

CAPITOL REPORT – WEEK 9

MARCH 1, 2024

Weekly Overview: This week, the Senate began to debate bills on the floor and actually gave first-round approval (Perfected) six fairly noncontroversial bills. By all accounts, this week was the least confrontational so far this session.

The House Third Read and passed three bills this week and have sent to the Senate sixteen bills for consideration thus far.

This week also marks the end of bill filing for the 2024 legislative session. Legislators have until the end of day on Friday, March 1st to file any legislation of interest. To remind you, for the 2023 session, a total of 2,307 bills and resolutions were filed, and ahead of the closing deadline, we have already surpassed last year numbers and are expected to exceed 2,500. One can only assume with the influx of bill filings and ongoing delays in the Senate, this should make for an interesting last eleven weeks of session.

Candidate Filings

On Tuesday, February 27th filing for the August 2024 Primary Election officially opened. Both the House and Senate held truncated session on Tuesday to allow their members to walk down to the Secretary of State Building to file for their respective offices. All of the State House seats and half (odd numbered Districts) the Senate are up for re-election. The U.S. Senate Seat currently occupied by Senator Josh Hawley is also up for re-election as well as all of the Congressional Districts and five of the six statewide offices. We have highlighted some of the key races below, but you can see all of the filings using this [Link](#). Filing for the August Primary closes on March 26, 2024.

Governor – Eight candidates have field under the republican ticket for Governor. Current Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft and current Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe are the two “frontrunners” one of which will win the primary. Senator Bill Eigel from St. Charles County who is term limited from his Senate seat has also filed. Five other candidates from across the state have also filed for the State’s top position - including Darrell McClanahan who has made headlines recently for his connection to the Ku Klux Klan. Current House Minority Leader Crystal Quade is the front runner for the democrat nomination.

Lt. Governor - Despite the pending ethics investigation, current Speaker of the House, Dean Plocher did file for Lt. Governor. Joining him in that race are current State Senators Holly Rehder and Lincoln Hough. Sen. Hough is the Budget Chair in the Senate and will likely be a good fundraiser and has the potential to be the front runner in the race. Currently there is no democrat challenger.

Secretary of State – Two current General Assembly office holders have filed for Secretary of State. Senator Denny Hoskins and Rep. Adam Schwadron have both thrown their respective hats into the ring. Greene County Clerk Shane Schoeller has also filed for the open seat vacated by Ashcroft. Senate Pro Tem Caleb Rowden, who had previously made his intentions to run public, has yet to file and many are speculating that he won’t. Three democrats from St. Louis have also filed for the open position.

State Senate Seats – Eight seats in the State Senate are considered open seats because either their current senator is term limited or has chosen not to run again. Senators Elaine Gannon (District 3), Holly Rehder (District 27) and

Karla Eslinger (District 33) have all chosen not to seek re-election. As previously announced, Senator Eslinger will be appointed as the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in May of 2024. Senators Lauren Arthur (District 17), Denny Hoskins (District 21), Andrew Koenig (District 15), John Rizzo (District 11), and Caleb Rowden (district 19) are term limited and cannot run for re-election to the Senate.

Other Filings of Note:

- **U.S. House District 1** – Incumbent Cori Bush received two challengers. Former State Senator Maria Chappelle-Nadal and current St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Wesley Bell have filed for the seat.
- **U.S. House District 3** – Current Congressman Blaine Luetkemeyer has chosen not to run again. Among the seven filed candidates are one current State Senator, Mary Elizabeth Coleman and two former Senators Kurt Schaefer and Dr. Bod Onder. Also filed to fill the vacancy is recent capitol denizen Arnie “AC” Dienoff. Arnie has made a name for himself over the last few years as an unpaid citizen advocate testifying on bills in the Capitol that happen to peak his interest.
- **State Senate District 3** – Current Senator Elaine Gannon chose not to seek re-election. Two current House members – Mike Henderson and Cyndi Buchheit-Courtway have filed to replace Gannon.
- **State Senate District 27** – Current Senator Holly Rehder chose not seek re-election to her Senate District and filed for Lt. Governor. Three candidates have filed to replace Sen. Rehder two of which are current State Representatives – Jamie Burger and Chris Dinkins.
- **State Senate District 31** – Current State Senator Rick Brattin is seeking re-election, but drew two current House challengers. Sen. Brattin has been criticized for being part of the former Conservative Caucus and current Freedom Caucus which has helped cause the dysfunction in the current State Senate. Representatives Dan Houx of Warrensburg and Mike Haffner of Raymore are the two challengers.
- **State Senate District 33** – Seeking to fill the seat currently held by Sen. Karla Eslinger are also two current House members - Travis Smith of Dora and Brad Hudson of Cape Fair

In Brief...

- On Wednesday, Republican Senator Mitch McConnell, the longest-serving Senate leader in U.S. history, announced he will be stepping down from his leadership role in November but will carry out his term through 2027. Potential successors include Senator John Thune (R-South Dakota), who has been the whip in the Senate since 2019; Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas), has been in the Senate since 2003; and Senator John Barrasso (R-Wyoming), has been in the Senate since 2007.
- Tuesday, Former St. Louis Rams player Aeneas Williams joined the American Heart Association and Missouri legislators at the Capitol to support bipartisan bills that would establish a cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) in schools. More than 350,000 people experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital in the United States each year, according to the American Heart Association. About 23,000 of those cardiac arrests are experienced by children under the age of 18. "Forty percent of those cardiac arrests are sports-related," Sen. Karla Eslinger, R-Wasola, said. "These bills would take a meaningful step to ensure that our schools are properly trained and ready if a cardiac event were to happen during our school hours and during extracurricular events."
- The Kansas City Chiefs released renderings of their reimagined Arrowhead Stadium at the Harry S. Truman Sports Complex. The renderings include what the Chief's call a new "activation zone" and more parking on the site where the Kansas City Royals' Kauffman Stadium presently stands. The total cost of the proposed renovation is estimated at nearly \$800 million, and Chief's Chairman Clark Hunt says the Hunt family would pay \$300 million of that total. The rest would be funded from a Jackson County ballot measure which would extend the 3/8th-cent sales tax, which has been placed on the April 2nd ballot.

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Budget Update

There was a flurry of budget activity this week. On Tuesday morning, the House Sub-committee on Appropriations-General Administration convened to lambast Treasurer Vivek Malek for the use of taxpayer funded advertising decals on so-called “grey machines.” If committee members sought an apology and a commitment to remove the decals they were doomed to disappointment. It was an over two-hour contentious hearing which ended with Chairman Scott Cupps demanding the decals be removed or face consequences from the committee.

Additionally, the full House Budget Committee convened Wednesday morning consider passage of [HB 2016](#), which is the Emergency Supplemental bill for \$2.2 million to allow for funding the Governor’s Executive Order to send Missouri National Guard members and Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers to Texas. Committee members expressed concerns there was already sufficient funding within the Governor’s discretionary fund and this would cause command confusion as federal troops have already been deployed. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 25-4 vote.

The Senate Appropriations Committee also continues to hear from the various departments methodically and expeditiously regarding the FY2025 governor recommendations and department requests. The timeline for the House to finish crafting their version of the budget was expected to be completed before the legislative Spring Break in March but with the delay of the budget bills being filed, this deadline will not be met. It is anticipated the two FY2024 Supplemental bills will be completed before the legislative Spring Break.

