

CAPITOL REPORT – WEEK 11

MARCH 15, 2024

Weekly Overview: This week, the Senate tackled one priority issue relating to education reforms which included vouchers for private schools. For about six hours, the Senate debated a Senate substitute version of [SB 727](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-St. Louis County), before laying the bill over on to the Informal Calendar. Much of that debate involved delaying tactics by Senate Democrats who wanted to negotiate on various provisions of the bill. On Tuesday, the Senate Perfected a bill relating to veterans’ programs before returning to debate on the education-related bill. Sen. Koenig introduced a new substitute bill based on negotiations with members of the minority party. The bill was thoroughly debated and amended before finally being Perfected (first round approval). The final version of the bill differed very substantially from the bill as originally introduced. Major changes included: 1) An increase in beginning pay for teachers from \$25,000 to \$40,000 and more for teachers with experience and those with advanced degrees; 2) A boost to state aid to public schools who have a five-day work week; 3) A major alteration to the school district foundation formula by using a metric of weighted enrollment to determine the “weighted average daily attendance”; 4) Changes to the MOScholars Program that requires the State Treasurer to post certain information on-line, including the number of students awarded MOScholars scholarships and the amount of money sent to qualifying schools; 5) An increase in the cap on tax credits that fund Educational Assistance

Organizations from \$50 million to \$75 million per year; 6) Empowerment Scholarship Accounts would be made available to students statewide; 7) An increase in the qualifying income needed to qualify for free and reduced lunches and 8) Provisions that would allow public charter schools in Columbia. The bill passed by a vote of 20-13 with three Republicans joining the 10 Democrats in opposition.

Just as some elation set in due to the passage of a Republican priority bill, the mood quickly reversed on Wednesday. Senator Mary Elizabeth Coleman (R-Jefferson County) presented her bill reforming the initiative petition process to a House Committee on Tuesday. During her presentation she urged members to restore some of the provisions removed during final passage in the House (popularly known as “ballot candy” provisions) and told the committee that she would help organize an effort to use the Previous Question (PQ) in the Senate to keep the restored provisions. The PQ is a cloture parliamentary procedure that halts debate and calls for an immediate vote on the pending measure. The press reported on Coleman’s remarks and the Democrats in the Senate were outraged and demonstrated their discontent by announcing that they would not permit any bills to be debated. Several Democrats, led by Minority Leader John Rizzo, took Coleman to task for a couple of hours before Majority Floor Leader Cindy O’Laughlin abruptly adjourned for the day.

Meanwhile, the House continued to Perfect and Third Read bills. On Wednesday morning, after Perfecting three bills during the morning session, Majority Floor Leader Jon Patterson announced that there would be no afternoon session.

In the news...

- *Missouri Independent* reports that Speaker Dean Plocher (R-St, Louis County) made an appearance, alongside his attorneys, before the House Ethics Committee on Tuesday evening. According to the report, his testimony was done in a closed-door session and lasted for approximately an hour and a half. Plocher is the subject of a myriad of allegations involving his push to send a House contract to a vendor, seeking illegal reimbursement for travel expenses, expenditures on office improvements and a ballooning personal services budget for staff. The House Ethics Committee is expected to make a public report in the future.
- Another lawsuit has been filed in federal court to end the state's control of the Kansas City Police Department. Under the current system of state control, a governor-appointed police board has complete authority to make decisions about KCPD policy, the hiring of the police chief and how the budget is spent. The lawsuit points to the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, as well as the Civil Rights Act. The plaintiffs have also requested a jury trial.
- On Monday, Fontbonne University announced it will be closing its doors after the 2025 summer session ends. Washington University has made an agreement to purchase the 16-acre campus over the next two months. After many years of declining enrollments and a shrinking endowment, the school's board of trustees voted to cease operations. The school will not be admitting freshmen in the fall of 2024 but there will be classes through 2025. All undergraduate students will get scholarships to cover tuition for the summers of 2024 and 2025.

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Budget Update

The House Budget Committee finally convened this week to allow Chairman Cody Smith (R-Carthage) to present his proposed changes to the FY25 budget. Within this document, the Budget Chairman typically makes large sweeping changes across the seventeen budget bills. Chairman Smith provided a high-level overview of the changes made and informed the committee the deadline for any additional amendments would be next Tuesday March 19th at 5pm. No amendments submitted after the deadline will be considered. The committee is scheduled to begin the mark-up process at 10am on March 25th.

A link to the full proposed chairman substitute can be found [here](#).

Angel Investment Incentive Act

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1178](#), Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2226](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Smith (R-Dora) and establishes the “Missouri Angel Investment Incentive Act.” Beginning January 1, 2025, the bill would permit a tax credit for an investor’s cash investment in a qualified business in the amount of 40% of the investor’s cash investment in any qualified business. The credit will be equal to 50% of the investor’s cash investment if the business is located in a county meeting the rural area classification in the bill. Additionally, the bill contains provisions concerning allocation of the tax credits, factors MTC may consider as part of its assessment, and qualifications for designation as a “qualified business. Finally, the bill applies caps the amount of tax credits that may be issued. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated he will be offering a committee substitute to align the bill with the House companion by changing the start date of the program, delayed the dates the credit would automatically increase, shortened the sunset to six years and changed “region” to “county.” Bio STL, Greater KC Chamber of Commerce, Civic Council of Greater KC, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, United WE, and Codify supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

ATV Designation

The Senate Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1261](#), sponsored by Senator Jill Carter (R-Granby). The bill designates all-terrain vehicles used for any agricultural use to be considered farm machinery and equipment when seeking a sales tax exemption. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

Ballot Measures

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SJR 74](#), sponsored by Senator Mary Elizabeth Coleman (R-Arnold). Currently, constitutional amendments must win a simple majority of voters statewide. As originally filed, the resolution, upon voter approval, would require amendments to receive a majority vote in at least five of the state’s eight congressional districts. During the bill’s progression through the Senate, the bill was amended to prohibit any constitutional amendments that would permit lobbyists gifts, provides exclusive authority to the General Assembly to enact laws enforcing provisions in the Constitution relating to initiative petitions proposing constitutional amendments, and prohibits foreign activity in the initiative petition process. The bill was further amended by the sponsor and limited the resolution to voter thresholds and the resolution now only requires all such proposed constitutional amendments and new constitutions to receive a majority of the votes cast statewide as well as a majority of the votes cast in at least a majority of the

Congressional districts, such approved amendments to take effect at the end of 31 days after the election. The sponsor asked the committee to include language that “only U.S. Citizens are allowed to vote.” Campaign for Life, Missouri Right to Life and MO Farm Bureau provided supporting testimony. Justice Now, National Council of Jewish Women St Louis, League of Women Voters, Missouri Relators Association, Mo Voter Protection Coalition, Jobs with Justice Voter Action, MO NEA and a private citizens provided opposing testimony.

Bentley and Mason's Law

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1374](#), sponsored by Senator Elaine Gannon (R-De Soto). This act establishes "Bentley and Mason's Law". Under this act, if a person is convicted of the offense of driving while intoxicated and such offense caused the death of a parent or guardian, such person shall pay, pursuant to a court order, a monthly restitution to the child of the deceased parent or guardian until the child reaches 18 years of age. Bentley and Mason's Grandmother, as well as Mothers against Drunk Driving provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Broadband Internet Expansion Grants

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [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 included state or local grant money and limits the deduction only to money dispersed for this express purpose. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Business Operating Hours (Sundays)

The House Transportation Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2533](#), sponsored by Representative Richard Morse (R-Dexter). The bill prohibits any political subdivision from adopting a law, ordinance, resolution, and business remain open for business on Sundays. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Career Academic Plans

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2794](#), sponsored by Representative Gretchen Bangert (D-Florissant). The bill requires that students in the eighth grade complete a career assessment, meet with a guidance counselor, and develop a personal plan of study or individual career and academic plan. Additionally, the bill repeals the "Career Readiness Course Task Force" which was dissolved in 2019. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which removed the word guidance from in front of counselors as we no longer refer to them as guidance counselors, just counselors and a definition for Career Literacy was added. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-1 vote.

Catalytic Converters

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1406](#), sponsored by Representative Hardy Billington (R-Poplar Bluff). The bill requires that a record for the sale of a catalytic converter must include the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) of the vehicle from which the catalytic converter was removed. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Cemeteries

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2672](#), sponsored by Representative Richard West (R-Wentzville). The bill adds the definition of "human and pet cemetery" to current statute, which would allow for the creation of cemeteries in which both human remains, and the remains of other creatures could be interred and memorialized at the discretion of the lot holder. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Central Bank Digital Currency

The Senate Insurance & Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 826](#) sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). This bill would prohibit public entities from accepting, or participating in any test of, "central bank digital currencies," as defined in the bill. The bill also modifies the definition of "money" for purposes of the Uniform Commercial Code to exclude central bank digital currency from its meaning. No supporting or opposing testimony was present to the committee.

