, educational requirements, and emerging fields of study available to high school students entering college or the workforce in Missouri. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill Consent by a 150-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Child Protection

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2227](#), sponsored by Representative Hannah Kelly (R-Mountain Grove). This bill requires the Children's Division to place into trust any benefits administered by the Railroad Retirement Board, the Social Security Administration, or the Veterans Administration and to assist children in state custody with applying for and receiving such benefits within 60 days after placement into custody. Additionally, the bill includes [HB 1835](#) which requires the Children's Division to attempt to place foster children within a home of the same faith and [HB 1904](#) which modifies the abuse and neglect statutes to clearly define independent activities do not constitute abuse. Foster Adopt Connect, Kids Win Missouri, Foster Care Adoption Coalition and the Center for Rights of Abused Children provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Childcare Facility Licenses

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1111](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). The bill creates a prescribed pediatric extended care facility license issued by the Department of Health and Senior Services. During the bill's progression, the bill was amended to include [SB 899](#), which modifies provisions relating to childcare provider licensing requirements for certain providers and include language that clarifies and limits the MO Department of Social Services authority when inspecting the conditions of places; and [SB 811](#), relating to the temporary childcare provider licenses. The Department of Health and Senior Services, The Special Learning Center, Missouri After School Network, Eldon School District, Kids Win Missouri, Ranken Jordan Hospital, Missouri Alliance of YMCAs, BJC Healthcare, and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony stating special needs care is expensive and is needed to provide consistent care for both children and parents. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Civil Reform Omnibus

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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. Language was added which created 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 previous debate, the sponsor offered an amendment which would have added provisions regarding Jaxx's Law, age verification to access sexually explicit material online and add provisions regarding qualified spousal trusts. Ultimately, the amendment's provisions proved too controversial, and the sponsor withdrew the amendment. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 146-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Commercial Transactions

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [HB 2780](#), sponsored by Representative Justin Hicks (R-Lake St. Louis). The bill makes several updates and modifications to commercial statutes. Specifically, the bill prohibits public entities from accepting payments using any central bank digital currency, modifies definitions for central bank digital currency and updates the Uniform

Commercial Code. Additionally, the bill makes hybrid transactions subject to the Uniform Commercial Code and defines hybrid transactions. Finally, the bill modifies when and how a person has control of electronic document of title, modifies when a purchaser has control of security entitlements and modifies definitions of secured transactions. During previous debate, the bill was successfully amended to include [HB 1478](#), which establishes the Money Transmission Modernization Act of 2024; and [HB 1948](#), which modifies the requirements of notice for sale by an operator of a self-service storage facility and includes a provision that allows an increase of self-storage insurance from \$5,000 to \$15,000. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 96-27 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Community College Transferable Credit

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [HB 2310](#), sponsored by Representative Cameron Parker (R-Campbell). This bill increases from 42 to 60 the number of semester credit hours that shall be approved as "transferable core of lower- division courses" from community colleges and four-year universities. By the 2025-26 academic year the coordinating board for higher education shall identify an additional 18 credit hours to be included in the transferable core of lower-division courses. Additionally, all the different four-year colleges and university systems would collectively decide on 5 additional classes that would be transferable. After no debate, the House passed the bill by a 152-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

County Officials

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1363](#), sponsored by Senator Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill includes several provisions relating to county officials. Specifically, upon the approval of the salary commission, the bill allows counties to increase coroners' salaries. Additionally, the bill allows county corners that fill the slot of sheriffs to receive that salary, allows salary commissions to amend the base salary schedule, allows county collectors to conduct tax sales via electronic media, allows county auditors to audit and examine claims, excludes the Boone County sheriff from the current salary schedule, and changes statutes concerning public administrators. During bill progression, the bill was amended to clarify a St. Louis City sheriff shall be required to hold a valid peace officer license within two years of being elected as sheriff and also clarifies the annual salary for a sheriff shall be no less than \$50 thousand dollars a year. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which added [HB 1522](#), which modifies provisions relating to the establishment of alternative county highway commissions in certain counties. Additionally, language was added which requires the Chief of Police to be elected in St. Charles County. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 11-1 vote.

Criminal Proceedings

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [HB 2700](#), sponsored by Representative Ron Copeland (R-Salem). This bill modifies the offense of delivery of a controlled substance to add that a person commits the offense if he or she knowingly distributes or delivers a schedule I or schedule II-controlled substance and great bodily harm or death results from the use of the controlled substance. Additionally, the bill includes provisions relating to tampering with a judiciary official, electronic signature for records, up to \$45 per day for jail costs, definition of vulnerable person, clean-up language on crime victims fund, and relating to juvenile proceedings. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Dementia Services

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 2071](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The sponsor's goal is to create a full-time coordinator position within the Department of Health and Senior Services' Division of Senior and Disability Services. The coordinators duties will be specified towards dementia services and will include data analysis, strategy development, education, and evaluation. Missouri Alzheimer's Association and a private citizen provided supporting testimony stating one of the duties of the dementia coordinator will be to evaluate services that already exist and make sure every resource is be used to its full potential. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