Abortion Ban

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SJR 87](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). The constitutional amendment, if approved by voters, would prohibit the performance or inducement of an abortion on a woman, except in cases of medical emergencies. Additionally, the General Assembly may provide an income tax credit for those contributing to pregnancy resource centers but bars the credit for those contributing to entities that performs, induces, or refers for abortions. Campaign Life Missouri and Missouri Right to Life provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Administrative Rules

The House Economic Development Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2197](#) and [HB 1961](#), sponsored by Representatives Brad Hudson (R-Cape Fair) and Alex Riley (R-Springfield). The bills are identical and require a department or agency to repeal two rules in the event they issue one new rule. During bill presentation, the sponsor informed committee members of the difficulty to remove or amend any rules, citing Missouri currently imposes over 113 thousand rules that Missouri imposes, not including statutes or county or city ordinances. The intent with the legislation is to encourage the review and repeal of rules, giving lawmakers another tool to hold departments accountable and to remove undue regulatory burdens on citizens and business. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to combine both bills into one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 9-4 vote.

Alcohol ID Requirements

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2599](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Farnan (R-Stanberry). Currently, an individual

that wants to purchase alcohol must present a form of identification (driver's license, military ID, passport, etc.). This bill allows alcohol suppliers to use an optional electronic scanner that verifies the age of the purchaser. Enrollment for this program would require the user to upload their ID for verification. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which requires a vendor to accept other forms of identification and payment. Additionally, an opt-out provision was added to the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Alternative Therapies

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 768](#), sponsored by Senator Holly Thompson Rehder (R-Sikeston). The bill as filed is similar to [HB 1830](#), sponsored by Representative Aaron McMullen (R-Independence) and seeks to provide \$3 million to go towards a clinical trial on the efficacy of using alternative medicines and therapies, including, but not limited to, the use of psilocybin for the medical treatment for mental health disorders. Specifically, for patients that are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, treatment-resistant depression, substance abuse disorders, or who require end-of-life care. During committee discussion, a substitute was adopted to narrowly tailor the bill to apply only to veterans with qualifying conditions. Additionally, as the bill is drafted, the program is within the MO Department of Social Services, the committee substitute moved the program to the MO Department of Mental Health. Finally, the committee substitute increased the funding for research grants from \$2 million to \$3 million, expanding the financial resources available for studying psilocybin's therapeutic potential, and provided clean-up language throughout the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 6-1 vote.

Angel Investing

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2226](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Smith (R-Dora). The bill 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 committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which changed 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." Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-2 vote.

Assisted Living Facility Referrals

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1733](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Amato (R-Arnold). The bill sets forth a series of disclosures that individuals or entities must provide to prospective residents or their families. These disclosures include documentation of the existence of any relationships between the referral agency and the assisted living facility if the referral agency receives a fee from the assisted living facility for the referral and written documentation of the agreement between the referral agency and the prospective resident or representative. Additionally, the bill sets forth some prohibitions and requirements that assisted living facilities are required to meet. These include a prohibition of payment of fees to referral agencies under certain conditions, a prohibition of the selling or transferring of contact information to

third parties and a requirement to maintain a written or electronic copy of the agreement between the referral agency and the prospective resident or resident's representative. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to modify the fees referral agencies may charge or receive, outlined the rights of patients, and added skilled nursing facilities to the provisions of the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Auditing State Departments

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1815](#), sponsored by Representative Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal). The bill requires an audit of all state departments every four years. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated these performance audits have saved Ohio \$1.4 billion in costs and these audits could help identify which State positions could be eliminated or modified to save taxpayer dollars. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which precludes auditing entities from performing more than one audit on any state agency. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Blighted Area Definition

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1242](#), sponsored by Senator Barbara Washington (D-Kansas City). The bill modifies the definition of "blighted area" for the purposes of tax increment financing (TIF). During bill presentation, the sponsor stated the current definition is broad and her intent with the legislation is to narrow the definition to ensure that the tax incentives go towards area that are deemed blighted areas. A private attorney from Kansas City provided supporting testimony. The MO Economic Development Financing Association opposed the bill and informed committee members that the bill as written eliminates a lot of necessary requirements when determining blighted areas and also eliminates developer reporting requirements.

Broadband Internet Expansion Grants

The Senate dedicated floor time Monday evening to debate [SB 872](#), sponsored by Senator Karla Eslinger (R-Wasola). 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. During debate, the sponsor offered a floor substitute to include [SB 1411](#), which extends the expiration date of the Uniform Small Wireless Facility Deployment Act; [SB 947](#), modifies provisions relating to video services; [SB 896](#), creates a state and local sales tax exemption for utilities, equipment, and materials used to generate or transmit electricity. During debate, Senator Tracy McCreery (D-St. Louis) expressed concern with the inclusion of [SB 947](#), relating to video services and after considerable debate, the sponsor offered an amendment to remove [SB 947](#) provisions, the bill was then returned back to the calendar to be debated further another day.

Business Inspection Exemptions

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1156](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Fulton). The bill specifies that applications for a new motor vehicle franchise dealer license shall not be required to include a certification by a law enforcement agency that the dealer has a bona fide place of business, provided that the applicant is a retailer that sells agricultural supplies and is under common ownership and control

with at least 5 other new motor vehicle franchise dealers doing business under the same name. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Candidate & Campaign Committee Electronic Payments

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1504](#), sponsored by Representative Gretchen Bangert (D-Florissant). This bill would permit the use of electronic payment systems by candidate and campaign committee accounts, provided that expenditures are paid through the official depository account and written record of all transactions are maintained by the treasurer or person responsible for record keeping for the committee. The bill also requires that expenditure reports shall include the total expenditures made by electronic methods. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which made technical changes and ensured sectional references were consistent throughout the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

Central Bank Digital Currency

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1676](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Matthiesen (R-O’Fallon). The bill defines “central bank digital currency” and prohibits any state agency from accepting or requiring the use of central bank digital currency. The sponsor stated eleven other states passed similar legislation and wants to ensure the use of this currency is never mandated by the state. Citizens for Sound Money, Satoshi Action Fund and several private citizens provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Chicken Pasturing

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 985](#), sponsored by Senator Nick Schroer (R-O’Fallon). The bill would allow property owners to own and pasture up to 4 chickens for every 2/10ths of an acre that is owned. A homeowner’s association may adopt reasonable rules, subject to applicable statutes or ordinances, regarding ownership or pasturing of chickens, including a prohibition or restriction on roosters. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2690](#) and [HB 2691](#), sponsored by Representatives Jamie Gragg (R-Ozark) and Holly Jones (R-Eureka). The bills are identical and seek to establish and modify provisions relating to child abuse and neglect. Currently, where there is a suspected case of child abuse or neglect, a child may be taken into temporary protective custody, which cannot exceed 24 hours unless an extension is authorized by an order of the juvenile court. These bills provide that such extension is authorized except when a parent, guardian, or authorized representative provides proof that contradicts abuse or neglect allegations. Fractured Families and several private citizens provided supporting testimony. Missouri Network Against Child Abuse provided opposing testimony stating clarity on the definition of “proof” is needed.