Childcare Facilities (Allergies)

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2552](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Schulte (R-New Bloomfield). The bill adds childcare facilities to the list of which a physician is authorized to prescribe epinephrin auto-injectors. Additionally, the bill requires both childcare facilities and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop policies addressing allergy prevention and response. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which clarifies the allergy provisions shall be known as "Elijah's Law" as it is known nationally. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2036](#), sponsored by Representative Emily Weber (D-Kansas City) and [HB 2364](#), sponsored by Representative Anthony Ealy (D-Grandview). The bills are similar and adds child care facilities to the list which doctors may prescribed epinephrine auto-injector. Additionally, the bill requires child care facilities and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop allergy prevention policies. Just Like You Films, Elijah-Aliva Foundation and several parents provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Children's Division Benefits

The House dedicated floor time Monday evening to debate [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. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted that added [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. During debate, Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green) successfully amended the bill to bar fees being charged to homeless and emancipated youths 15 and up for documents to obtain a permit or driver's license. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. The House dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit the bill and through a series of procedural motions, returned the bill to the floor for debate. The purpose was to remove the amendment added by Representative Chad Perkins as the

language was found to be drafted incorrectly. Once modified, the House again provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Circuit Clerk Salaries

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1389](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill modifies compensation of circuit clerks. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated there are ongoing negotiations right now and while the bill as written is going to change, the concept of the legislation is going to remain the same, which is to increase the salary of circuit clerks. The Polk County Circuit Clerk, MO Circuit Judges Association, MO Court Reporters Association, Greene County Circuit Clerk, Pettis County Circuit Clerk, and the Sheridan County Circuit Clerk supported the bill and informed committee members that it has been 29 years since there has been a pay increase and highlighted that circuit clerks are on call 24 hours a day. No opposing testimony was presented.

The House dedicated floor time Monday evening to debate [HB 1630](#), sponsored by Representative Sean Pouche (R-Kansas City). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1389](#), highlighted above. During the bill's progression through the committee process, substitute language was adopted to adjust the percentages to reflect the state pay increase from last year. During debate, the sponsor attempted to amend the bill to remove the tie of the circuit clerks to the associate circuit judges, but the bill was ultimately returned back to the calendar to be debate further another day.

Commercial Driving Privileges

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2304](#) sponsored by Representative Jeff Knight (R-Lebanon). This bill seeks to add verifications of an individual's eligibility for a driver's license. The Department of Revenue must verify the driver's eligibility for a license through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. After no discussion, the committee voted the bill do pass 9 - 0.

Commercial Practices

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [HB 1948](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill modifies the requirements for notice of sale by operators of self-service storage facilities for the sale of personal property of an occupant in default. The bill allows for the operator to advertise the sale in any other commercially reasonable manner in addition to advertising in the classified section of newspapers. During bill progression, substitute language was adopted which added the provisions from [HB 2066](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker) which requires the Department of Revenue to issue licenses for those who buy or sell catalytic converters. It also requires scrap metal dealers to require proof the catalytic converter came from a licensed repair shop or was obtained legally and contains penalty provisions for those who are found knowingly purchasing, obtaining, or possessing stolen catalytic converters. Additionally, HBs [1406](#), [1721](#) and [2276](#) were added to the title only. During debate, the bill was further amended by the addition of [HB 2131](#) which prohibits a person soliciting of payment of money by any writing that could be considered a bill, invoice, or statement of account due, but is in fact a solicitation for an order and prohibits the sales of motor vehicles on Sundays. Once modified, the House provided the first of two approval votes.

Commercial Transactions

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-2 vote.

Condemnation of Property

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1468](#) sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). The bill relates to the protection of the freedom of religion as it relates to property and eminent domain. The legislation says cities, including charter cities, shall not have the right to condemn lands owned by a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious organization. The bill sponsor stated the legislation is related to potential new sports stadiums in the Kansas City region and churches currently existing on prospective sites. Clergymen and faith-based groups provided supporting testimony. A Cole County citizen provided opposing testimony.

Contracts with Public Entities

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1724](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Falkner (R-St. Joseph). Due to unintended consequences with legislation that was passed in 2019 relating to Industrial Revenue Bonds. Prior to 2019, IRB projects were exempt from mechanical liens due to government ownership, which caused issues for subcontractors and in 2019, language was amended to require payment bonds for IRB projects in order to protect subcontractors. The bill removes the IRB payment bond requirements, provides an option to governmental entities to require a payment bond or consent to the filing of mechanical liens, and eliminates personal liability for employees and elected and appointed officials of a government entity for decisions made by a governmental entity requiring the payment of bonds. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

County Hospital Investments

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1665](#), sponsored by Representative Tara Peters (R-Rolla). Currently, the board of trustees of any hospital may invest up to 15% of their funds, that are not required to meet their obligations or for the hospital operations, into any mutual funds in the form of an investment company, a variety of stocks, bonds, and money-market investments. The bill removes the percentage restriction for investment purposes and deletes language relating to a mutual fund in the form of an investment company. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which limits the rating on the bonds which can be invested in to “A” or better and can invest up to 50% in the top five bonds “A” or better. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

County Official Salaries

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2571](#), sponsored by Representative Peggy McGaugh (R-Carrollton). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1362](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo) and 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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Cursive Writing Instruction

The House Special Committee on Education Reform convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2852](#), sponsored by Representative Peggy McGaugh (R-Carrollton). The bill requires schools in the state to provide instruction on cursive writing to students prior to the completion of the fifth grade and requires students to pass a proficiency test on competencies in reading and writing of cursive. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill consent by a 5-0 vote.

Death Penalty

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 951](#), sponsored Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). The bill clarifies the death penalty may be sought as a punishment in offenses of statutory rape in the first degree and the sex tracking of children in the first degree. The Missouri Baptist Convention provided supporting testimony. Empower Missouri and other advocates provided opposing testimony.

Delivery of a Controlled Substance

The House Judiciary Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [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. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to include 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. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-1 vote.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

The House Health and Mental Health Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 1723](#), sponsored by Representative Aaron Crossley (D-Independence). The bill establishes the "Dialectical Behavior Therapy Task Force" whose mission is to make specific recommendations for standards and procedures for certifications in dialectical behavior therapy. Additionally, the bill requires health benefit plans to cover dialectical behavior therapy and prohibits persons and entities from performing dialectical behavior therapy unless certified by the Dialectical Behavior Therapy Linehan Board of Certification or any other entity approved by the Department of Commerce and Insurance. The sponsor stated a substitute will be forthcoming which will remove the provisions requiring health benefit plans to cover the therapy and requiring certification to perform the therapy and will also tighten the framework of the duties of the task force. DBT practitioners, private citizens, Aspire Advocates provided supporting

testimony stating this therapy is critical for some patients and needs to be expanded. ArmorVine and Americas Health Insurance Plans provided opposing testimony to the bill, as filed.

Disability Transportation

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 990](#), sponsored by Senator Jill Carter (R-Neosho). The bill specifies that if an applicant for a disabled person license plate or windshield placard has presented a physician's statement noting that the applicable physical disability is permanent, a physician's statement shall not be required in order to renew the plate or placard. Paraquad provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Dr. Dan Brown Memorial Highway

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1453](#), sponsored by Representative Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill designates the Dr. Dan Brown memorial highway in Phelps County. Several lobbyists and friends provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee. The committee immediately moved to pass the bill consent by a 6-0 vote.

DWI Diversion Program

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1200](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Barton). The bill creates a DWI diversion program. A person is eligible if they meet the following requirements: the person has not been convicted of an alcohol related alcohol offense, the person has not previously been convicted of an intoxicated-related traffic offense and is not currently enrolled in another diversion program. Additionally, the defendant may not hold a commercial driver's license, operating a commercial vehicle at the time of the offense and the offense did not result in injury or death. MADD and the Coalition of Interlock Manufacturers testified in support. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which include changes on how DOR is notified, adds a provision of ineligibility related to breathalyzer tests, and how court documents related to DWIs are transferred to DOR and that defendants are responsible and addresses compensation related to noncompliance. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

Earnings Tax

The House dedicated floor time Monday to debate [HB 1516](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). The bill seeks to exempt from the city earnings tax all taxpayers whose income is at or below the 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted to ensure the bill does not apply to Kansas City. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Elderly Abuse

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1710](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles). The bill clarifies the abuse of an elderly, disabled or vulnerable person is a class E felony. A person commits this offense if they are a caregiver or elderly, disabled or vulnerable person if they knowingly act or knowingly fails to act in a manner that results in substantial risk to the life, body or health of that elderly, disabled or vulnerable person. AARP, VOYCE, and a state private advocate provided supporting testimony. Missouri Assisted Living

Association and Missouri Healthcare Association provided opposing testimony stating the definitions within the bill need to be more narrowly defined.

Election Omnibus

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [HB 2140](#), sponsored by Representative Peggy McGaugh (R-Carrollton). The bill modifies numerous provisions regarding elections and the election process. Specifically, the bill includes the following provisions:

- Allows electronic notification of election authorities;
- Changes the opening date for filing a declaration of candidacy that is not specified by law or charter for an office in a political subdivision or special district from the 17th Tuesday prior to the election to the 16th Tuesday prior to the election;
- Changes the closing filing date for filing a declaration of candidacy for such offices from the 14th Tuesday prior to the election to the 13th Tuesday prior to the election;
- Specifies that lists of absentee voters with permanent disabilities shall be kept confidential and shall not be posted or displayed in an area open to the public nor shown to any unauthorized person;
- Currently, provisional ballots are available at elections where federal or statewide candidates or statewide ballot measures are on the ballot. This bill makes provisional ballots available at any public election;
- Adds threatening to harm or engaging in conduct reasonably calculated to harass or alarm an election official or a member of one's family as class three election offenses;
- Creates the "Missouri Elections Sovereignty Act". The bill specifies that the State of Missouri reserves the right to determine the time, place, and manner of its own state elections, and declares that any federal laws regulating the same shall apply only to federal elections.