The committee then turned its attention to [HB 2837](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). This bill will remove the end date for the Alzheimer's Task force, set new term limits, and require regular reports to government officials. The sponsor's goal is to prevent people from being taken out of the workforce because they have to care for their Alzheimer and dementia-related diagnosed relatives. Missouri Alzheimer's Association presented supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Department of Conservation Modifications

The House Special Committee on Government Accountability convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HJR 125](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The resolution modifies the funding of and makeup of the Department of Conservation. Currently, the Conservation Commission consists of four members appointed by the Governor with not more than two members from the same political party. If approved by the voters, this resolution would allow the legislature to determine the number and qualifications of members and require no more than half be from the same political party and come from different congressional districts. Additionally, the bill prohibits commissioners from receiving gifts and requires reporting equal to members of the General Assembly. Finally, the resolution specifies that beginning on January 1 the year following approval, 10% of revenue derived from the Conservation Sales and Use Tax will go for duties and responsibilities of the Division of State Parks within the Department of Natural Resources and 10% for the duties and responsibilities of local political subdivisions in which land owned by the Department of Conservation is located. Several members of the Conservation Federation of Missouri, Missouri Park and Recreation Association and Department of Conversation provided opposing testimony stating this threatens the future of conservation efforts. No supporting testimony was presented to the committee.

Department of Revenue Omnibus

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [HB 1775](#), sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green). The bill exempts homeless children, homeless youth, and unaccompanied youth from certain fees collected by Department of Revenue fee offices related to intermediate driver's license fees and their first nondriver identification card. During debate, several amendments were successfully added to create an omnibus Department of Revenue bill. Specifically, the bill now includes:

- [HB 1459](#), which modifies provisions relating to disabled American veterans' special license plates;
- [HB 2843](#), expands provisions relating to confidentiality of motor vehicle or driver registration records for parole personnel;

- [HB 2589](#), which modifies provision of the “Champion for Children” tax credit and the “Donated Food” tax credit relating to tax credit award denials;
- [HB 1451](#), which modifies provisions relating to the issuance and renewal of license plates and placards for person with disabilities;
- A provision allowing for alternative fuel decals to be purchased for up to two years.
- A provision altering personal vehicle registration fees to \$25 and motorcycles to \$10.
- A provision altering farm fleet vehicle registrations; and
- A provision modifying vehicle emission inspections.

After no debate, the House passed the bill by a 115-32 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Digital Mining

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1050](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill creates new provisions relating to digital mining. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted prohibiting the application of new taxes to cryptocurrencies and prohibiting the state from banning cryptocurrencies. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 3-2 vote.

Drug Trafficking

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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 a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 108-25 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1451](#), sponsored by Senator Holly Thompson Rehder (R-Sikeston). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2576](#), highlighted above. The Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys provided supporting testimony. A private attorney provided informational testimony regarding the drug threshold language. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Earnings Taxes

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee convened on Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 993](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). Currently, the cities of St. Louis and Kansas City levy an earnings tax on income of residents and nonresidents performing work in the city, at a rate not to exceed 1%. Starting January 1, 2025, the bill seeks to phase out the earnings tax incrementally by 0.1% over a period of years. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

The committee then turned its attention towards [HB 1516](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). The bill modifies provisions relating to earnings taxes. Currently, the cities of Kansas City and St. Louis levy earnings taxes, which are imposed on salaries, commissions, and other compensation earned by nonresidents for work or services performed in the city. This proposal disallows earnings taxes from being assessed on work rendered outside city limits through telecommuting or other remote means and allows all residents of impacted counties to request refund for any earnings tax levied.

Additionally, effective September 30, 2024, as long as the City of St. Louis imposes an earnings tax, the bill requires the City of St. Louis to submit a quarterly report detailing receipts from the earnings tax. Associated Industries of Missouri provided supporting testimony stating there is no constitutional authority to impose this tax. City of St. Louis provided opposing testimony.

Education Reform

The Senate dedicated floor time Wednesday evening to debate [HB 2287](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters). The bill modifies provisions relating to the Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program to add clarification for the required enrollment process of virtual course programs for parents and specify a payment schedule for resident districts calculating attendance of virtual students. During debate, Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester) offered a substitute to include a 40% transportation trigger that was inadvertently removed from [SB 727](#), highlighted below. Additionally, the substitute provides a fix on the 18-hour certification to clarify that private schools are not required to take that certification, clarifies the definition in Chapter 571 that's related to the definition of school when it comes to our firearms, and adds provision for homeschool statutes relating to guns. Senator Tracy McCreery (D-St. Louis) then attempted to amend the bill to require any new charter schools that are proposed by the legislature would have to go to a vote of the people. After brief debate, the amendment failed, and the Senate then passed the bill by a 27-4 vote. The bill now will go back to the House for further consideration. The House dedicated floor time Thursday morning to debate [HB 2287](#). After considerable debate, the House Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed the bill by a 105-32 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Governor for final approval.