Child Custody for Military Parents

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1494](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City). The bill establishes the Uniform Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act, which seeks to establish guidelines for a divorced active military parent(s). No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Child Support Termination

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2148](#), sponsored by Representative Chris Dinkins (R-Lesterville). Currently, a parent's obligation to pay child support terminates when the child reaches 18 years of age unless the child is enrolled in and attending a secondary school program of instruction and other specified criteria are met, in which case the support obligation terminates when the child reaches 21 years of age. The bill would modify this to end child support at 18 years of age. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which clarifies the child must have turned 18 or obtained a high school diploma and ensures this only applies to orders enacted after January 1, 2025. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Clean Water Law

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to debate [HB 2134](#), sponsored by Representative Ed Lewis (R-Moberly). The bill seeks to provide clarity by specifying that under no circumstances DNR shall provide an exemption for any bio-solid sludge or process waste to the end user. The intent of the legislation to address a current out of state disposal company that is operating on 600 acres of land west of Anderson, MO. During debate, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to further modify the definition of agrochemical facility, remove the 30 day of continuous operation provision and requires the testing be done by a third-party. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approvals by a 144-1 vote. On Thursday, the House revisited the bill and after a brief debate, was passed by a 151-2 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Community College Transferable Credit

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2310](#), sponsored by Representative Cameron Parker (R-Campbell). This bill increases from 42 to 60 the number of semester credit hours that shall be approved as "transferable core of lower- division courses" from community colleges and four-year universities. By the 2025-26 academic year the coordinating board for higher education shall identify an additional 18 credit hours to be included in the transferable core of lower-division courses. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted that stated all the different four-year colleges and university systems would collectively decide on 5 additional classes that would be transferable. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 15-0 vote.

County Financial Statements and Officials

The Senate Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1362](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). In 2022, [HB 1606](#) was Truly Agreed and Finally Passed (TAFP) and was signed into law by the Governor. However, in December 2023 the Supreme Court overturned and deemed the bill violates the constitutional single subject requirement. In response to the Supreme Court's decision, the sponsor has refiled the provisions into two separate bills. [SB 1362](#) relates to financial statements of certain local governments. Specifically, the bill aligns second, third, and fourth counties to file an abbreviated annual financial statement like first class counties. The bill prohibits publishers from charging anything other than the normal rate to publish the statement and requires counties to supply to the publisher an electronic copy. Additionally, the bill provides the MO Department of Revenue the ability to do a onetime downward adjust on fines for political subdivisions that have failed to file a timely financial statement and provides that any political subdivision that has

gross revenues lower than \$5000 or has not levied or collected sales and use taxes will not be fined. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

The committee then turned its attention to [SB 1363](#), also sponsored by Senator Crawford. The bill includes several provisions relating to county officials. Specifically, upon the approval of the salary commission, the bill allows counties to increase coroners' salaries. Additionally, the bill allows county corners that fill the slot of sheriffs to receive that salary, allows salary commissions to amend the base salary schedule, allows county collectors to conduct tax sales via electronic media, allows county auditors to audit and examine claims, excludes the Boone County sheriff from the current salary schedule, and changes statutes concerning public administrators. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

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, highlighted above. MO Association of County Clerks and Election Authorities, MO Municipal League, MO Association of County Auditors, Municipal League of Metro St. Louis, MO Press Association, and the MO Association of Counties supported the bill. A state public advocate opposed the bill. The MO State Auditor's Office provided informational testimony regarding the fines that are applied in the event a county fails to file their financial statements.

Criminal Justice

The House Judiciary Committee met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2210](#), sponsored by Representative Lane Roberts (R-Joplin). The bill modifies provisions relating to criminal conduct. Specifically, the bill seeks to modify the definition of "persistent offender", expands the offense of fleeing to include operating a motor vehicle, and adds to rights of victims of crimes the right to be informed by the prosecutor regarding post-conviction relief hearings. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated the language was brought to him by the Attorney General's Office. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Cronkite New Voices Act

The Senate Progress and Development Committee convened Wednesday to discuss [SB 1099](#), sponsored by Senator Barbara Washington (D-Kansas City). This bill will ensure that student journalists in high schools and colleges can freely express themselves in school publications without fear of censorship, except in specific situations that the bill mentions. Their advisors are there to guide them, not to control their content. Advisors cannot be punished for standing by this freedom under this bill. Schools also cannot be held responsible for what students publish unless they had a direct hand in it or ignored offensive or threatening content. Students who are not minors might face legal consequences for what they publish. A private citizen gave supporting testimony, and he mentions a past Supreme Court case where the principal of a school felt the topics that the journalist students wrote about were too controversial and the court ruled in favor of the school's administration. A Mizzou professor and students presented supporting testimony stating this bill protects student's first amendment rights and that voting against the bill will allow schools to avoid taking accountability. No opposing testimony was presented.

CTF Medical Alert System Creation

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1155](#), sponsored by Senator Angela Mosley (D-Florissant). The bill creates the Christian Taylor Ferguson ("CTF") Medical Alert System to aid in identifying and locating a missing endangered person, including children, who are missing under unexplained, involuntary, or suspicious circumstances and who are believed to be in danger due to a medical condition that requires immediate care, medication, or treatment. Christian Ferguson's mother provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented.

Defining SEX Act

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2309](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles). The bill establishes the "Defining SEX Act", and provides definitions of the terms "boy", "father", "female", "girl", "male", "man", "mother", "sex", and "woman". During discussion, substitute language was adopted which modified the definitions to modify the definition of "female," "girl," "mother," and "woman" to say remove the words "eggs occurring naturally" to ensure IVF fertility treatments were not affected. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 9-4 vote.

DEI and Economic Boycott Prohibitions

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 980](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Sullivan). The bill establishes new restrictions for entities conducting business with the state. Specifically, the bill prohibits public entities from entering into contracts with a company, unless the contract includes written certification the company is not currently engaged in any kind of economic boycott and will not engage in such practice for the duration of the contract. Additionally, the bill prohibits private businesses seeking to establish a contractual relationship with another private business to require or suggest data be provided regarding the extent to which its workforce, managers, executives, or ownership and have any policy which exhibit particular DEI classifications. Opportunity Solutions Project provided supporting testimony. Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Associated Industries of Missouri, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Civic Council of Kansas City, Missouri Speech and Hearing Association, BJC Healthcare, Missouri State Conference of the NAACP, Greater St. Louis Inc. and Health Forward Foundation provided opposing testimony stating this creates new mandates on private business and would change the state procurement process.

Diaper Banks

The House Ways and Means Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2384](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Sharp (D-Kansas City). The bill seeks to extend the Diaper Bank Tax Credit to December 31, 2030. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to include diaper banks in the Columbia and Ozark areas. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 9-0 vote.

Dietitians Licensure

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 1053](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill establishes a temporary license for dietitians and sets forth the criteria under which the temporary license may be obtained under a licensed supervisory dietitian. Additionally, the bill specifies the supervisory dietitian may not be an

immediate family or hold a temporary license. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Division of Geology and Land Survey Confidential Information

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [SB 1351](#), sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). The bill requires any individually identifiable information obtained by the Division of Geology and Land Survey to remain confidential and not released to the public or disclosed in response to any request. The bill also provides a penalty clause for failure to comply. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which specifies information may only be released through a subpoena or court order, clarifies that all information on application is confidential and adds a penalty provision. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-2 vote.

Dog and Cat Euthanasia

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2593](#), sponsored by Representative Holly Jones (R-Eureka). The bill outlines the sole method of euthanasia for certain entities is sodium phenobarbital or its derivative. HSUS, Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation and Animal League Defense Legislative Fund provided supporting testimony stating Missouri is one of two states that has not completely banned the use of gas chambers for animals in shelters. No opposing testimony was presented.