During debate the bill was further amended by removing the sunset from the complaint process for those found to have violated election law, requires the labeling of ballot measures, closes the Hancock Amendment loophole and any ballot measure seeking approval to change, add or modify a tax on real property shall express the effect of the change in terms of real dollars owed per \$100,000. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Elections (Primary)

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1120](#), sponsored by Senator Jill Carter (R-Granby). The bill reinstates the presidential preference primary election, to be held on the first Tuesday in March of each year in which a presidential election is held. During bill presentation, committee members questioned the reasoning to reinstate the primary election. The Democratic Director and Republic Director of St. Louis County supported the bill and cautioned the committee from implementing two elections so close together and advocating combining elections. The MO Voter Protection Coalition, and the ACLU also supported the bill and stated the bill would facilitate greater participation by all voters. The MO Security of States Office provided informational testimony and informed committee members that it would cost the state about \$8million for a presidential preference primary.

Electric Plant Closure

The House Utilities Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1753](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Pollitt (R-Sedalia). The bill creates provisions for the closure of

electric power plants. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to allow multi-generation construction to be done outside of the state if it is connected to the grid in the regional transmission organization (RTO) the generation is a member. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station Installations

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 1511](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). The bill requires political subdivisions that require the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at certain businesses to pay the costs associated with the installation, maintenance, and operation of such stations. Additionally, the bill caps any political subdivision from requiring more than five EV stations per parking lot. A pastor from Jefferson County, Petroleum and Convenience Store Association, and Associated Industries of MO supported the bill and informed committee members that the installation of EV should be left up to customer demand and decided at a local level. No opposing testimony was presented.

Electrical Corporation Deferrals

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1422](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). The bill was filed as a replacement to [SB 1247](#) and is in response to the pressing need for reliable baseload power. The bill seeks to modify definitions and allows the use of plant and service accounting (PSA), which makes it possible to get back full investments made into utility projects. Additionally, the bill provides utilities a depreciation of 100% of expenses, instead of 85%, and extends the sunset date from December 31, 2028, to December 31, 2035. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to change the depreciation back to 85% through August 27, 2024. Additionally, the committee substitute excludes the cost of investments in new generating units and energy storage systems from the requirement that at least 25% of the cost of investments reflected in each year's capital investment plan shall be comprised of grid modernization projects. Once modified the committee passed the bill by a 9-2 vote.

Emergency Medical Services

The House Health and Mental Health Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 2458](#), sponsored by Representative Chris Dinkins (R-Lesterville). This is the House companion to [SB 1340](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City) and requires ambulance district board of directors to complete three hours of continuing education for each term of office and failure to do so will result in a loss of office. Additionally, the bill requires each ambulance district to arrange for an audit of the district's records and accounts every three years by a certified public accountant and make the results available to the public on the district's website or otherwise freely available by other electronic means. Missouri Ambulance Association, Missouri EMS Association and Adair County Ambulance provided supporting testimony stating this would simply ensure boards are running legally and efficiently and attempt to provide better patient care. ArmorVine provided opposing testimony.

Emergency Medical Services

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 1340](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). The bill requires ambulance district boards of directors to complete three hours of continuing education for each term of office and failure to do so will result in a loss of office. Additionally, the bill requires each ambulance district to

arrange for an audit of the district's records and accounts every three years by a certified public accountant and make the results available to the public on the district's website or otherwise freely available by other electronic means. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Eminent Domain for Solar and Wind

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1262](#), sponsored by Senator Jason Bean (R-Holcomb). The bill prohibits the use of eminent domain by electrical corporations for the construction or erection of any plant, tower, panel, or facility used for wind and solar farms that are owned by public utilities. The MO Farm Bureau, MO Corn Growers Association, MO Soybean Association, and several private citizens supported the bill and expressed concern about property rights and the use of eminent domain and informed committee members that the state is seeing a huge influx of commercial wind and solar projects. Sierra Club opposed the bill. Ameren provided informational testimony and informed committee members that Ameren does not use eminent domain for their wind or solar projects but would like an exemption for their grid connector lines.

Employment Security

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2614](#), sponsored by Representative David Casteel (R-High Ridge). This bill adds to the reasons a claimant is disqualified for unemployment compensation by adding that if the designated representative of the Division of Employment Security within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations finds that a claimant failed to appear for a scheduled job interview or skills test. The bill also revises the method of notifying the claimant by deleting the current requirement of certified mail and referring to notification in writing or by email. After a lengthy discussion, the committee failed to pass the bill by a 3-7 vote.

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. Missouri Association of Realtors provided supporting testimony stating this allows for a statewide uniform policy. Empower Missouri provided opposing testimony stating the decisions should be left to the local municipalities.

Externships – Career and Educational Experience

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [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 no discussion, the committee passed the bill consent by a 15-0 vote.

Family Trust Companies

The House Financial Institutions Committee met in executive session Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 2798](#), sponsored by Representative Michael O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). The bill modifies the statutes on family trust companies to transfer administration and enforcement from the Secretary of State's office to the Division of Finance within the Department of Commerce and Insurance. The bill also: (1) Describes the process for the initial registration of a family trust and validates those family trust companies and foreign family trust companies that are in good standing as of August 28, 2024; and (2) Adds compliance with Section 362.1030, RSMo, to requirements for foreign family trust companies. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 9-0 vote.

Fast Track Program

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2278](#), sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler). Beginning January 1, 2025, this bill increases the maximum gross income for eligibility for the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant from \$80,000 to \$100,000 for taxpayers who are married filing jointly and from \$40,000 to \$50,000 for all other taxpayers, adjusted annually based on inflation. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1056](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). The bill increases the maximum gross income for eligibility for the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant from \$80,000 to \$100,000 for taxpayers who are married filing jointly and from \$40,000 to \$50,000 for all other taxpayers, adjusted annually based on inflation to match the consumer price index beginning January 1, 2025. The Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, MO Community College Association, Independent Colleges & Universities of Missouri, MO Chamber, MO Ambulance Association, and Council on Public Higher Education provided supporting testimony stating the bill expands the pool of applicants for apprenticeship or on-the-job training programs for adults. A private citizen provided opposing testimony.

Financial Transactions Involving Public Funds

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2526](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Owen (R-Springfield). The bill standardizes and adds transparency to the RFP process for deposits by municipalities. Specifically, the bill requires an RFP that addresses due diligence, safe custody of funds, interest rates, services, compliance with State and Federal regulations, and convenience and efficiency of treasury functions. The Missouri Municipal League and Missouri Bankers Association provided supporting testimony stating this would create uniformity and end the confusion with the RFP process for the different classification of cities.

Firearms: Anti-Red Flag Gun Seizure Act

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 998](#), sponsored by Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). This act establishes the Anti-Red Flag Gun Seizure Act which provides that any federal order of protection or other judicial order issued by a court to confiscate any firearm, firearm accessory, or ammunition from any law-abiding citizen shall be considered an infringement on the people's right to keep and bear arms. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

First Responder TTD (Volunteer)

The House Insurance Policy Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2641](#), sponsored by Representative Kyle Marquart (R-Washington). The bill seeks to calculate the rate of temporary total disability compensation for volunteer firefighters and volunteer first responders. Specifically, the temporary total disability benefits will be based on the volunteers weekly pay at their regular place of employment. Additionally, the bill outlines how to calculate benefits if the volunteer's regular place of employment's wages is not fixed or cannot be ascertained. Washington Missouri Fire Chief and Fire Service Alliance provided supporting testimony stating they are seeking gap insurance for volunteers that are injured while providing services and this could potentially help with future recruiting. MIRMA and Missouri Insurance Coalition provided informational testimony regarding pool insurance policies for municipalities and emergency responders and current statutes that address compensation.

Health Care Practitioners

The House Health and Mental Health Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 2534](#), sponsored by Representative Lisa Thomas (R-Lake Ozark). The bill seeks to require the information health care practitioners must provide when advertising their services. Additionally, the bill requires the health care practitioner's license be displayed as well as wearing a name badge or other identification at all times while practicing. Missouri State Medical Association, Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, Missouri Society of Anesthesiologists, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Emergency Room Physicians Association, Missouri Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons and Missouri Academy of Family Physicians provided supporting testimony stating this simply allows for greater transparency for patients and allows patients to know exactly whom they are interacting. Blitz, Barge & Deutsche Law Firm, Missouri Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, Missouri Chiropractic Physicians Association, Hannibal Regional Health Care, Missouri Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Golden Valley Memorial Health Care, Missouri Nurses Association and Missouri Hospital Association provided opposing testimony stating this interferes in the healthcare professional relationship and there is already truth in advertising provisions in statute that must be followed.

Hearing Aid & Cochlear Implant Coverage

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday morning to debate [HB 2626](#), sponsored by Representative Cameron Parker (R-Campbell). The bill requires MO HealthNet to cover the cost of hearing aids and cochlear implants. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted to require the hearing devices to be medically necessary, provided by a certified and/or licensed audiologist, and [HB 1918](#) was added to the title of the bill. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary votes. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

High School Athlete Compensation

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [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. The University of Missouri System testified in support. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Higher Education Funding

The House Committee on Higher Education convened in public session on Wednesday afternoon to consider [HB 2905](#), sponsored by Rep. Brenda Shields (R-St. Joseph). The bill directs the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, in consultation with public universities and colleges in the state and a committee of members of the Missouri House to jointly develop a higher education funding model based on the institutional mission, outcomes, and performance accountability of each institution. The University of Missouri System, UM Flagship Council, and Council on Public Higher Education provided supporting testimony stating the bill would provide stability in the funding process and more accurately reflect each school's contribution to the state. The Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development provided informational testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Homeless Program Funding

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1336](#), sponsored by Senator Holly Thompson Rehder (R-Sullivan). The bill amends the section of law, which was declared unconstitutional in *Byrd, et al. v. State of Missouri, et al.* The bill specifies that state funds for homelessness shall be used for certain facilities, including parking areas, camping facilities, and short-term shelters, and shall comply with certain requirements. Additionally, any person that owns or operates a private camping facility pursuant to this act shall be immune from liability under certain circumstances. Finally, the bill states no person shall be permitted to use state-owned lands for unauthorized sleeping, camping, or long-term shelters. Any violation shall be a Class C misdemeanor; however, the first offense shall be a warning with no citation. Empower Missouri, Greater KC Coalition to End Homelessness, Missouri Justice Coalition, Paraquad and other advocates provided opposing testimony. No supporting testimony was presented to the committee.