The House also dedicated floor time Thursday morning to debate [SB 727](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). The bill expands the Empowerment Scholarship Account Program (ESA) statewide and increases the cap from \$25 million to \$75 million. Additionally, the bill includes a charter school expansion to operate in St. Louis County, St. Charles County, and Boone County. During the bill's Senate progression, language was added clarifying that homeschoolers cannot participate in the ESA program. Additionally, some language related to four-Day school week was added, included language related to teacher pay, included language related to the foundation formula and makes part of it based on enrollment rather than daily average attendance. Finally, there is some funding to go towards helping teachers' recruitment and retention by increasing teacher pay and also creating a scholarship program to promote being a teacher as a possible career path for individuals. After considerable debate, the House Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed the bill by a narrow 82-69 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Governor for final approval.

Election Integrity and the Media

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2628](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). The bill defines "deceptive and fraudulent deepfake" and "synthetic media." It prohibits the use of synthetic media against candidates 90 days prior to an election unless a disclaimer is included with the message. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted adding [HB 2603](#), which establishes the "Caller ID Anti-Spoofing Act." Additionally, language was removed regarding the broadcast station liability and penalty provisions were added. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Election Reform

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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 passed the bill by a 102-44 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Electrical Plants Closures

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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 previous 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. After considerable debate, the House passed the bill by a 114-27 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Employment Eligibility Modifications

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2489](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). Beginning on January 1st, 2025, an employer or business entity must verify an employee’s immigration status before allowing them to work. Additionally, language was removed regarding the bidding limit amount and the subcontractor liability provisions. Finally, the bill outlines the verification process. During debate, Representative Ian Mackey (D-St. Louis) successfully amended the bill to add [HB 2725](#), which prohibits noncompete clauses in physician employment contracts. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Employment Law Preemption

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [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. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which removed provisions regarding labor disputes and contracting capabilities for unions. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 9-5 vote.

Entertainment District

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1431](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2068](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker) and upon voter approval, the bill creates an entertainment district within the Bagnell Dam area. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Financial Instruments

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 835](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). As originally filed, this bill updated provisions relating to lending by repealing an existing prohibition against parties agreeing in writing to any rate of interest, fees, and other terms and conditions in connection with any loan of less than \$5,000 secured by real estate used for agricultural activity. Additionally, the bill permits lenders to charge consumers for the cost of a credit report or reports. Finally, the bill repeals a provision enacted in 1883 that requires description of a woman's status as "wife" when executing a notary's certificate of acknowledgement form in the course of a real estate transaction with her husband. During the bill's Senate progression, the bill was amended to include [SB 736](#), relating to the Linked Deposit Program (MO Bucks); [SB 753](#), which establishes the Commercial Financing Disclosure Law; [SB 1518](#), which prohibits any public entity from discriminating or giving preferential treatment to any bidder, offeror, or vendor when engaged in procuring or letting contracts for any purpose, based on an environmental, social and governance score; prohibits the State of Missouri from accepting payments using central bank digital currency; and [SB 735](#), specifically exempts all purchases of bullion and investment coins from all state and local sales taxes and requires the State of Missouri to accept gold and silver as legal tender. The MO State Treasurer provided supporting testimony regarding the MO Bucks cap increase provisions and highlighted how the program has impacted the State of Missouri. The Farm Credit Systems, SCS Financial, the MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the MO Credit Union Association also specifically supported the inclusion of the MO Bucks provision. The MO Bankers Association, and the Missouri Installment Lenders Association supported specifically the underlying bill, the credit report cost pass-through, the MO Bucks program, and then the municipality piece on the depository institution. The MO Municipal League, and the Municipal League of Metro St. Louis specifically supported the municipality piece on the depository institution. The Revenue Base Finance Coalition supported the inclusion of the Commercial Financing Disclosure Law provisions. The MO Sierra Club specifically opposed the inclusion of [SB 1518](#), relating to environmental, social and governance (ESG) scoring. A private citizen provided informational testimony and advocated the need to keep legislation to single subjects and advocated the need to remove [SB 735](#) provisions, relating to gold and silver as legal tender.

Gold and Silver

The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to debate [SB 735](#), sponsored by Senator Bill Eigel (R-St. Charles). The bill allows for gold and silver to be used as legal tender in the state of Missouri, requires any state public entities to accept gold and silver as legal tender, but it does not require private entities and also prohibit the state treasurer from accepting payments using central bank digital currency. During debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to allow the Department of Revenue to promulgate the rules that would be associated for how they are going to accept that payment. After some debate, the senate provided its first of two necessary approvals by a 17-13 vote.

Health Care Benefits

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2082](#), sponsored by Representative Kurtis Gregory (R-Marshall). The bill provides the MO Farm Bureau and other not for profit organizations the authority to offer affordable and quality health benefits to their members and allows them to work with reinsurance companies and third-party administrators to ensure consumers have access to nationwide network of providers and claims are paid. Missouri Farm Bureau,

Farm Bureau Health Plans of Tennessee, Missouri Dairy Association, Missouri Corn Growers Association, Missouri Soybean Association, Opportunity Solutions Project, and the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives provided supporting testimony. American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Inc., National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Missouri Insurance Coalition, American Heart Association, America's Health Insurance Plans, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and a state public advocate provided opposing testimony stating a concern the plans offered are not "insurance" and would not be regulated by state authorities, potentially leaving customers open to wrongful denial of claims related to pre-existing conditions.