Doula Services Reimbursement

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1446](#), sponsored by Representative Jamie Johnson (D-Kansas City) and [HB 2632](#), sponsored by Representative Wendy Hausman (R-St. Peters). The bills are identical and defines “doula” for the purpose of creating a registration process to allow for health insurance reimbursement for services. During committee discussion, the bills were combined into one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 11-2 vote.

Drug Trafficking

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1433](#), sponsored by Representative Willard Haley (R-Eldon). Currently, trafficking drugs in the first degree is a class B felony if the person knowingly distributes, delivers, manufactures, or produces, or attempts to distribute, deliver, manufacture, or produce more than 10 milligrams of fentanyl. The bill modifies the amounts of fentanyl and the corresponding criminal penalty increases. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

The committee turned its attention to consider passage of [HB 2576](#), sponsored by Representative David Casteel (R-High Ridge). The bill is identical to the one highlighted above. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which combined the bills into one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 18-3 vote.

Electrical Choice and Competition

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2070](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill requires the PSC to allow commercial, industrial, and residential customers of electric utilities to choose an electric generation supplier. Additionally, the

bill requires electric utilities to provide open access over their transmission and distribution systems to all electric generation suppliers to sell electricity directly to consumers. Finally, the bill requires the PSC to establish guidelines and procedures to move from the current electric structure to a competitive market for the generation of electricity. The sponsor stated the intent of the legislation is to provide a fair market for consumers to have a choice in who supplies their electricity. Retail Energy Supplier Association and Retail Energy Advancement League provided supporting testimony stating this would deregulate and completely change the current electricity market which would ultimately benefit consumers by decreasing costs. Ameren Missouri, Evergy, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Liberty Utilities provided opposing testimony stating states which have enacted deregulated markets have only seen an increase in costs for consumers.

Emergency Department Staffing Requirements

The House Professional Registration and Licensing Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2548](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Christ (R-St. Louis). The bill requires hospitals with emergency departments to have at least one physician on site, on duty and be responsible for the duration the emergency department is open. American College of Emergency Physicians, Missouri State Medical Association, BJC, Washington University Healthcare, Missouri State Orthopedic Association, Missouri Society of Gastroenterologists, Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons and several physicians provided supporting testimony stating complex care cases require physicians be present as the training physicians undergo to treat these cases is more expansive. Missouri Hospital Association, University of Missouri Healthcare, Herman Area District Hospital, and a nurse provided opposing testimony stating this legislation would have a devastating impact on rural hospitals where staffing shortages are already reaching critical levels.

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1953](#), sponsored by Representative Bennie Cook (R-Houston). Currently, the governor appoints members and designates the chairperson to the Advisory Council on Emergency Medical Services. The bill would allow the Director of the Department of Social Services to appoint members to the Advisory Council. Additionally, the bill would increase the members from 16 to 23 and removes the criteria that one member be from St. Louis City. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to specify there must be at least thirteen members but does not set a maximum number of members. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Eminent Domain

The House Judiciary Committee met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1750](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill). 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 Cattlemen's Association, MO Corn Growers 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. The Sierra Club opposed the bill and expressed concern over the lack of concern with climate change. Ameren provided informational testimony and informed committee members that Ameren does not have any plans to use eminent domain for any of their wind or solar projects but would like an exemption for their grid

connector lines. Everygy also provided informational testimony and stated they try not to utilize eminent domain, however sometimes it is necessary.

Employment Eligibility Modifications

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2489](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). Beginning on January 1st, 2025, an employer or business entity must verify an employee's immigration status before allowing them to work. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which removed the bidding limit amount and the subcontractor liability provisions and outlines the verification process. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-2 vote.

Employment Security

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2098](#), sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington). The bill modifies the definition of "wages" to include vacation pay, termination pay, severance pay and holiday pay for the week that it is payable. The sponsor stated thirty-five other states count severance and termination pay as wages. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

Estate Planning

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1221](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill changes provisions relating to estate planning, including notice for transfers of the principal place of administration of a trust, electronic wills, and estate planning during the COVID-19 state of emergency. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to include SB 988, which modifies provisions relating to qualified spousal trusts. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Eviction Moratorium

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 895](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill prohibits any Missouri county, municipality, or political subdivision from imposing a moratorium on eviction proceedings unless specifically authorized by state law. Additionally, the bill requires all transfers of title of real property for rental properties with outstanding collectible judgements to be filed in the circuit court within thirty days after transfer of title. After brief committee discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-2 vote.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1300](#), sponsored by Senator Jason Bean (R-Pemiscot). The bill requires the Department of Revenue to access the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse at the time of application for a commercial driver's license or commercial driver's instruction permit and determine whether the applicant is prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle for violations of certain alcohol or controlled-substance laws. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which added [SB 1298](#), which repeals requirements that cotton trailers be used exclusively for transporting cotton. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Fences and Enclosures

The House Judiciary Committee met Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1729](#), sponsored by Representative Kent Haden (R-Mexico). The bill allows real property owners building a fence to enter an adjoining property up to ten feet without liability for trespassing. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated his intent is to help rural farmers. An attorney supported the bill and highlighted the difficulties and complexities of property laws. The MO Farm Bureau, and the MO Cattlemen's Association also provided supporting testimony and stated the bill provides additional flexibility for farmers and ranchers and provides the flexibility to protect livestock. No opposing testimony was presented.

Financial Interest Statements

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2146](#), sponsored by Representative Peggy McGaugh (R-Carrollton). Currently, governing bodies of political subdivisions with general operating budgets in excess of \$1 million are required to file financial interest statements with the Missouri Ethics Commission. The bill alters this by requiring governing bodies to submit an attestation to the Commission if the operating budget is expected to exceed \$1 million. Additionally, the bill requires election authorities and other entities to submit to the commission a list of those required to submit financial interest statements within two days of the closure of candidate filing. The Missouri Ethics Commission and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Fire Protection Services

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 879](#), sponsored by Senator Doug Beck (D-St. Louis). The sponsor presented on his proposed committee substitute which authorizes municipalities within St. Louis County to submit to the voters of the City a proposal to authorize the governing body to impose a property tax no more than \$.25 per \$100 assessed valuation, to provide fire protection services. Additionally, upon voter approval, the bill allows the governing body of any fire protection district, to ask for a sales tax up to a maximum of 1% on all sales, to reduce any property tax imposed by the district up to 50%. However, the property tax must be imposed for the purpose to provide fire protection services. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated the bill currently only applies to St. Louis County, and currently there are four other districts that cannot levy a sales tax and the sponsor is open to expanding the bill to include the other districts. MO Association of Career Fire Protection Districts supported the bill. The Municipal League Metro St. Louis opposed the bill and stated that the average property tax is currently 8.9% and adding another percent to that will raise it to almost to 10% and ultimately, the bill will raise taxes too high in St. Louis.

Firefighter Retirement Systems (St. Louis City)

The House Pensions Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1980](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Hinman (R-O'Fallon). This bill relates to the administration of the two firefighter retirement systems serving firefighters in the City of St. Louis and would permit the two systems – the Firemen's Retirement System (FRS) and the Firefighters' Retirement Plan (FRP) – to be administered together, with the same Board of Trustees serving and investing the funds of both systems. St. Louis Firefighters Local 73 and Missouri State Council of Firefighters provided supporting testimony. The Office of the Mayor of the City of St. Louis and a state public advocate provided opposing testimony stating the bill would return control to a board operated by the state. The Firemen's Retirement System

of St. Louis provided informational testimony stating that there would be no loss of local control because there would still be no corresponding state statute controlling FRP.