Hospital Pricing Transparency

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1212](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). The bill bars hospitals not in compliance with federal hospital price transparency laws on the date that items or services are purchased from or provided to a patient from initiating a collection action against the patient for a debt owed for those items or services. Additionally, the bill provides a civil remedy for patients. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-1 vote.

Human Trafficking

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2688](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Myers (R-Warrenton). The bill establishes a twenty-year statute of limitations for certain trafficking offenses. Additionally, the bill creates an “aggravating circumstance” for human trafficking offenses and adds additional penalties of up to five years imprisonment. The bill establishes the “Council on Human Trafficking” within the Department of Public Safety and develop plans related to providing victims of human trafficking with services, provide training and seek solutions to human trafficking. Finally, the bill allows those convicted of prostitution to seek expungement of the record. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted that removed the creation of the “Council on Human Trafficking” within the department of public safety and changed “business” to “business owner”. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1245](#), sponsored by Senator Holly Thompson Rehder (R-Sullivan). The bill modifies several provisions regarding the trafficking and exploitation of children and vulnerable persons. The bill seeks to incorporate the suggestions from the interim taskforce. Specifically, the bill outlines restitution procedures from victims of human trafficking, allows prosecutors to request the Attorney General's help on human trafficking cases, modifies numerous penalty provisions regarding sexual offenses against children and modifies several councils and task forces regarding human trafficking. Missouri Network Against Child Abuse provided supporting testimony. Missouri Civil Justice Reform Coalition and American Tort Reform Association provided informational testimony regarding some concerns with language within the bill but stated negotiations are ongoing.

Hydrant Inspections

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [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. Missouri Public Utility Alliance provided supporting testimony stating this would allow larger cities to utilize the five-year option instead of just the smaller municipalities. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Ignition Interlock Device

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee met Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1952](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Sharp (D-Kansas City). Currently, a person who has had his or her driver's license suspended or revoked because of an assessment of points for an intoxication-related traffic offense conviction and who has a prior alcohol-related enforcement contact must show proof to the Director of Revenue that any motor vehicle driven by the person has a certified ignition interlock device installed. Under this bill, the requirement applies only to a person who has an intoxication-related traffic offense conviction in which the person's blood alcohol content was at least .08 but less than .15 and who has a prior alcohol-related enforcement contact or to a person who has an assessment of points for an intoxication-related traffic offense conviction in which the person's blood alcohol content was found to be .15 or more. The Missouri Department of Transportation testified in support of the bill. No other testimony was presented.

Illegal Immigrants

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1372](#) sponsored by Senator Bill Eigel (R-St. Charles County). The bill creates and modifies provisions relating to illegal immigrants. The legislation creates a new state offense of improper entry, prohibits a student that is deemed unlawful from enrolling in a university or college, any person deemed here illegally from receiving a public benefit and any appropriation made by the General Assembly to any entity, whether public or private, for the purpose of providing services to those unlawfully present in the United States. Armorvine provided supporting testimony. Missouri Catholic Conference, the Interfaith of Latin America and advocates provided opposing testimony.

Incarcerated Individual Reimbursement

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB1353](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill 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. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

The House Corrections and Public Institutions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2558](#), sponsored by Representative Justin Sparks (R-Wildwood). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1353](#), highlighted above. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

The committee then turned its attention towards [HB 2665](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters). The bill is similar to [HB 2558](#) and requires a county from which an inmate or detainee resides to reimburse St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County for the daily cost of housing. After no discussion the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Income Tax Elimination (Corporate)

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee met Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1029](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). The bill seeks to eliminate the corporate income tax incrementally over a period of five years, to be fully eliminated by calendar year 2029. After brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

The committee then turned its attention towards [SB 823](#), sponsored by Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). The bill seeks to reduce the corporate income tax rate to 2.25% and provides additional 0.5% reductions for every \$50 million collected. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-1 vote.

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [HB 2274](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Smith (R-Dora). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1029](#), highlighted above. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Income Tax Elimination (Personal)

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform convened Tuesday morning to discuss [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 discussions, committee members expressed concerns with the bill and stated that Missouri has not grown compared to surrounding states. No supporting testimony was presented. The MO Budget Project opposed the bill and informed committee members the bill would deprive the state of adequate resources and substituting an income tax for a sales tax, which would impact low wage workers, more than high income earners.

Joint Committee on Legal Tender

The Senate Insurance & Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1028](#) sponsored by Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). This bill would establish a permanent joint committee known as the “Joint Committee on Legal Tender” to examine the possibility and constitutionality of issuing gold and silver coinage, and the possibility of keeping a certain amount of gold and silver coinage and specie

in the custody of the state at all times. The sponsor stated that he brought this bill because he wishes to avoid government control over and tracking of people's digital purchases. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight

The Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight convened Monday to hear testimony from Missouri Department of Transportation Director Ryan McKenna. Throughout his presentation, Director McKenna highlighted current challenges the Department faces, its successes, goals, infrastructure improvement plans for Interstate 70, its license plate, highway sign programs and Commission.

Director McKenna stated the overall goal of MoDOT is to provide a world class transportation system that's safe, innovative, reliable, and dedicated to a prosperous Missouri. He described safety issues MoDOT workers face such as general highway and roadway accidents, reckless and high-speed driving and highlighted the 139 employees that have lost lives as a result of roadway and construction zone accidents. He also mentioned the increase in traffic fatalities among motorists and motorcyclists. Director McKenna also discussed the workforce issues MoDOT is facing when it comes to its workforce and staffing levels. In its FY25 budget, Director McKenna has requested additional funds to address market pay concerns and staffing shortages. In the last several years, the Department has lost over 15,000 years of experience. The Director said the Department continues to work to address employee pay so it can properly staff critical response positions.

Next, Director McKenna discussed Governor Mike Parson's bridge focus program. In December 2023, MoDOT completed the \$353 million project designed to rehabilitate or replace 250 bridges in the state. In the past decade, the Department has completed more than 4200 projects with a total budget of \$11.1 billion. 94% of those projects were completed on time and 5% of those projects were completed under budget. Director McKenna went on to highlight the success of the Department. In recent years, motorists have traveled 53 billion miles on Missouri highways and interstates. Missouri's minor routes make up the largest group of state highways, accounting for about 17,500 miles, just over half of the entire state highway system.

The presentation was concluded with a listing of current projects underway which include the I-70 Missouri River Bridge at Rockport, a \$240 million construction project, the I-270 project in North Saint Louis County, cross traffic for I-70, Minneola climbing lanes and the \$1.5 billion overall I-70 project.

Empowerment Scholarship Account Program

The Senate dedicated floor time Monday afternoon 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 debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to provide several changes to funding mechanisms and include language clarifying that homeschoolers cannot participate in the ESA program. After considerable debate, the bill was returned to calendar to be consider further another day. The Senate dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to revisit the bill. During debate, the sponsor offered a new substitute and stated the ESA language is similar to what was on the floor prior. Additionally, the new substitute adds some language related to four-Day school week, includes language related to teacher pay, includes language related to the foundation formula and makes part of it based on enrollment rather than daily average attendance.

During Senate discussions, the sponsor further stated the reasoning behind the foundation formula changes is to address the fixed costs of having to run a school. Even if students aren't showing up, you have to pay a teacher and there are also certain fixed costs associated. Additionally, within the proposed substitute, there's 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 Senate adopted the new substitute and provided its first of two necessary approval votes. The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning to consider passage of SB 727. After some debate, the Senate passed the bill by a 19-10 vote. The bill now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Juror Compensation

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1220](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill modifies provisions relating to the compensation of jurors. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to include that the governing city or county approves the alternative juror compensation package so costs appropriately line up with planned budgets. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Juvenile Justice and Education

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee met Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1895](#), sponsored by Representative Raychel Proudie (D-Ferguson). This bill establishes the "Task Force on Juvenile Justice and Education", which is created to study and make recommendations on the processes, procedures, and protocols regarding education for adjudicated youth in Missouri. There was no testimony of any kind presented.

Land Bank

The House dedicated floor time Monday evening to revisit [HB 2065](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Owen (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. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 119-33 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Library Boards

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2648](#), sponsored by Representative Jamie Gragg (R-Ozark). The bill seeks to modify local public library boards by providing local communities the option to elect members instead of being appointed. During committee discussion, committee members expressed concern with candidate involvement and questioned who would fund the election and campaigns. The sponsor informed committee members that the election costs would be funded by the libraries and counties. Several private citizens supported the bill. The MO Library Association opposed the bill and expressed concern with the cost of moving towards an elected instead of appointed board.

License Plate (Single)

The House Transportation Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2804](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Kalberloh (R-Lowry City). The bill allows the Department of Revenue to issue only one license plate to specified vehicles. The bill requires any vehicle requesting only one license plate to turn in the remaining plate to the Department of Revenue. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Linked Deposit Program

The Senate Insurance & Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1803](#) sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington). This bill raises the cap on the Treasurer's investment authority through the Linked Deposit Program. The bill is identical to Senator Crawford's [SB 736](#). Testifying in favor of the bill were the Missouri Bankers Association, Missouri Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Missouri Credit Union Association, Missouri Independent Bankers Association, FCS Financial, Associated Industries of Missouri, and Missouri Farm Bureau. No other witnesses testified on the bill.