Healthcare Omnibus

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2413](#), sponsored by Representative Tara Peters (R-Rolla). The bill modifies provisions relating to healthcare. Specifically, the bill repeals provisions relating to required notice provided to patients upon their completion of a mammogram. Additionally, the bill includes [HB 1879](#), modifies provisions relating to expedited partner therapy; [HB 1979](#), modifies blood tests for pregnant women to include additional testing; [HB 2190](#), continuous coverage of self-administered hormonal contraceptives; and includes language regarding victims of sexual assault need to obtain care at hospitals with an emergency department or a referral must be made to a qualifying hospital for care. After no debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Home-based Businesses

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2292](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Falkner (R-St. Joseph). The bill says property owners or leaseholders operating a no-impact, home-based business must submit an affidavit that includes a description of the business, its activities and a statement affirming the business will not disrupt the neighborhood or residential area to the city clerk or other appropriate municipal officer. Committee members expressed concerns with the definition of "no-impact," targeting small businesses, government overreach and if the legislation is necessary. During bill presentation, the sponsor highlighted safety concerns and traffic issues raised by local governments. The Missouri Municipal League, Municipal League of Metro St. Louis and the City of Springfield testified in support stating political subdivisions are not looking for additional regulations on small businesses. A state public advocate provided opposing testimony. The City of Weldon Spring provided informational testimony.

Homeowners Associations

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1324](#), sponsored by Senator Tracy McCreery (D-St. Louis). The bill enacts the "Missouri Uniform Homeowners Association Act," which provides for the owner's associations to be governed by a board of directors and specifies election procedures. The Community Associates Institute-Heartland Chapter, and a citizen that has participated in various homeowners' associations supported the bill. American Resort Development Association, MO Realtors, MO Bankers Association, and the St. Louis Homebuilders Association opposed the bill.

Jail Districts

The House Corrections and Public Institutions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [SB 900](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Sullivan). Currently, any two contiguous counties may form a regional jail district. This bill specifies if a regional jail district levies a sales tax and a new county

wants to join the district, the county seeking to join must vote to enact the sales tax. If the sales tax is not approved, the county will not be allowed to join the jail district. Additionally, the bill allows the districts to equip and maintain the facility, as well as lease any properties. Finally, the bill also repeals a provision, which allows the sales tax to be used for court facilities within the jail district. During the bill's Senate progression, substitute language was adopted which included [SB 1353](#), which mandates that the Department of Corrections compensates counties or St. Louis City for the duration an individual was held in custody before being transferred to a correctional center, with a per diem cost cap of \$37.50. The procedure requires the sheriff of the county or St. Louis City to report the total days an offender spent in jail to the county clerk or the chief executive officer of St. Louis City. This report must then be forwarded to the Department of Corrections within two years of when the claim is eligible for reimbursement. The Department is tasked with verifying the expenses. Additionally, the bill includes [SB 1098](#), which establishes caps on phone rates for calls made in jails by inmates. The legislation says no correctional facility shall charge no more than 12 cents per minute for a domestic phone call of an inmate. Finally, no jail may charge a fee of more than 14 cents per minute for a phone call for any jail with an average daily population of more than 1,000 inmates or more than 21 cents per minute for any jail with an average daily population of fewer than 1,000 inmates. L.J. Hardin Company provided supporting testimony regarding the elimination of the sunset on the bonding. Additional supporting testimony was provided by Missouri Association of Counties and St. Louis County regarding the reasonable jail reauthorization but also the streamlining of how counties are reimbursed. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Judicial Proceedings Omnibus

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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 a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 146-6 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1634](#), sponsored by Representative Sean Pouche (R-Kansas City). The bill changes provisions relating to the Kansas City area transportation authority. The legislation states if there is a commissioner vacancy on the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority that was appointed from Platte or Clay County, the mayor of Kansas City must appoint a successor from the panel submitted by the county commission of the county wherein the vacancy occurred. A state public advocate provided opposing testimony. The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority provided informational testimony regarding the current process. No testimony in support was presented to the committee.

Linked Deposits

The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to debate [HB 1803](#) sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington). The bill is the House companion to [SB 736](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Bufferlo) and raises the cap on the Treasurer's investment authority through the Linked Deposit Program. After no debate, the Senate Truly Agreed and Finally Passed the bill by a 33-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Governor for final approval.

Military Parent Child Custody

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday morning to debate [HB 1494](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City). The bill establishes the Uniform Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act, which seeks to establish guidelines for a divorced active military parent(s). After a brief debate, the House passed the bill Consent by a 153-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Military Personnel Tuition

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 912](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Franklin). The bill modifies several provisions relating to veterans by requiring the MO Veterans' Commission to review veterans' suicides, collect data of services by state agencies provided to veterans, amongst several specialty license plate provisions. Additionally, the bill prohibits any foreign ownership of agricultural land near military areas and exempts any military signing bonuses from state income taxes. Missouri Rural Crisis Center, State Armor Action and private citizens provided supporting testimony. The Missouri Chamber of Commerce provided opposing testimony specifically regarding the foreign ownership provision only.

Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Incentive Program

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Nonnative Plants

The Senate Agriculture, Food Production, and Outdoor Resources Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1281](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). This is the Senate companion to [HB 1555](#), sponsored by Representative Bruce Sassmann (R-Bland) and prohibits the sale or distribution of any viable portion or seeds of an invasive plant unless the Director of the Department of Agriculture provides written approval. Additionally, the bill requires the Director of the Department of Agriculture to develop an "Invasive Plant List" and create a "Potentially Invasive Plant Watchlist." During committee discussion, the sponsor stated he is still working with interested parties and plans to offer a substitute on the floor to update the plants identified on the list. The committee then passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

OTC Medication Limits

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1485](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2824](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Stephens (R-Bolivar) and currently, there is a 7.2-gram limit on the sale, purchase, or dispensation of ephedrine, phenylpropanolamine, or pseudoephedrine to the same person in a 30-day time period. The bill changes the total amount to 9-grams. Haleon provided supporting testimony stating Missouri has the third most restrictive law in the country. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

PACE Act

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday morning to debate [HB 2756](#), sponsored by Representative Michael O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). The bill revises the Property Assessment Clean Energy Act by making it inapplicable to residential property. The bill provides guidance for any residential properties approved for the program between January 1, 2022, and August 28, 2024. Additionally, the bill allows dealers that originate these loans to package the loans together and also take on loans from other states. During debate, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to allow commercial PACE loans to be financed for up to thirty years. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. On Thursday, the House dedicated floor time to revisit the bill. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 105-16 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Pesticide Labeling

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [HB 2763](#), sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler). The bill allows the existing process in place under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) to be sufficient to satisfy any requirements for label. Additionally, the bill limits the labeling requirements to warn the "products may cause cancer" only. After considerable debate, the House provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Prescription Drug Coverage

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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 no debate, the House passed the bill by a 113-28 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Prior Authorization

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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 no debate, the House passed the bill by a 146-6 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Public Employee Representation

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2876](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). This bill makes various changes to the laws regarding public employees, public employee labor organizations, and labor agreements between those labor organizations and public bodies. However, public safety labor organizations, and employees of the Department of Corrections are exempted from the bill. The sponsor's intent with the legislation is to limit taxpayer funded services from being impacted directly or indirectly by public unions. Freedom Foundation provided supporting testimony. Missouri AFL-CIO, Services Employees International Union Missouri Council, Missouri State Council of Firefighters, Carpenters Regional Council, SEIU Healthcare Workers, American Federation of Teachers, St. Louis County Police Association and Missouri NEA provided opposing testimony stating a similar bill was passed in 2018 and the Supreme Court struck the entirety of the bill as unconstitutional.

Public Safety Omnibus

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [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. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to include [SB 765](#), establishes a conviction review unit; [SB 861](#), modifies provisions relating to expungement; [SB 746](#), modifies provisions relating to eligibility for parole; [SB 1070](#), establishes a statewide task force focused on addressing cyber-crimes and stalking; and [SB 901](#), establishes "Valentine's Law" which creates the offense of aggravated fleeing a stop or detention of a motor vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Public Service Commission

The House Utilities Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2167](#), sponsored by Representative Micheal O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1280](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Cierpiot (R-Lee's Summit). The bill as filed seeks to modify the duties of the Public Service Commission. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to simplify the bill by removing all provisions except for language to allow water, sewer, and gas utilities to use a future test year as part of the traditional 11-month rate case process. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Reinsurance Contract Disposition

The House Insurance Policy Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 834](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). This bill relates to the disposition of reinsurance contracts reinsuring policies of life or health insurance or annuities issued by insurers that have been placed into conservation, rehabilitation, or liquidation, with terms governing continuation or termination of such contracts. The bill also addresses a guaranty association's election to assume the liquidated insurer's rights and obligations under reinsurance contracts and a receiver's continuation of policies of life or health insurance or annuities issued by an insolvent insurer. Additionally, the bill includes [SB 1348](#), relating to insurance documents; and [SB 1359](#), relating to mutual insurance companies.

Additionally, the committee discussed [SB 1359](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). This bill is identical and includes all of the same provisions as [SB 834](#), highlighted above. The Resource Based Finance Coalition, MO Installment Lenders Association, MO Bankers Association, Farm Credit Services, MO Insurance Coalition, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, MO Credit Union Association, Municipal League of Metro St. Louis, MO Municipal League, and the MO State Treasurer's Office supported both bills. The MO Sierra Club opposed both bills.

Reinsurance Contracts

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [HB 2440](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters). The bill outlines the process under which life or health reinsurance contracts are disposed of, in the event the issuing insurer becomes insolvent. During previous debate, the bill was successfully amended to add provisions establishing confidentiality for documents during market conduct investigations, added the 340B mutual fix and allows self-storage insurance amounts to increase from \$5,000 to \$15,000. Additionally, the bill also was further amended to add provisions from [HB 2453](#), which modifies provisions regarding uninsured motorists. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 153-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Rental Property Local Government Ordinances

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [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. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which added other housing assistance programs as part of the source of income that may be considered by landlords as a refusal to lease. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Rural Access to Capital

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 802](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill establishes the “Missouri Rural Access to Capital Act” and creates tax incentives for investing in businesses located in rural areas. The tax credits are equal to the percentage of the fund investment, with no more than \$16 million dollars in total combined tax credits authorized per year. The bill specifies that investments and investors cannot be alien, a foreign entity or foreign-owned entities, or a foreign government. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

SALT Parity Clean-up

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 3-0 vote.