Funeral Insurance and Annuities (Pre-Paid)

The House Insurance Policy Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1678](#), sponsored by Representative Bruce Sassmann (R-Bland). Currently, there is a \$15,000 cap on pre-paid funeral and burial life insurance and annuity plans offered by funeral directors. The bill raises the cap to \$20,000. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 15-0 vote.

Geospatial Advisory Council

The Senate dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [SB 1039](#), sponsored by Senator Steven Roberts (R-St. Louis). The bill establishes Missouri Geospatial Advisory Council within the Office of Administration. The council will be charged with assisting and advising the state in ensuring the availability, implementation, and enhancement of statewide geospatial data infrastructure common to all jurisdictions through research, planning, training, and education. During debate, Senator Bill Eigel (R-St. Charles) amended the bill to remove several provisions of the bill, reducing the board simply to an advisory board instead of having any authority. Once modified, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Gold and Silver

The House Financial Institutions Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1955](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Hardwick (R-Dixon). The bill allows the State Treasurer to keep in the custody of the state treasury an amount of gold and silver greater than or equal to 1% of all state funds. The bill also exempts capital gains tax from the sale or exchange of gold or silver. Finally, the bill requires that gold and silver be accepted as legal tender for the payment of any debt at the discretion of the receiving entity. Several private citizens and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony. Citizens for Sound Money provided informational testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Guardian Ad Litem Modifications

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 801](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). Current statute dictates guardian ad litem are appointed for children in certain abuse and neglect cases, including when children are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. This bill repeals that provision and requires the court to appoint an attorney to the child before the first hearings take place and will represent that child through all court proceedings and does not allow the child to waive the right to representation. Additionally, the bill states an attorney may not represent both the child and the guardians. During committee discussion. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-2 vote.

Guardians Ad Litem

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2495](#), sponsored by Representative Ann Kelley (R-Lamar). The bill specifies that guardian ad litem have an ethical obligation to the children they are appointed to represent. Multiple private citizens provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Health Benefit Plan Cost-Sharing

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 1628](#), sponsored by Representative Dale Wright (R-Farmington). The bill provides that when calculating an enrolled patient's overall contribution to an out-of-pocket max or any cost-sharing requirement under a health benefit plan, a health carrier or pharmacy benefits manager must include any amounts paid by the patient enrolled or paid on behalf of the enrolled patient. The provisions only apply to high-end drugs and not generic medications unless no higher-end medication is available for the purpose intended. Private citizens, Missouri Hemophilia Association, Medical Society of the State of Missouri, American Cancer Society, American Cancer Action Network, National Multiple Sclerosis Society and Missouri Pharmacy Association provided supporting testimony stating 19 states have passed similar legislation. PCMA, St. Louis Area Business Health Coalition, Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council, Missouri Insurance Coalition, Americas Health Insurance Plans, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas City provided opposing testimony.

Health Care Workers

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2556](#), sponsored by Representative Justin Hicks (R-Lake St Louis). The bill prohibits employees or contractors of licensed or registered health care facilities from being required to physically engage with a person exhibiting violent tendencies if there is a reasonable fear that such engagement may result in bodily harm to the employee or contractor. Missouri Nurses Association and two provided supporting testimony citing their personal stories of being attacked while on the job. Children's Mercy Hospital, Capital Region Medical Center, Missouri Psychiatric Center, and the Missouri Hospital Association provided opposing testimony.

Higher Education

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2650](#), sponsored by Representative Willard Haley (R-Eldon). The bill modifies provisions relating to the department of higher education and workforce development, Changes throughout the bill include changing the "Division of Workforce Development in the Department of Economic Development" to the "Office of Workforce Development in the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development" to reflect the current governance. The bill also changes the currently named "Show-Me-Heroes" program to the "Missouri Heroes Connect". The bill repeals the following statutes relating to: The "Career Readiness Course Task Force", Graduate students teaching assignments, The "Missouri Guaranteed Student Loan Program" and the "Lender of Last Resort Revolving Fund", The "Vietnam Veteran's Survivor Grant", The "Marguerite Ross Barnett Competitiveness Scholarship Program", The pilot project "International Economic Development Exchange Program and the Advisory Council", Higher education faculty hiring practices, The "Advantage Missouri Program", The "Missouri Youth Service and Conservation Corps Act" and the "Youth Service and Conservation Corps Fund". The MO Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development testified in support of the bill. No opposing testimony was provided.

Homeless Youth Driver's Licenses

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 772](#), sponsored by Senator Elaine Gannon (R-De Soto). The bill reduces barriers for homeless and unaccompanied minors by allowing the Department of Revenue to issue a driver or non-driver license free of charge. After no discussion the bill was passed by a vote of 4-0.

Hospital Foundation Donations

The House Economic Development Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [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. No opposing testimony was presented.

Human Trafficking

The House dedicated floor time to debate [HB 1706](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Myers (R-Warrenton). The bill establishes the "Counter Human Trafficking Task Force." The Task Force will be chaired by the Attorney General and hold an initial meeting before September 27, 2024. Additionally, the Task Force shall collect information on existing counter human trafficking resources and provide legislative recommendations on what resources and tools are needed to stop human trafficking and shall submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly on or before October 31st of each year. Finally, the bill requires the Board of Nursing oversee that nurses receive the correct training, raised the restitution limit to \$10,000 per identified victim. During debate, Representative Marlon Anderson (D-St. Louis) successfully amended the bill to ensure the Executive Director of the Missouri Office of Prosecution Services was on the task force. Once modified, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Hunt and Fish Rights

The House Conservation and Natural Resources Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HJR 87](#), sponsored by Representative John Black (R-Marshfield). Upon voter approval, the resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to assert the right of Missourians to hunt and fish. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-3 vote.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

The House Veterans Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2215](#), sponsored by Representative Chris Brown (R-Kansas City). The bill establishes the Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment and Recovery Act, which creates a fund to reimburse facilities that provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy to veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, and it is to be used to conduct studies on the use of alternative therapies for these conditions. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated pre-clinical and clinical trials have shown that hyperbaric oxygen therapy can induce neuroplasticity and improve clinical outcomes of veterans with treatment-resistant PTSD. The biological effects of hyperbaric oxygen therapy include improved mitochondrial function, stem cell proliferation, angiogenesis, and neurogenesis. Air Force Sergeants Association, and Help Our Heroes provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented.

Incarcerated Individuals – County Reimbursement

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 1353](#), 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 from when the claim is eligible for reimbursement. The Department is tasked with verifying the expenses. Support for [SB 1353](#) came from St. Louis County, the Jackson County Legislature, the Missouri Association of Counties, and Boone County. Their endorsement highlights the widespread acknowledgment of the financial burden counties bear during the pre-transfer incarceration period and the necessity for state compensation. There was no opposing testimony presented.