Long-Term Facility Surveillance

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1709](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles). The bill requires long-term care facilities to install, operate and maintain 24-hour digital cameras which must have views of each entryway into residents' rooms. Additionally, the bill sets forth specific criteria for editing video and who may request copies of footage and how it may be utilized. Finally, the bill prohibits the release of any footage or video of residents without consent from the resident or family members. The sponsor stated the intent is to provide transparency and peace of mind for family members and is open to any changes to strengthen the language. Several private citizens provided supporting testimony stating this would ensure other families had recourse if their loved ones were injured on site. Missouri Assisted Living Association and Missouri Healthcare Association, stating facilities that rely on 75% or more Medicaid reimbursement cannot afford to install digital surveillance systems. Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys provided informational testimony regarding current elder abuse laws and penalties.

Maintenance Orders

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [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. Several attorneys provided supporting testimony stating this particular section of statute has not been updated in fifty years. A state public advocate provided opposing testimony stating this should be left to the judge's discretion.

Marriages

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2376](#), sponsored by Representative Sean Pouche (R-Kansas City). The bill allows marriages to be solemnized by the recorder of deeds or the deputy recorder under the supervision of the recorder of deeds. The sponsor

stated the bill seeks to address the backlog in the judicial system and provide another option. The Platte County Recorder of Deeds supported the bill and informed committee members that Platte County does not have the resources currently and the majority of people are going to surrounding counties and the bill simply provides options and the ability to streamline. No opposing testimony was presented. The Recorder Association of MO provided informational testimony and stated they continue to work with the sponsor and wanted to make themselves available for any questions.

Mental Health Courts

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1370](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). The bill includes within treatment courts, a specific authorization for mental health courts. The sponsor's intent is to add another element within treatment courts. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Minimum Sentences

The House Crime Prevention Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 1545](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Allen (R-Kansas City). Currently, anyone with a previous prison commitment to the Department of Corrections must serve a minimum percentage of his or her sentence, as specified in law. This bill modifies the percentage an individual must serve in relation to his or her age. During committee discussion substitute language was adopted which addressed committee members concerns from the public hearing. The sub specifies that in order to qualify for earlier release their crime cannot be a domestic assault or sexual in nature. The bill was passed by a vote of 9 yes, 6 no and 2 present.

Missouri Defense and Energy Independence Act

The House Economic Development Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1834](#), sponsored by Representative Aaron McMullen (R-Independence). The bill establishes the Missouri Defense and Energy Independence Act, which seeks to provide a tax credit for a company that converts its operations towards the production of chemicals, metals, gases, or rare earth minerals that will be used for projects designed to decrease or eliminate reliance on foreign-produced chemicals, metals, gases, or rare earth minerals used in the production of energy projects or Department of Defense projects to claim a tax credit against costs incurred during the conversion process. The total credit is capped at \$40 million annually and each qualifying company may claim up to \$6 million. Finally, the bill includes a six-year sunset. The sponsor informed the committee the intent of the legislation is complete independence from foreign produced microchips and energy production. Jost Chemical Company, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the American Farm Institute supported the bill and stated we have an abundance of natural resources, and the bill would help keep us from relying on other countries. Additionally, it was stated, the bill would generate jobs and revitalize abandoned and blighted areas. No opposing testimony was presented.

Missouri State Employees Retirement System

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and pensions Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 1401](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). Beginning on August 28, 2024, in the event that the Board of the Missouri State Employees' Retirement System ("MOSERS") certifies a contribution rate that exceeds 28.75%, the Commissioner of the Office of Administration shall include in its appropriation request an amount equal to the difference between the certified contribution rate and

28.75% of the compensation of members who are employees of the public higher education institutions. COPHE provided supporting testimony stating this could help provide better services and programs to students. Missouri State Employees Retirement System provided informational testimony stating the legislation would be cost neutral and not adversely impact the system.

Missouri Uniform Fiduciary Income and Principal Act

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1007](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill establishes the Missouri Uniform Fiduciary Income and Principal Act, which modifies provisions relating to trust and estate administration. A committee subset was offered to include clean up language and cross references to language. After no discussion, the committee substitute was adopted. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

MO Contracts

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1827](#), sponsored by Representative Cyndi Buchheit Courtway (R-Festus). Currently in making purchases, the Commissioner of the MO Office of Administration shall give preference to commodities and tangible personal property produced within Missouri. The bill will add Missouri based businesses to the list of businesses that are given preference for purchases made by the state. The Missouri based business is defined as a corporation, limited liability company, limited partnership or limited liability partnership formed or domiciled in Missouri, whose principal place of business has a physical location within the state. Citing the Department was previously contracting with several MO based business and unexpectedly have canceled the contracts and moved the services to out-of-state companies, the intent of the legislation is to promote Missouri businesses and keep taxpayer money within the State. Proffer Wholesale Produce Inc, and a state public advocate supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

MO HealthNet Work Requirements

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SJR 76](#), sponsored by Senator Jill Carter (R-Granby). The constitutional amendment, upon approval by the voters and with a federal waiver, would require able-bodied adult MO HealthNet participants, ages 19 to 49, to participate in work and community engagement requirements. The amendment allows MO HealthNet to grant certain exemptions to those who are disabled and outlines specific criteria that must be met to qualify for other exemptions. Empower Missouri, AARP, American Cancer Action Network, Missouri Budget Project, Health Forward Foundation and Paraquod provided opposing testimony stating this legislation is discriminatory and unlikely to receive a federal waiver. A private citizen provided supporting testimony. The Department of Social Services provided informational testimony regarding the waiver process and estimated timelines.

MO Works Program Modifications

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [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 a 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 MO Department of Economic Development supported the bill and informed committee members that the AIM and TIME zones use the same economic incentives and the bill simply combines the programs into one overall cap. Additional supporting testimony was presented by the MO Economic Development Council, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Port KC, Associated Industries of MO and informed committee members that the MO Works Program is a great economic tool for the state and the proposed changes would benefit the program by providing flexibility. No opposing testimony was presented.

Motor Vehicle Registration

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2096](#) sponsored by Representative Bob Bromley (R-Carl Junction). The bill would allow drivers with a vehicle aged up to five years old be able to pay for vehicle registration up to five years. After no discussion, the committee voted the bill do pass 8 - 0.

Motor Vehicle Registration (Biennial)

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2097](#) sponsored by Representative Bob Bromley (R-Carl Junction). The bill would allow individuals to obtain a two-year registration on their vehicle. After no discussion, the committee voted the bill do pass 9 - 0.

Municipal Meeting Notices

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1992](#), sponsored by Representative Sherri Gallick (R-Belton). The bill requires that notices of county planning board hearings be posted on the county's website, and it repeals the requirement that the notices be posted at least 15 days in advance of the hearing in at least two places in each township. Cass County and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Mutual Insurance Companies

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2524](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Knight (R-Lebanon). The bill creates the “Protecting Missouri’s Mutual Insurance Companies Act” and establishes standards regarding reinsurance coverage and company examinations. Under the bill, no Missouri mutual insurance companies would be required to acquire or carry reinsurance greater than adequate reinsurance and that unlimited reinsurance would be optional. Additionally, the bill limits when and under what conditions the Director of the Department of Commerce and Insurance may hold a hearing regarding a proposed merger of Missouri mutual insurance companies. Finally, the bill addresses fees the Department may charge for the examination of Missouri mutual insurance companies, with additional guidelines for how the Department may conduct such examinations. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which is compromise language between the mutual insurance companies and the Division of Insurance. Specifically, the bill allows Chapter 380 insurance companies to remain instead of becoming Chapter 379 and modifies the audit transparency provisions. Additionally, language was added which mirrors [SB 1348](#), which specifies that certain confidentiality provisions shall also apply to records used in market conduct investigations and actions. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Naturopathic Physician Licensure

The House Professional Registration Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2446](#), sponsored by Representative Doug Richey (R-Excelsior Springs). The bill establishes the “Naturopathic Physicians Practice Act” and seeks to define the terms, scope, and requirements for the practice of naturopathic medicine. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which modified the definition of “minor office procedure” to not include general anesthetics or surgery, prohibits the prescribing of Schedule III, IV and V narcotics and opioids, removed provisions regarding naturopathic pain management and requires accreditation by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Net Metering

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 855](#), sponsored by Senator Cindy O’Laughlin (R-Shelbina). The bill pertains to net metering of solar power. In 2007, the legislature created a framework for MO citizens to sell back power to the prospective utility provider in excess of their immediate onsite needs and only be billed for the net amount of power used during that billing cycle. Since the passage of the law, there has been considerable sustained growth in the number of members connecting personal energy generation sources to the electric grid and with current law, local member co-op member boards are denied the flexibility necessary to ensure the fixed costs to maintain the electrical system are shared fairly between member generators and members that choose not to connect their own energy sources. This bill clarifies the Public Service Commission or the governing body of a electric cooperative or a municipal utility are to offer net metering to customers who generate their own electricity at rates identical in certain ways to rates if the customer did not generate electricity. Calloway Electric Cooperative, MO Association of Municipal Utilities, City of Fulton, Evergy, Ameren MO, MO Farm Bureau supported the bill. The MO Solar Energy Industries Association, Renew MO opposed the bill and stated the bill essentially provides a blank check to utilities and allows them to implement any amount of fees to customers.

Nonprofit Safety and Security Task Force

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee met Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 1557](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schwadron (R-St. Charles). The bill establishes the MO Task Force on Nonprofit Safety and Security and is tasked with studying and making recommendations on the security needs of nonprofit organizations at elevated risk of terrorist attacks in Missouri. Additionally, the bill establishes the "Supplemental Nonprofit Safety and Security Fund" to be used to defray costs of security enhancements or measures, for eligible nonprofit organizations. There was no discussion from the committee and the bill was passed 18-0.