Sewer Districts

The House Utilities Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2351](#), sponsored by Representative Gary Bonacker (R-House Springs). The bill authorizes sewer districts to petition, jointly with the Board of Directors of a Public Water Supply District (PWS), a circuit court to consolidate the operation of a sewer and water supply and distribution facilities without a vote of the residents of the district. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to remove language “without the vote of the residents of the district” in order to require a vote in order to move forward with any consolidation. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Sexual Trafficking Involving Children

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday morning to debate [HJR 132](#), sponsored by Representative Wendy Hausman (R-St. Peters). The resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to establish the penalty for sexual trafficking of a child in the first degree will result in life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Shutdown Orders

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [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 little debate, the House passed the bill by a 132-9 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Solid Waste Permits

The Senate dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [HB 1751](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill). The bill relates to solid waste permits. Currently, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is prohibited from issuing a permit for the operation of a solid waste disposal area designed to serve a city with a population greater than 400,000 inhabitants located in more than one county, if the site is located within one-half mile of an adjoining municipality without its approval. During debate, Senator Mike Cierpiot (R-Lee's Summit) offered a substitute to include solid waste processing facility, demolition landfill, or sanitary landfill to the description, and change the adjoining jurisdictions from one-half mile to within one mile. After no debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 24-7 vote. The bill now will be sent back to the House for further consideration.

Solid Waste Permits

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [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. 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. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to ensure landfills that have already been granted the approval to expand, are not affected by the legislation. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 11-0 vote.

Statute of Limitations

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 853](#), sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). Currently, actions for personal injury shall be brought within five years from the time the injury occurred. The bill requires any action be brought within two years from the time the injury occurred. Additionally, current actions against an insurer relating to uninsured motorist coverage or underinsured motorist coverage, including any action to enforce such coverage, are to be brought within ten years. The bill requires any such actions to be brought within two years. Health Care Services Group of Jefferson City, Missouri Insurance Coalition, Missouri Civil Justice Reform Coalition, NFIB, Missouri Canoe and Floaters Association, Missouri Railroad Association, Associated Industries of Missouri, American Tort Reform Association, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Missouri Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds and Missouri Farm Bureau provided supporting testimony. A personal injury attorney provided opposing testimony stating this would deprive people of their constitutional rights to a jury trial.

The committee then turned its attention to [SJR 64](#), sponsored by Senator Karla Eslinger (R-Wasola). Upon voter approval, the resolution allows crime victims to bring a civil cause of action against a defendant who caused or contributed to the injury during a time frame no shorter than the time it takes a criminal case for the injury to be brought. Child US Advocacy, several attorneys and numerous private citizens provided supporting testimony stating 27 states have passed similar legislation. Civil Justice Reform Coalition and Missouri Insurance Coalition provided opposing testimony citing a Missouri constitutional provision which does not allow laws to be applied retroactively.

Finally, the committee discussed [SJR 88](#), sponsored by Senator Barbara Washington (D-Kansas City). Upon voter approval, the resolution provides that civil actions relating to injuries or illnesses caused by rape or forcible sodomy, injuries or illnesses caused by childhood sexual abuse, or tortious conduct that

causes a person to be a victim of rape, forcible sodomy, or childhood sexual abuse against the party committing the rape, forcible sodomy, or childhood sexual abuse may be commenced at any time, including those actions that have been barred by the application of the existing statute of limitations at the time of this provision's enactment. Child US Advocacy, Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Missouri Network Against Child Abuse and numerous private citizens provided supporting testimony stating 27 states have passed similar legislation. Civil Justice Reform Coalition and Missouri Insurance Coalition provided opposing testimony citing a Missouri constitutional provision which does not allow laws to be applied retroactively.

Tax Credit – Homestead Property

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2432](#), sponsored by Representative Wendy Hausman (R-St. Charles). The bill is similar to [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 ensures that people who are delinquent on their taxes, that those amounts can still be collected so people are not benefiting in the event they are not paying taxes. St. Charles County, MO Tax Relief Now, MO Association of Counties, MO County Collectors Association, Warren County Republican Committee, and the Warren County Tax Freeze Committee supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Credit – Revitalization

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday morning to debate [HB 1936](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Wilson (R-St. Charles). The bill modifies provisions relating to the Historic Preservation tax credit and renames such tax credit the "Missouri Historic, Rural Revitalization, and Regulatory Streamlining Act" to allow counties to designate certain structures as "essential community or heritage facilities." The intent with the bill is to streamline the process and not only incentive but also enable developers to revitalize areas. Additionally, provisions regarding Economic Development Advancement Funding (EDAF) were removed, extend the project timeline from nine months to two years, and require a 120-day turnaround for applications. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Tax Credit – Service Animal