Industrial Development Corporations

The House Workforce and Infrastructure Development Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1460](#), sponsored by Representative Greg Sharpe (R-Ewing). The bill changes the law regarding industrial development corporations by terminating provisions applicable to only Lewis County. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Inmate Phone Calls

The House Corrections and Public Institutions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1679](#), sponsored by Representative Michael Davis (R-Kansas City) and [HB 2169](#), sponsored by Aaron McMullen (R-Independence). The bills are similar and seek to require jails and correctional centers to provide inmates with reasonable access to phone services during confinement. Additionally, the bills prohibit institutions from charging exorbitant amounts for domestic phone calls and seeks to place a cap on the amount per minute. During committee discussion, the bills were combined to create one legislative vehicle and the rate was capped at up to \$.12 per minute. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Insurance Company Investigation Record Confidentiality

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1348](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill addresses the Department of Commerce & Insurance's handling of documents provided by insurance companies as part of market conduct investigations and specifies that certain confidentiality provisions shall also apply to records used in market conduct investigations and actions. The bill specifies regulated entities shall have at least 30 business days to submit any record or material requested by the Department of Commerce and Insurance, and records maintained beyond the required retention period shall not be required to be produced with certain exceptions. The sponsor noted that while these investigation documents would be held confidential, final investigation reports are made public. Missouri Insurance Coalition, American Property Casualty Insurance Coalition, and the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies provided supporting testimony stating this would allow for a streamlined and fair investigative process. A state public advocate provided opposing testimony.

Insurance Coverage for Pharmacy Services

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2267](#), sponsored by Representative Tara Peters (R-Rolla). The bill enacts provisions relating to insurance coverage of pharmacy services. Specifically, the bill provides that a health carrier or pharmacy benefits manager (PBM) shall not impose any penalty, impediment, differentiation, or limitation on participating providers for providing medically necessary clinician-administered drugs, regardless of whether the participating provider obtains the drugs from an in-network provider, including but not limited to refusing to approve or pay, or reimbursing less than the contracted payment amount. Additionally, the bill prohibits health carriers and pharmacy benefits managers from discriminating against covered

entities or pharmacies that participate in the 340B drug pricing program and requires health insurers and PBM's to cover biosimilar products. Citizens Memorial Hospital, University of Missouri Healthcare, HCC Network, Ozarks Community Health Center, Four Rivers Health Center, Bothwell Regional Health Center, Missouri Primary care Association, Missouri Pharmacy Association, Golden Valley Memorial Health Care Clinic, Phelps Health County Hospital, Western Missouri Medical Center, Fitzgibbon Hospital, Missouri Hospital Association, Barnes Jewish Hospital, St Luke's Health System, Hannibal Regional Health Care System, CoxHealth, Mercy Hospitals, University Health System Kansas City and Missouri Rural Healthcare Association testified in support of the bill, stating the 340B program provides access to care and highlighted the bill removes barriers to patient care. The Missouri Insurance Coalition, Mid America Carpenters Regional Council, America's Health Insurance Plans, and Blue Cross Blue Shield Kansas City opposed the bill and informed committee members that the 340B program is a federal program that has existed since 1992 and stated the provisions should be applied to smaller hospitals and FQHC facilities, instead of providing costs savings and benefits to big hospitals.

Insurance Data Security

The House Insurance Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2316](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Hardwick (R-Dixon). The bill establishes the Insurance Data Security Act to keep policy holder data secure. The bill requires licensees to implement an information security program in keeping with the size and complexity of the licensee and the scope of its activities, specifying standards for risk assessment by licensees. Additionally, the bill further requires certain oversight of “third-party service providers” and requires incident response plans as part of information security programs and contains annual reporting and document maintenance provisions. Finally, the bill also specifies procedures and standards for investigation of cybersecurity events, as well as requirements to notify regulators, consumers, other insurers, and insurance producers as detailed in the bill if certain cybersecurity events occur. The sponsor noted this is predominately NAIC model language with some further restrictions added. The Missouri Insurance Coalition provided supporting testimony noting that the bill does not seek to create, promote, or curtail any potential private cause of action available to an affected policy holder, and that different compliance responsibilities would apply based on insurance company size. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Insurer Payments to Health Care Providers

The House Insurance Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2400](#), sponsored by Representative Bishop Davidson (R-Republic). The bill specifies the time frames and notices that health carriers and prepaid dental plan corporations must follow when submitting, acknowledging, requesting, and paying claims. It also outlines the penalties and interest for late or unpaid claims. The Missouri Dental Association provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Jail Expenses

The House Corrections and Public Institutions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2665](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters). The bill requires St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County when housing an inmate or detainee who is a resident of another county or city, the city or county of residence must reimburse the city or county that is housing the inmate or detainee for the daily cost of housing. St. Charles County provided informational testimony stating the prisoner per diem needs to be raised as actual costs are closer to \$123 per day and

the per diem from the state is \$23 per day and this should apply statewide. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Judicial Salaries

The Senate dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [SJR 71](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). This proposed constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, provides that the administration of justice shall include levying costs and fees to support salaries and benefits for sheriffs, prosecuting attorneys, and circuit attorneys. During debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to provide grammatical technical changes. Once modified, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Juror Compensation

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1220](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill modifies provisions relating to the compensation of jurors. The MO Supreme Court provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented. Cole County Commissioner provided informational testimony and informed committee members that depending on the case, \$50 a day is not feasible for Cole County.

Keep Your Ground Act

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 989](#), sponsored by Senator Jill Carter (R-Granby). Under current law, if self-defense is found to be a justified defense in a criminal case, it does not remove civil liability. The bill repeals this provision and establishes the "Keep Your Ground Act" which states no individual shall be held civilly liable for damages resulting from conduct found to be justified. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Library Board and Consolidated Library Districts (Powers)

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1512](#), sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). The bill prohibits Library Boards from overruling county planning commission plans and limits the expenditure of tax levies or tax funds for libraries. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 9-2 vote.

License Plate Fees – Personalized

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1798](#), sponsored by Representative Ron Copeland (R-Salem). Currently, special personalized license plates cost an additional \$15 over the regular registration fees. The bill increases the special personalized license fee to \$30 and specifies that the increased amount will only be charged for new or reissued plates and not annually upon renewal of existing plates. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 7-4 vote.

License Plate Tags – Temporary

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1754](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Pollitt (R-Sedalia). The bill authorizes law enforcement officers to stop, inspect, or detain someone solely to determine whether a temporary permit is current. If it has expired, the law enforcement officer must seize the expired temporary permit and assess a penalty of \$200. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

License Plates – Disabled American Veterans

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1459](#), sponsored by Representative Greg Sharpe (R-Ewing). The bill modifies the current Disabled American Veterans license plate by only requiring only an emblem and slogan of the Disabled American Veterans organization on the plate. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by consent with an 11-0 vote.

License Plates – Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 1015](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). This act modifies the application process for Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation special license plates by specifying that application and payment for the required emblem-use authorization may be made to the Director of the Department of Revenue at the time of vehicle registration. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee also convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1552](#), sponsored by Representative Bruce Sassman (R-Bland). This is the House companion to the bill highlighted above. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill consent by a 12-0 vote.

License Plates – Veterans

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2091](#), sponsored by Representative Michael O'Donnell (R-St Louis). The bill creates special vehicle license plates for veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which adds Kuwait to the bill. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-0 vote.