Offenders Omnibus

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [HB 1777](#), sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green). The bill modifies several provisions certain offenders. Specifically, the bill addresses incarcerated offenders accessing SNAP benefits, releasing of inmates from the Department of Corrections’ procedures, restraints on children in juvenile court, procedures for pregnant inmates and admissibility of certain evidence in criminal cases. During debate, the bill was further modified by modifying the minimum eligibility for inmate release and the addition of [HB 2770](#) which modifies prison sentences for repeat felony offenders. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Optometrists

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 956](#), sponsored by Senator Karla Eslinger (R-Wasola). The bill would allow licensed optometrists to use injectable agents and surgical procedures for certain purposes. Simply put, this bill would expand the scope of practice for licensed optometrists in Missouri. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated that a licensed optometrist licensed in Missouri and trained on the procedures outlined in this bill, cannot practice these procedures in Missouri, however they can drive 30 minutes south down to Arkansas where they are allowed to practice these procedures. Several practicing optometrists supported the bill and stated the bill would allow optometrists to perform in-office surgical procedures that they are already educated, trained, and certified to perform and stated advancements in Medicare and in medical care has changed over the past 30 years and optometry has not been kept up to date in those 30 years. Additional supporting testimony was presented by the Missouri Optometry Student Association, and the student liaison to the Missouri Optometry Association. Dr. Denise Hug who was licensed as an optometrist, continued her education and is now a practicing ophthalmology specialist in Kansas City and also a member of the MO Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (MOSEPS) opposed the bill and highlighted the vast contrasts of education between ophthalmologists and optometrists, stating there are thousands of hours of training an ophthalmologist participates in outside of just the eyeball to be able to provide the care that is being asked for by optometry. Dr. James Luetkemeyer on behalf of the MO State Medical Association also opposed the bill stating the bill as drafted would be a very broad expansion of the scope of practice, particularly as laser technology continues to improve in the field.

Outdoor Advertising

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1008](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill exempts signs displayed by a landowner who also owns a business that is advertised on the sign from the current \$200 outdoor advertising fee and biennial inspection for certain highway signs. The bill also includes language clarifying that the landowner is exempt from fees if they are the permit holder of the sign and own the business advertised on the sign. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

PACE Act

The House Local Government convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [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. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to allow dealers that originate these loans, to package the loans together and also take on loans from other states. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Paramedic Services (Community)

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2627](#), sponsored by Representative Bennie Cook (R-Houston). The bill 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. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Park Records Closure

The Senate Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1019](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill allows for public governmental bodies to close records, meetings, and votes that relate to individually identifiable customer information for visitors who make a camping, lodging, or shelter reservation for a Missouri State Park or State Historic Site, unless the records are requested by the visitor or authorized for release by the visitor. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

Pediatric Extended Care Facilities

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1975](#), sponsored by Representative Melanie Stinnett (R-Springfield). Beginning August 28, 2025, the bill bars prescribed pediatric extended care facilities without a license from the Department of Health and Senior Services. Additionally, the bill defines “prescribed pediatric extended care facility.” During discussion, substitute language was adopted which specifies the provisions of the bill do not apply to “child care facilities.” Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Peer Review Committees

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee met Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 1952](#), sponsored by Representative Bennie Cook (R-Houston). The bill would place licensed providers of emergency medical services under the provisions of the health care professionals’ statutes for purposes of liability and other disclosures made by peer review committees. There was no discussion from the committee and the bill was passed 16-1.

Pesticide Labeling

The Senate Agriculture, Food Production, and Outdoor Resources Committee met Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1416](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). 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. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to limit the labeling requirements to warn the “products may cause cancer” only. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-1 vote.

The House Agriculture Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2763](#), sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1416](#), highlighted above. Bayer Cropscience, MO-AG MFA, MO Corn Growers Association, MO Soybean Association, Person-Fordyce Farms, MO Cattlemens Association, MO Farm Bureau, the Director of Life Science and Workforce Engagement for the Missouri Biotechnology Association, Associated Industries of MO, Prairie Queen Ag, MO Pork Association, and the MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided supporting testimony and informed committee members that today, glyphosate-based herbicides are the most widely used weed control products in the world. This widespread adoption is due not only to the effectiveness and extensive economic and environmental benefits, but also the strong safety profile of these products. When it comes to safety assessments, glyphosate is among the most extensively tested pesticides on the market. The MO Trial Attorney Association, MO Coalition for the Environment, along with several private citizens opposed the bill.

Pet Shop Operation

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 937](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill prohibits dealers and pet shops from purchasing animals who are not licensed to sell and handle animals in accordance with current law and requires the shop to release the breeder's name and address. Additionally, the bill prohibits political subdivisions from enacting or enforcing an ordinance or other regulation that prohibits the operation of a licensed pet shop. Pet Land provided supporting testimony.

Missouri Alliance for Animals Coalition, Humane Society of the United States, Animal Defense Legal Legislative Fund provided opposing testimony stating the penalty provisions are not strict enough and there are no real enforcement provisions within the bill.

Plants (Nonnative)

The Senate Agriculture Policy Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [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). The bill 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." Missouri Invasive Plant Council, farmers, Conservation Federation of Missouri, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Missouri Parks Association, Missouri Forrest Products Association and Missouri Cattlemen's Association provided supporting testimony. A plant wholesale dealers provided opposing testimony stating there should be a deadline on adding plants to the invasive plan list and the watchlist.

Prenatal Testing

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1260](#), sponsored by Senator Elaine Gannon (R-DeSoto). The bill seeks to modify prenatal testing. Currently, health care providers draw and test a pregnant woman's blood at or soon after her first prenatal exam for syphilis, hepatitis B, or other similar diseases. The bill requires, with consent, an additional blood draw at 28 weeks of pregnancy and include hepatitis C and HIV and requires the tests be approved by the FDA. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

Professional Counselors

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 1284](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill modifies the licensure processes for professional counselors. Specifically, the bill requires the Division of Professional Registration to provide electronic access to licensure applications within 15 business days and allows graduates to receive provisional licensure until the Division can fully review the applications. During committee discussion, Senator Karla Eslinger (R-Wasola) informed committee members the division of professional registration worked with stakeholder groups and drafted a committee substitute that would empower the executive director for the professional counselor board to approve clean licensure applications. Currently the board members themselves have to approve all applications. This committee substitute would also require that the division of professional registration put the license information for professionally licensed professional counselors online. After no further discussion, the committee substitute was adopted, and the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Professional License Suspension

The House Professional Registration Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [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. The sponsor stated the way the Department of Revenue contacts people who are delinquent on their taxes is antiquated and some may not be aware they are delinquent on their taxes before their licenses are suspended. Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, private citizens and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Property Tax Payments

The House Ways and Means Committee met Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2356](#), sponsored by Representative Peggy McGaugh (R-Carrollton). Currently, a township county may not allow taxpayers the option to pay any part of their real and personal property taxes on an annual, semiannual, or quarterly basis. This bill allows township counties the option to pass such an order or ordinance. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Protection Orders (Lifetime)

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 869](#) sponsored by Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). Known as Hayley's Law, the bill provides that a court shall have jurisdiction at the time of sentencing to enter a lifetime protection order restraining or enjoining the defendant from contacting the victim if the defendant has been found guilty of a dangerous felony. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Public School Retirement System

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Pensions Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 877](#), sponsored by Senator Doug Beck (D-St. Louis). Current law provides that a member of the Public School Retirement System of Missouri with 32 years or more of service, regardless of age, be provided a retirement allowance with a multiplier of 2.55% of the member's final average salary for each year of the membership service. The bill modifies the multiplier by allowing 2.53% for those with 31 years of service, 2.56% for those with 32 years of service and 2.6% for those with 33 years of service. PSRS, Missouri State Teachers Association, Missouri Retired Teachers Association provided supporting testimony stating the increase in the multiplier in current statute has caused an increase in experienced teachers returning to the classroom.

Public Service Commission Members

The House Agriculture Policy Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 2832](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill). Currently, the Public Service Commission consists of five members appointed by the Governor, with advice and consent of the Senate. The bill increases the number of members to seven, with not more than one from each Congressional district. In addition, at least one member must have experience in finance, one member must have experience in the utility sector, and two members must have been engaged in farming. During committee discussion, Representative Doug Clemens (D-St. Ann) attempted to amend the bill by requiring a member of the board to be a consumer protection advocate. After brief discussion, the amendment failed, and the committee passed the bill by an 11-3 vote.

Railroad Crossing Safety

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1299](#), sponsored by Senator Jason Bean (R-Pemiscot). The bill specifies that drivers shall stop at railroad crossings for "any on-track equipment" in addition to trains. Union Pacific Railroad and the Brotherhood of Maintenance Way Employees provide supporting testimony. The Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys provided opposing testimony stating the language within the bill is too vague. The Missouri Railroad Association provided informational testimony regarding the appropriated funds in last year's budget to make upgrades to railroad crossing across Missouri.

Red Light Camera Enforcement

The House Transportation Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2849](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill prohibits any political subdivision from issuing a notice or violation in any intersection within their jurisdiction from the use of automated red light enforcement systems. The MO Municipal League, and Vera Mobility provided opposing testimony. No supporting testimony was provided to the committee.

Renewable Natural Gas

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee met Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 829](#), sponsored by Senator Caleb Rowden (R-Columbia). In 2021, legislation was passed 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 to the PSC to promulgate rules and spread the costs of the project across the rate base. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to clarify definitions and timelines. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 9-2 vote.