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 2705](#), sponsored by Representative LaDonna Appelbaum (D-St. Louis). This bill will establish a tax credit for \$125 per year, per service animal, for up to two pets. The tax credit will go towards the adoption and not be ongoing. There are no restrictions as to the type of pets that qualify. Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation, APA Adoption Center St. Louis presented supporting testimony stating that children and seniors benefit greatly by having service animals and this is important for not only people with mental health problems, but also young children and pets reduce PTSD symptoms, anxiety, loneliness and more. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Tax Deduction – Research

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1365](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2457](#), which seeks to decouple our state income taxes from section 174 of the IRS tax code to allow taxpayers to deduct specified research and experimental expenditures from their federal adjusted gross income tax code. The MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Exemption – Nuclear Construction

The House dedicated floor time Thursday afternoon to revisit [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 passed the bill by a 122-11 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Taxation – Income & Sales

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SJR 50](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). Upon voter approval, the resolution places a 5.5% cap on income taxes. The resolution also modifies a provision prohibiting sales taxes levied on transactions not taxed as of January 1, 2015, by providing an exception for sales and use taxes on subscriptions, licenses for digital products, and online purchases of tangible personal property. The Microsoft Corporation provided informational testimony regarding the licensing for digital products. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee. The committee reconvened in executive session Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of SJR 50. After no discussion, the committee passed the resolution by a 7-2 vote.

Taxation – Personal Property Assessment

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee convened on Thursday morning to consider passage of [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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

Taxation - Private Pensions

The House dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [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 passed the bill by a 96-31 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Telehealth Services

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 851](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). Currently, provisions governing a physician's use of telemedicine require that a physician-patient relationship be established in person before telemedicine services be rendered. The bill removes the in-person requirement and allows the relationship to be

established via telemedicine using adaptive questionnaires. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Transient Guest Taxes

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2836](#), sponsored by Representative Wendy Hausman (R-St. Peters). The bill modifies provisions related to the use of transient guest taxes for a county convention and sports facilities authority. The bill specifies that the tax revenue from an authorized transient guest tax may be used, in addition to funding the construction and operation of the convention, visitor, and sports facilities, to promote, market, and advertise the authority's convention, visitor, sports, and other facilities, as well as the attractions and amenities that are in close geographical proximity to the facilities. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

The committee then turned its attention to [HB 2863](#), sponsored by Representative Kurtis Gregory (R-Marshall). This bill authorizes a transient guest tax for economic development purposes in Arrow Rock upon voter approval. The bill authorizes, upon voter approval, a transient guest tax of not more than 6% per occupied lodging establishment room per night or more than 6% per rental term of such lodging facility for economic development purposes and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure improvements and upon enactment, will include the Village of Arrow Rock. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Utility Omnibus

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1746](#), sponsored by Representative Mike O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). The bill modifies and creates several new provisions relating to utilities. Specifically, the bill:

- Creates a uniform 20-year depreciation schedule for property tax assessments on gas and water infrastructure.
- Creates a state and local sales tax exemption for utilities' equipment, and materials used in the transmission and distribution of electricity.
- Allows consolidated sewer districts' boards of trustees to pay members up to \$100 for each attended meeting.
- Specifies that a large water public utility may file with the Public Service Commission for the purchase of small water systems and requires the PSC to approve the purchase within 6-months but provides the PSC may request an additional 30 days for good cause showing, if the PSC does not issue a decision within 30 days, the application shall automatically be approved.
- [SB 1219](#), creates a uniform assessment for solar projects at 5% of the cost of the system.
- [HB 2193](#), legislation was originally passed in 2021, to promote investments in renewable natural gas (RNG) by creating the Renewable Natural Gas Program which allowed gas corporations to recoup the costs for RNG projects. To date, the program has not been able to be fully implemented. The bill seeks to modify the program by directing the PSC to promulgate rules and spread the costs of the project across the rate base.
- Allows large consumers of energy that buy renewable energy or credits from the market, to avoid being charged twice. Once for the energy/credits they purchase and the cost of renewable compliance by the utility.
- [SB 1422](#), modifies certain provision relating to deferrals by electrical corporations.

- Changes the definition of a "large water public utility" to include those that regularly provide water, sewer, or a combination of either, to more than 8,000 customers.
- Economic Development Rider - allows gas companies to offer a discount for large users. Includes consumer protections.
- [SB 837](#), Securitization fix - allows PSC to go outside OA to hire financial advisor or outside counsel due to time constraints.
- [HB 1622](#), requires the Public Service Commission to permit electrical, water, and gas corporations to recover workforce development investments. Utility cannot earn a return on the investment, and it is capped at .55% of the corporation's total operating revenues as reported in 2022.
- [SB 982](#), language change that allows utilities to schedule hydrant tests to align with their mandated flushing program.
- [HB 2501](#), Small Wireless Facility Deployment Act that took effect on 1/1/2019 expires January 1, 2025. The bill repeals the expiration date.