License Plates and Placards – Disabled

The House Transportation Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1451](#), sponsored by Representative Rudy Veit (R-Jefferson City). This bill increases the renewal period for removable windshield disability placards from four years to eight years or for the duration that correlates with the disabled person's current physician's statement expiration date. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Lighter Sale and Distribution Regulations

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 850](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill aims to regulate the sale and distribution of lighters in Missouri, focusing on those that are unsafe or counterfeit. It includes definitions for what constitutes an "unsafe" or "counterfeit" lighter, essential for the bill's implementation. The bill also exempts interstate transportation and storage from its provisions, acknowledging the complexities of supply chain logistics while aiming to prevent the sale and distribution of non-compliant lighters. According to the sponsor, [SB 850](#) is seen as part of a broader legislative effort concerning product safety and consumer protection. ZIPPO testified in support of the bill, providing details on current testing requirements for lighters. The Missouri Petroleum and Convenience Association and HUB Inc. opposed it, arguing it unfairly picks winners and losers and is a solution in search of a problem. Immediately after the hearing,

the committee went into executive session to consider passage of the bill. After brief committee discussion, the committee passed the bill by a narrow 4-3 vote.

Long-Term Care Administration of Medication

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 2525](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Stephens (R-Bolivar). Currently, the law allows for nurses, technicians, or nurse's aides to administer certain medications, including insulin, in long-term care facilities. The bill adds additional medications approved to be dispensed by certain staff, as long as they are prescribed by a physician. Twin Oaks Senior Living, and Missouri Assisted Living Association provided supporting testimony stating the bill simply allows for the law to catch up to the current medical technology and ensure all facilities are in compliance. No opposing testimony was presented.

Mayoral Residency Requirements

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 856](#), sponsored by Senator Cindy O'Laughlin (R-Shelbina). Current law requires mayors of third- and fourth-class cities to reside in the city they are being elected. The bill seeks to repeal this provision and instead require that the mayoral candidate shall reside in the county and be a resident of the county for a duration before and during the election. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to clarify the bill only applies to cities with less than 5,000 inhabitants. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Mental Health Courts

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [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. The MO Supreme Court, Empower MO, and the MO Association of Public Administrators provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented.

The House Judiciary Committee met Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2064](#), sponsored by Representative John Black (R-Marshfield). As originally filed, the bill was the House companion to [SB 1370](#), highlighted above. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to create an omnibus bill and include the amended version of [HB 1886](#). In addition, the substitute also includes language that requires internet service providers to block access to obscene websites and requires users to confirm they are not minors. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 11-0 vote.

Missing and Murdered African American Women Task Force

The Senate Progress and Development Committee convened Wednesday to discuss [SB 890](#), sponsored by Senator Angela Mosley (D-St. Louis). This bill creates the "Missing and Murdered African American Women Task Force". If passed, the task force will elect a chairperson and hold an initial meeting before October 1, 2024. The sponsor reports that the state of Missouri has the second most missing black women cases in the country. The task force will address policies and measures to address violence against African American women and girls. A private citizen and the NAACP presented supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented.

Missouri CROWN Act

The Senate Progress and Development Committee convened Wednesday to discuss [SB 969](#), sponsored by Senator Barbara Washington (D-Kansas City). This bill governs discriminatory practices based on someone's hair texture or protective style. There have been multiple cases around the country where black students or employees have been punished for wearing their hair in natural, protective, and cultural styles such as box braids, afros, etc. and this bill seeks to prevent this from further discrimination. Three students that attend Missouri universities presented supporting testimony recounting their experiences of being ridiculed and treated differently based on the way they wore their hair. The city of St. Louis presented supporting testimony stating that St. Louis has already enacted a local CROWN Act. The NAACP and The National Association of Social Workers (Missouri Chapter) also presented supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented.

Missouri Uniform Fiduciary Income and Principal Act

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [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. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated she will be offering a committee substitute to update statute references. The MO Bar Association provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented.

Protection Order – Lifetime

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [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. Hayley provided supporting testimony and provided her personal story. MO Association of Prosecuting Attorneys also supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Missouri Works Definitions

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 785](#), sponsored by Senator Doug Beck (D-St. Louis). The bill modifies the Missouri Works program by modifying definitions, including the definitions of average wage, gross wages, taxable wages, new payroll, and notice of intent. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated some companies have fallen out of compliance with the program due to wages rising so rapidly, the intent of the legislation is to take into account rising wages and allow companies to remain compliant. The Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Association, along with several private business owners provided supporting testimony and highlighted their companies have been kicked out of the program due to the MO County wage agreement, which has led to increased wages. No opposing testimony was presented.

Mo Bucks

The Senate dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate [SB 736](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 1803](#), sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington) and raises the aggregate amount the state treasurer may invest in linked deposits with a cap of \$1.2 billion. The current cap is \$800 million. The bill also changes the calculation basis from "dollars" to "percentages". During debate, Senator Bill Eigel (R-St. Charles) amended the bill to include [SB 735](#), which creates and modifies provisions relating to gold and silver. Senator Rick

Brattin (R-Belton) then amended the bill to prohibit the state treasurer from accepting payments using central bank digital currency. Once modified, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Motor Fuel Tax

The House Transportation Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2072](#), sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill modifies provisions relating to the motor fuel tax exemption. Currently, motor fuel is exempt from fuel tax, and an exemption and refund may be claimed by a taxpayer if the tax has been paid and no refund has been previously issued. These exemptions and refunds are currently issued on a fiscal year basis. The bill seeks to align the exemptions and refunds based on the tax year and would allow a person to apply for a standard/flat refund in the amount of \$30 for the 2024 tax year, \$45 for the 2025 tax year, and \$60 for the 2026 tax year. Additionally, the bill also authorizes a taxpayer to donate the motor fuel tax refund to a tax-exempt nonprofit entity by providing the entity with all required documentation and a signed statement indicating that the nonprofit is entitled to the taxpayer's refund. Lastly, the bill establishes the "Motor Fuel Tax Fund of 2021", to include all refundable revenue collected to be deposited. Any money in the Fund not refunded to a motor fuel purchaser within the required time will remain in the Fund and be subject to appropriation by the General Assembly for road and bridge projects for state-owned infrastructure. No supporting testimony was presented. Missourians for Transportation Investment opposed the bill and stated the fund that is created in the bill would be subject to appropriations and also stated allowing donations of receipts, would allow for double dipping since it would allow a charitable organization to utilize the refund and would also allow the donor to claim a charitable contribution on their taxes.

The committee then turned its attention towards [HB 2649](#), also sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew. The bill specifies that any amount over \$550 million of the motor vehicle fuel tax collected must be apportioned and distributed between the counties, cities, and the State Highways and Transportation Commission. No supporting testimony was presented. Missourians for Transportation Investment opposed the bill and highlighted the fiscal note, which states the \$550 million trigger will never be met.

Mutual Insurance Companies

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1359](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). This is the Senate companion bill to HB 2452, sponsored by Representative Jeff Knight (R-Lebanon). The bill establishes the "Protecting Missouri's Mutual Insurance Companies Act" and establishes standards regarding reinsurance coverage and company examinations. The bill exempts Missouri mutual insurance companies from acquiring or carrying reinsurance greater than adequate reinsurance and that unlimited reinsurance would be optional. CFM Insurance, Missouri Insurance Coalition, and National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies provided supporting testimony. A state public advocate provided opposing testimony.