The House Utilities Committee met Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2193](#), sponsored by Representative Mike O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Road Fund

The House Transportation Accountability committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HJR 127](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). Upon voter approval, the proposed constitutional amendment would require that the State Road Fund be subject to appropriation by the General Assembly, rather than standing appropriated without legislative action. Additionally, the resolution specifics part of the Department and the Commission's responsibility is to create the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is used to determine what projects need to be completed. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to include [HJR 128](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker) and upon voter approval, the resolution would dedicate 1% of the collected gas tax money to counties based on assessed value of agriculture land, instead of the total amount of agricultural land in the state. Once amended, several committee members expressed concern with the constitutionality of including [HJR 128](#) and ultimately the committee failed to pass the resolution by a vote of 2-11.

Rural Access to Capital Act

The House dedicated floor time to debate [HB 2170](#), sponsored by Representative Kurtis Gregory (R-Marshall). This 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 objective is to address the growing unemployment rate in rural areas and the adverse impact it has on rural communities. During debate, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to correct a drafting error and bar foreign owned entities from collecting or benefiting from tax credits. Representative Mike Burton (D-Lakeshire) unsuccessfully attempted to amend the bill by requiring companies seeking tax incentives to have been domiciled in Missouri for five years. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

School Safety Assessments

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1153](#), sponsored by Senator Angela Mosley (D-St. Louis). The bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to conduct annual safety assessments of all public schools in the state in consultation with the Department of Public Safety and Missouri Center for Education Safety of each school's vulnerabilities to school shootings and intruders and provide recommendations on the implementation of appropriate safety procedures, policies, tools, and training protocols. A former school principal provided supporting testimony. A private citizen provided opposing testimony.

School Safety Standards and Protocols

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1761](#), sponsored by Representative Justin Hicks (R-Lake St. Louis). The bill creates several provisions relating to school safety standards and protocols beginning in the 2025-26 school year. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which removes processes by which a school district found to be noncompliant with provisions of the bill may become re-accredited after losing accreditation due to noncompliance. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-5 vote.

School Staff Training Material Reviews

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1203](#), sponsored by Senator Mary Elizabeth Coleman (R-Arnold). The bill requires school districts and charter schools to post staff training, instructional aides, and curricular materials on topics including nondiscrimination, diversity, equity, and inclusion on the district's website and expands the purview of the Missouri Attorney General's Office to enforce provisions of the law and investigate allegations of noncompliance. A private citizen provided supporting testimony. The ACLU of Missouri and MO Equity Education Action provided opposing testimony regarding the provisions of enforcement by the Attorney General.

School Start Date Restriction Exemptions

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 882](#), sponsored by Senator Greg Razer (D-Kansas City). The bill modifies the start date of the academic year for public school districts in which a charter public school operates. Currently, a charter public school is exempt from a prohibition on school districts beginning the academic year sooner than 14 calendar days prior to the first Monday in September. This bill allows

school districts in which a charter is operating to also be exempt. The Missouri School Boards Association and a parent from the Kansas City Public Schools provided supporting testimony stating the bill helps families with multiple children align schedules and begin school on the same day. The Missouri Canoe & Floaters Association provided opposing testimony stating the bill potentially impacts the ability to employ students during the summer and would negatively affect the tourism season.

Sewage Regulations

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1283](#), Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2083](#), sponsored by Representative Kurtis Gregory (R-Marshall). Currently, a state standard for the location, size of sewage tanks, and length of lateral lines is based partially on the percolation or permeability rate of the soil, as well as other specified factors. This bill modifies this provision to state that the standard is based partially on soil properties and also establishes the costs associated with testing. The MO Public Health Excellence supported the bill. A state public advocate opposed the bill.

Sexual Offenses Involving Children

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [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 now discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Sheriffs' Elections and Duties

The Senate General Laws Committee met Wednesday morning to consider [SJR 75](#) sponsored by Senator Jill Carter (R-Jasper). [SJR 75](#) modifies provisions related to sheriffs. If adopted, the legislation says that each county shall elect a sheriff to a four-year term by a majority of the qualified voters of the county. This constitutional amendment shall not apply to any county which does not elect a sheriff. The legislation also says sheriffs shall be notified of ongoing federal investigations happening within respective jurisdictions and that a sheriff may be removed from office by voters. Members of the committee raised concerns about responsibilities of sheriffs varying in the state. The Missouri Sheriff's Retirement System and the Reason Foundation provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Shutdown Orders

The House Special Committee on Small Business convened Monday evening to consider passage of [HB 2796](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis) and [HB 2874](#), sponsored by Representative Brian Seitz (R-Branson). The bills are similar and 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. During committee discussion, the bills were combined to create one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

Small Wireless Act

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1411](#), sponsored by Senator Karla May (D-St. Louis). The bill is similar to [HB 1995](#), sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green) and seeks to extend the sunset date of the Uniform Small Wireless Facility Deployment Act from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2029. AT&T, the MO Municipal League, Verizon, T-Mobile, City Utilities of Springfield, and the MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the bill and stated that [HB 1995](#) repeals the sunset completely and they would also be supportive of the full repeal as the program is working.

The House Utilities Committee met Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2501](#) sponsored by Representative Jeff Farnan (R-Stanberry). The bill is the identical to [HB 1995](#), sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green) and repeals the sunset on the Uniform Small Wireless Facility Deployment Act. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Solar Property Assessment

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1836](#), sponsored by Representative Aaron McMullen (R-Independence). In 2013, legislation was passed to provide a tax exemption for solar facilities to offset development and operations costs. In 2022, the MO Supreme Court ruled that the exemption for “solar energy systems not held for resale” under Section 137.100(10) was unconstitutional and overturned the language, which now provides each individual county to set the tax rate. The bill attempts to set a statewide assessed value for solar property based off of \$1000 per megawatt. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to provide rates based off of the projects planning stage. Specifically, projects that are grandfathered/started, will be taxed at 3%, people that were planning a project but haven’t built yet, will be based off of \$1000 per megawatt, and any future projects will be based off of \$2000 megawatt. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 17-2 vote.

Special Education Services

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [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 presentation the sponsor said the bill was intended to ensure continuity of therapy or services a child is receiving prior to Kindergarten and measure progress before a child is assigned an IEP. Missouri Disability Empowerment (MODE), Missouri NEA, Kids Win Missouri, and several child psychiatrists and therapists provided supporting testimony. The Special School District of St. Louis County testified for informational purposes saying they would like to be a resource for legislators in better understanding the services students receive. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Special Taxing District

The House dedicated floor time Monday evening to revisit [HB 2058](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). The bill includes three provisions. Specifically, the bill seeks to adjust the

definition of video service provides to exempt streaming platforms. Additionally, the bill requires community improvement districts to be approved by a 2/3 vote before being established and also requires 2/3 approval for transportation development districts prior to the construction or funding of any project. Lastly, the bill specifies that if a political subdivision submits a tax proposal for a new or increased tax authorized under a specific statute and it does not pass, the proposal cannot be submitted again for two years following the rejection. During the bill's progression, substitute language was adopted to clarify language regarding the election cycle and to include a provision to allow a political subdivision to resubmit to voters before two years in the event there is a federal or state declared natural disaster. Additionally, a provision from [HB 1517](#) which requires any new tax levy voted on by the people to have clear and concise ballot language regarding any new tax levies implemented or extended and to include any sunset date provisions was added to the bill. During debate, the bill was successfully amended to add an additional provision from [HB 1517](#) to close a loophole within the Hancock Amendment to ensure approved levies do not surpass expenditure limitations and allows ballot measures to be added before the two-year moratorium if a change is made to the ballot proposal. Additionally, language was adopted which clarifies the 2/3 majority threshold still applies if a sales tax is the funding mechanism and special taxing districts are not affected. Once modified, the House provided the first of two approval votes.

State Agency Purchasing

The House Special Committee on Government Accountability convened Wednesday afternoon 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. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

State Agency Reorganization Reference Cleanup

The Senate General Laws Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1017](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). The bill updates reference to several state agencies due to the reorganization of such state agencies by executive order. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

State Auditor Powers

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 1048](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2111](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters) and 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. Additionally, the bill provides the Auditor with subpoena power and allows for the auditing of County Collectors and Insurance Funds. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to repeal requirement to duplicate an audit already done by insurance companies, and specifies they need to only report the findings of the audit. It also adds records relating to reports of allegations and improper governmental activities to the list of records exempt from disclosure. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

State Board of Education Printed Annual Report

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1208](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). The bill removes a requirement for the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education to print copies of the Annual Report of the State Board of Education for distribution and instead requires the Department to post the Annual Report on its state website. During discussion the bill sponsor said the bill was necessary to modernize the process and increase access for the public. A private citizen provided opposing testimony. No supporting testimony was presented to the committee.

State Funds Prohibition

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2634](#), sponsored by Representative Cody Smith (R-Carthage). The bill prohibits public funds being expended to any abortion facility, or affiliate or associate thereof, including for MO HealthNet reimbursement. Campaign Life Missouri, Missouri Right to Life, Susan B. Anthony-Pro Life America, Missouri Catholic Conference, and several private citizens provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee. The committee immediately passed the bill by a 5-1 vote.

Storage Facilities

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. Missouri Self Storage Owners Association and American Self Storage Association provided supporting testimony stating the use of only newspapers is outdated and many self-storage sites do not have local papers within a 30-mile radius. The Missouri Press Association provided opposing testimony.