Liberty and Summit Utilities, Associated Industries of Missouri, MO Public Utility Alliance and City Utilities of Springfield, Strata Solar, Spire, Evergy, MO American Water, Ameren, MO Solar Energy Industry Association, Central States Water, MO Natural Gas Association, MO Chamber, Association of MO Electric Cooperatives, AT&T, and META/Facebook supported the bill. The Consumer Council of MO, a private citizen, Sierra Club - Missouri Chapter, Midwest Energy Consumers Group, and Missouri Industrial Energy Consumers opposed the bill.

The committee reconvened Thursday morning in executive session to consider passage of [HB 1746](#). During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to:

- remove [SB 1219](#), which creates a uniform assessment for solar projects at 5% of the cost of the system.
- remove provisions that creates a uniform 20-year depreciation schedule for property tax assessments on gas and water infrastructure.
- Removes the provision that requires the PSC to approve the purchase of a small water systems within 6-months but provides the PSC may request an additional 30 days for good cause showing, if the PSC does not issue a decision within 30 days, the application shall automatically be approved.
- Includes [SB 947](#), sponsored by Senator Holly Thompson-Rehder (R-Scott City), which modifies the definition of "video service" for provisions of law relating to video service providers to include the definition of streaming content.
- And includes [HB 2056](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield), which requires municipalities and the Missouri Department of Transportation to reimburse non-rate regulated utility providers, including telecommunications, Internet, and cable providers, for facility relocation due to road maintenance or construction.

Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-1 vote.

Water Exportation

The Senate dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to debate [SB 782](#), sponsored by Senator Jason Bean (R-Holcomb). The bill specifies that it is unlawful for any person to withdraw from any water source

for export outside the state of Missouri unless a water export permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources is held. Additionally, the bill requires a permit application recommendation be submitted to the General Assembly and the permit is deemed denied if the General Assembly does not take action on the recommendation within sixty days. Finally, the bill also outlines the process for renewing issued permits. During debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to provides that the findings relating to a request for reevaluation of any existing water exportation permit shall be sent to a major water user by the Director of the Department of Natural Resources within 60 days of the request, instead of 30 days; modifies the definition for “beneficial uses” and “water resources”; provides that a water exploration permit shall not be required where the withdrawal and ultimate use of the water are within 20 miles from the state border; provides that proposed use of water shall include recreational use; adds provisions relating to reevaluation of an existing water exportation permit; and provides that if a person applies for a water exportation permit, the Department of Natural Resources shall notify the county commission of the county where the water is located. Senator Tracy McCreery (D-St. Louis) further amended the bill to provide that the clean water commission and MO Water and soil districts have oversight/approval process over permits. Additionally, the amendment includes a new provision that outlines procedures in the event of a state of emergency to allow the Department to reevaluate existing permits. Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove) then attempted to further amend the bill to prohibit the exportation of water by use of a pipeline facility unless, unless the withdrawal and ultimate end use of the water by the pipeline is with the same six-digit hydrological unit code as the pipeline facility and is within 20 miles of the state border. After several hours of debate the bill was returned back to calendar to be debated further another day.

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit [HB 2153](#), sponsored by Representative Jamie Burger (R-Benton). The bill is the House companion to [SB 782](#), highlighted above. After brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 114-36 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

The Senate Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 2134](#), sponsored by Representative Ed Lewis (R-Moberly). The bill seeks to provide clarity by specifying that under no circumstances DNR shall provide an exemption for any bio-solid sludge or process waste to the end user. The intent of the legislation is to address a current out of state disposal company that is operating on 600 acres of land west of Anderson, MO. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to ensure operational control remains with farmers and owners by allowing yearly review; clarifies language regarding phosphorus solubility; provided clean up language throughout the bill; and adds [SB 782](#), highlighted above. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

Waterways and Ports Trust Fund

The Senate Agriculture, Food Production, and Outdoor Resources Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2352](#), sponsored by Representative Cyndi Buchheit-Courtway (R-Festus). The bill makes several changes to the Waterways and Ports Trust Fund including removal of: the requirement that funds be withdrawn only for the purposes of transportation grants; the requirement that the project be on or adjacent to the navigable rivers of this state; a provision requiring a 20% local match; and, a provision requiring that the project be “selected and approved by the highways and transportation commission, in consultation with the Missouri public ports, to support a statewide plan for waterborne commerce.” Rather than being based on approval by the highways and transportation

commission, projects would have to be capable of completion within two years of appropriation of funds by the general assembly, and any unspent funds remaining after two years may be reallocated. Lastly, the bill allows the STL Port Authority to access the funds. The Director of Administration of Jefferson County David Courtway, and the Jefferson County Port Authority supported the bill. New Madrid Port Authority, Mississippi County Port Authority, Southeast MO Regional Port Authority, Pemiscot County Port Authority, and Armor Vine opposed the bill. The Executive Director of the Jefferson County Port Authority Jim McNichols provided informational testimony and provided a historical overview of the Jefferson County Port and stated that before the Trust Fund was implemented there was no required match or restrictions on how the funds could be used. The St. Louis City Port Authority also provided informational testimony on the unintentional exclusion of the St. Louis City Port Authority and supported this provision of the bill.

Upcoming Hearings of Interest

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

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

Chamber Floor Calendars

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

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

Key Upcoming Dates

- 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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