Street Lights

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1045](#), sponsored by Senator Angela Mosley (D-Florissant). The bill modifies seeks to move the elections for street light maintenance district board members from the November general election to the April general municipal election. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated her intent with the legislation is to align this election with other municipal elections. Elbert A Walton, and the Democratic Director of St. Louis County supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

The House Utilities Committee met Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2828](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Amato (R-Arnold). The bill allows cities and counties to create a Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) and assess residents for the sole purpose of installing streetlights. The bill also creates the Neighborhood Safety and Crime Prevention Street Lighting Fund in the Department of Economic Development to provide matching grant funds to the cities and counties for streetlights. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Tax Credit – Child Care

The Senate Government Accountability Committee met Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1488](#), sponsored by Representative Brenda Shields (R-St. Joseph). The bill is the House companion to [SB 742](#), sponsored by Senator Lauren Arthur (D-Kansas City) and authorizes three different tax credits for child care. Specifically, the “Child Care Contributor Tax Credit Act”, “Employer-Provided Child Care Assistance Tax Credit Act”, and “Child Care Providers Tax Credit Act”. During bill presentation, the

sponsor stated child care is an economic issue for the state to consider solving, and the intent of the bill is to help different people, working families, businesses, and child care providers. St. Lukes System, City of Kansas City, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Civic Council of Greater Kansas City, UnitedWE, Kids Win MO, Associated Industries, MO Retailers Association, MO Grocers Association, MO NFIB, Moberly Area Economic Development, Aligned, MO Alliance of YMCA's, MO Hospital Association, St. Louis County, Goodwill, and National Association of Social Workers supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented. Immediately after the hearing, the committee went into to executive session to consider passage of the bill. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Tax Credit – Hospital Foundation Donations

The House Economic Development Committee met Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1731](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Amato (R-Arnold). The bill authorizes a non-refundable tax credit for donations made to local hospital foundations. The credit is capped at \$2 million per year. The Missouri Hospital Association, and BJC Health Systems supported the bill and informed committee members that Missouri Hospitals in 2021, spent about \$1.6 billion in charity, uncompensated care, and any help only benefits patient care. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 16-0 vote.

Tax Credit – Recovery Support

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee met Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1202](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). Beginning January 1, 2025, the bill authorizes a tax credit, equal to 50% of the amount of any donation made to an organization that provides recovery support services to people with substance abuse issues. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 3-2 vote.

Tax Credit – Sporting Events

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [HB 1483](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Christ (R-St. Louis). This bill provides a tax credit to nonprofit organizations, described as "certified sponsors," that are active members of the Sports Events and Tourism Association. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Tax Exemption - Property

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HJR 82](#), sponsored by Representative Brian Seitz (R-Branson). Upon voter approval, the resolution provides that any individual 65 years or older that has a Missouri taxable income of less than \$45,000 will not be subject to or liable for any property tax. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Exemption – Veteran Property

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SJR 84](#), sponsored by Senator Angela Mosley (D-Florissant). Upon voter approval, the resolution exempts certain disabled veterans from property taxes. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Exemption – Nuclear Security Enterprise

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee went into executive session Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1388](#), sponsored by Senator Greg Razer (D-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 no committee discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

The House Economic Development Committee met Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2710](#) and [HB 2681](#), sponsored by Representatives Chris Brown (R-Kansas City) and Anthony Ealy (R-Grandview). The bills are identical and the House companions to [SB 1388](#), highlighted above. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to combine both bills into one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 15-0 vote.

Tax Levy Ballot Language

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1517](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). This legislation requires any new tax levy voted on by the people, have clear and concise ballot language regarding any new tax levies implemented or extended and include any sunset date provisions. Additionally, the bill seeks to close a loophole within the Hancock Amendment to ensure approved levies do not surpass expenditure limitations. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to clarify the bill will apply statewide. Once modified, the committee passed the bill an 8-3 vote.

Tax Refund (Sales Tax)

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1233](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Moon (R-Ash Grove). The bill requires the Department of Revenue to authorize a sales tax refund to taxpayers in the event a judgement is ordered against the Department by the Administrative Hearing Commission for over-assessment or negligence in confirming the accuracy of information on the part of the Department, as revealed by an audit. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Telehealth

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 931](#), sponsored by Senator Lauren Arthur (D-Kansas City). The bill modifies the definition of “telehealth services” to include audiovisual and audio only services and expands which third-party platforms “telehealth services” may be provided. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

Telemedicine

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1532](#), sponsored by Representative Cyndi Buchheit-Courtway (R-Festus). Currently, provisions governing a physician's use of telemedicine requires that a physician-patient relationship must be established in person before telemedicine services may be rendered. The bill removes the in-person requirement and allows the relationship to be established via telemedicine using adaptive questionnaires. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which requires specificity on how the patient-physician relationship was established and adds a three-year sunset. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Tobacco Product Sales

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [SB 911](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). The bill specifies that the state shall preempt any

local laws, ordinances, orders, rules, or regulations enacted by a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the state regulating the sale of tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, or vapor products. Additionally, the bill bars political subdivisions from denying a qualified applicant for a tobacco products license if the new license is for the same business or location that had a tobacco products license within the previous 24 months. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-2 vote.

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee met Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2060](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). The bill is similar to [SB 911](#), highlighted above and specifies that the state shall preempt any local laws regulating the sale of tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, or vapor products. After brief committee discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 9-3 vote.

Uniform Community Property Disposition at Death Act

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2788](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). The bill seeks to sets guidelines for community property division upon a spouse's death and specifies the legal remedies for community property disposition. No testimony in support or opposition was presented to the committee.

Uniform Depositions and Discovery Act

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1452](#), sponsored by Representative Rudy Veit (R-Wardsville). The bill establishes the "Uniform Interstate Depositions and Discovery Act". This bill provides procedures and processes for when a subpoena for discovery or a deposition is submitted in Missouri by a party in a foreign jurisdiction. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Utilities Submetering

The House Local Government Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2531](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters). Currently, apartment buildings have installed submeters into individual units, which incentives occupants to reserve water resources and regulate costs between the tenants. However, certain local governments and utility providers have deemed these apartments as acting like a utility. The bill seeks to clarify that the apartments are not a public utility, and they have to disclose to their occupants how their submetering proposals are going to work, in addition disclose any fees. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated there is similar legislation in the Senate ([SB 1471](#)) and he plans to offer a committee substitute to align the language with the senate companion by clarifying the language applies only to water metering, not electricity. The St. Louis Apartment Association, and a state public advocate supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Utility Omnibus

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [HB 1746](#), sponsored by Representative Mike O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). The bill as filed, is a redo of [SB 275](#) from last session ('23) that was originally sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield) and includes numerous utility provisions that died on the senate calendar last session. Those provisions include the language from [HB 1728](#) (above); a state and local sales tax exemption for utilities' equipment, and materials used in the transmission and distribution of electricity; modifies provisions relating to the current renewable energy

standards by preventing businesses that use over 100 megawatts of renewable power and have entered into contracts with utilities to be 100% green from being charged twice; provides a uniform accounting practice when assessing taxes for in-ground utility infrastructure; allows consolidated sewer districts' boards of trustees to pay members up to \$100 for each attended meeting; modifies the definition of "large water public utility" to include a public utility that regularly provides water service, sewer service, or a combination of either to more than 8,000 customer connections; 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; creates economic discount rates for gas corporations; sets an assessed value for solar property; and reduces fire hydrant inspections to once a year. Finally, the solar property taxation provision was modified by grandfathering in older systems and capping the assessment at appraisal value, plus 5%.

During debate, the bill was further amended. Specifically, the bill now includes:

- [HB 2193](#), which modifies regarding renewable gas;
- [HB 2541](#), which relates to deferrals by electrical corporations;
- [HB 1995](#), which repeals the expiration dates of "Uniform Small Wireless Facility Deployment Act";
- [HB 1622](#), which allows public utilities to recoup any workforce development investments;
- Added language to specify the provisions within the bill only apply to utilities.

Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Valentine's Law

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday morning to debate [HB 1692](#), sponsored by Representative Justin Sparks (R-Wildwood). The bill establishes "Valentine's Law," which creates the offense of aggravated fleeing a stop or detention of a motor vehicle. Penalties will be a class D felony if the person creates a substantial risk of injury, a class B felony if the person causes physical injury, and a class A felony if the person causes death of another. During debate, the bill was successfully amended to define "speed" as driving 10 mph or more over the posted speed limit and clarifies these provisions do not apply to drivers seeking a safe place to pull over. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Veteran Suicide Awareness

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Pensions Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1495](#), sponsored by Representative David Griffith (R-Jefferson City). The bill directs the Missouri Veterans Commission, in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, to provide recommendations and make efforts to adopt procedures, programs, treatment options, additional aid, and any other assistance deemed necessary to assist in efforts to prevent veteran suicide, subject to appropriation. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Veterans Omnibus

The Senate dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [SB 912](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). 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. During debate, Senate Bill Eigel (R-St. Charles) amended the bill to prohibit any foreign ownership of agricultural land near military areas. Senator Eigel further amended the bill to include [HB 1713](#), which would military sign-on bonuses to that list of tax-free income. Once modified, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

The House dedicated floor time Monday evening to revisit [HB 1713](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles). The bill is the House companion to the amended [SB 912](#), highlighted above. During debate, Representative Deb Lavender (D-Manchester) attempted to amend the bill by removing the recently enacted tax cuts but, through a procedural move, the amendment was ultimately ruled out of order. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 141-0 vote.

Water Usage

The House Rural Community Development Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2669](#) sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler). The bill relates to water usage and says user information provided by a user using at least 100,000 gallons of water a day to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Geological Survey Division is confidential and cannot be released by the Division to the public or disclosed in response to a records request. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which specifies that information may only be released if an attorney files a motion and even then, there is specific information the Division may release. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-3 vote.

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

- March 18-22, 2024 - Legislative Spring Break
- March 26, 2024 – Last day of candidate filing
- April 1, 2024 – Easter Break – No Session
- April 2, 2024 – General Municipal Elections
- 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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