National Guard Education Assistance Grants

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1712](#), sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles). Currently, Missouri National Guard members can be awarded an educational assistance grant to an approved public institution or an approved private institution in Missouri. Beginning with the 2025-26 academic year, this bill allows

those members to receive the grant for tuition costs at any public, private, or virtual postsecondary education institution in the United States. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Non-Opioid Alternatives Pamphlet

The Senate dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [SB 830](#), sponsored by Senator Caleb Rowden (R-Columbia). The bill requires the Department of Health and Senior Services to develop a pamphlet on nonopioid alternatives for pain treatment. During debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to include [SB 943](#), which requires practitioners, before an initial opioid prescription and the third in a course of treatment, to consult with the patient as to the risks of taking opioids and alternatives to opioids. Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City) then attempted to amend the bill to include [SB 844](#), which provides that when calculating an enrollee's overall contribution to an out-of-pocket max or any cost-sharing requirement under a health benefit plan, a health carrier shall include any amounts paid by the enrollee or paid on their behalf. The provisions only apply to high-end drugs and not generic medications unless no higher-end medication is available for the purpose intended. After some debate, a point of order was called, and the bill was laid over.

Nurse Anesthetists

The House Professional Registration and Licensing Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1561](#), sponsored by Representative Bennie Cook (R-Houston). The bill removes collaborative practice agreements to allow CRNAs to provide anesthesia services, allows CRNAs prescriptive authority for and during the practice of anesthesia services, and allows CRNAs to develop care plans for patients. Mercy Hospital, Cox Health, Golden Valley Memorial Hospital, GI Associates and Endoscopy Care, Missouri Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Hannibal Hospital and several CRNAs provided supporting testimony stating this allows for a broader application of healthcare for patients. Missouri Society of Anesthesiologists, American College of Surgeons, American Medical Association, Ozark Anesthesia Association, Missouri State Medical Association, Jefferson City Medical Group Missouri State Orthopedic Association, Missouri Society of Gastroenterology, Reyes Radiology, Missouri College of Emergency Physicians and several anesthesiologists provided opposing testimony stating CRNAs do not receive the same education and training that anesthesiologists are provided and therefore patient care could be compromised.

Officer Resources

The House Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety met Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 1707](#), sponsored by Representative Jeff Myers (R-Warrenton). The bill allows the chief law enforcement executive jurisdiction to request assistance from another jurisdiction, including a jurisdiction outside of the State of Missouri. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 22-0 vote.

Paint Recycling Program

The Senate Commerce, Energy and the Environment committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 936](#) sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). This bill sets up a program for the disposal and recycling of unused paint. Recycling companies would be allowed to set up the program with DNR approval and oversight, set up collection sites with retailers and responsibly dispose of used paint. 70% of paint turned in will be recycled into new paint and keeps most of the paint out of landfills. The program would be funded by a surcharge on the paint manufacturers sell to

retailers. Recycling companies would reimburse DNR for the cost of oversight through the surcharge. The Paint and Coating Association, Paint Care, the Mo Municipal League, and the Mo Association of Counties testified in support of the legislation and stated that the program is needed to stop filling landfills of unused paint because there is no way to responsibly dispose of the waste. Some cities and counties have already started a similar program at a significant cost to the taxpayers. No opposing testimony was provided.

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. The sponsor stated there are currently six community paramedic services within Missouri and they are seeking to be able to expand the program but require an updated statute. MU Healthcare, Missouri Ambulance Association Board, Missouri Advisory Council for EMS, Missouri Ambulance Association and Ambulance District Association provided supporting testimony. Cole County EMS provided opposing testimony stating nothing in the legislation prevents community paramedics from operating in other jurisdictions without memorandums of understanding and this could directly impact patient care.

Partner Therapy

The House Healthcare Reform Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1879](#), sponsored by Representative Patty Lewis (D-Kansas City). The bill adds trichomoniasis or “trich” to the list of STDs that if a person receives a diagnosis, a physician is allowed to treat the individual’s sexual partners without a medical evaluation. Additionally, the bill also adds any STDs designated by the Department of Health and Senior Services and the CDC. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which simply clarifies treatment requires an existing relationship with a physician. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 11-2 vote.

Pension Fiduciary Responsibility

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Pensions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1113](#), sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Sullivan). This is the Senate companion bill to [HB 1937](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Owen (R-Springfield). This legislation seeks to ensure that investment fiduciaries do not consider ESG characteristics in a manner that overrides their fiduciary duties. MOSERS, MO Local Government Retirement System, PSRS and PEERS provided supporting testimony stating the bill simply codifies existing policies the pension systems have enacted regarding fiduciary responsibility and are already seeking the best risk adjusted return for their members. Sierra Club provided opposing testimony stating the definitions contained within the bill are vague and could negatively impact investments. MoDOT Retirement System provided informational testimony stating this is a policy they already have in place.

The House Pensions Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1937](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Owen (R-Springfield) and is the House companion to the bill highlighted above. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-3 vote.

Personal Property Taxes (Phasing Down)

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1669](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Matthiesen (R-O'Fallon). Currently, assessors annually assess all personal property at 33.3% of its true value in money. The bill seeks to phase down personal property taxes by 2% each year until 2036, ultimately leaving the rate at 6%. During committee discussion, committee members expressed concern for smaller counties and their ability to compensate for the lost revenue and how the reduction would affect the county employee retirement funds. American Action Fund supported the bill. The MO Ambulance Association opposed the bill and informed committee members that ambulance districts predominately get most of their tax revenue from real property taxes and if you remove personal property, then you are shifting that burden solely to property owners.

The committee then turned its attention towards [HJR 88](#), also sponsored by Representative Matthiesen. Upon voter approval, the proposed Constitutional amendment would eliminate taxes on tangible personal property. American Action Fund supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

Personal Property Valuations

The House dedicated floor time Thursday morning to revisit [HB 2430](#), sponsored by Representative Mike McGirl (R-Potosi). The bill specifies that any increase in value from a previous year's National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Official Used Car Guide shall not be counted as new construction. During bill progression, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to add a base year to calculation and reduces the assessed valuation to 33 1/3 to 31%. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 115-19 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Post-Award Negotiations

The Senate General Laws Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1253](#), sponsored by Senator Holly Rehder (R-Sikeston). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 1818](#), sponsored by Representatives John Voss (R-Cape Girardeau) and seeks to allow for post- award negotiations with the lowest and best responsive vendor if identified in the solicitation along with the time frame for post-award negotiations. The Commissioner may waive post- award negotiations. The Office of Administration, and Maximus testified in support of the bill. No other testimony was provided.

Pretrial Witness Protection Services Fund

The House Crime Prevention Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 2137](#), sponsored by Representative John Voss (R-Cape Girardeau). Currently, any law enforcement agency may provide for the security of witnesses and others in criminal proceedings or investigations. The bill allows any prosecuting attorney's office to provide such security as well. The Missouri Prosecutors Association provided supporting testimony. The Department of Public Safety provided informational testimony regarding the establishment of the fund, agencies allowed to access the fund and current funding levels.

Professional Licensing

The Senate Governmental Accountability Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 817](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). The bill provides that any person with at least 3 years of work experience in an occupation or profession in another state that does not use a license to regulate that occupation or profession may submit an application for licensure in Missouri. Additionally, the relevant oversight body shall require applicants to take a profession-specific exam. If

a license is issued, it shall be a one-time, non-renewable temporary license for two years. Finally, upon the temporary license expiring, the person shall be required to apply for a permanent license. Opportunity Solutions Project provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

PSC Commissioners

The Senate Commerce, Energy and the Environment Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 934](#) sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). Currently the Public Service Commission has 5 commissioners that are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor is not bound by any geographic restrictions and is only required to have 3 commissioners from his/her party. The bill proposes to add 2 commissioners to the Public Service Commission, both of which must have a background in production agriculture. The bill also proposes that no more than 1 commissioner can be from each congressional district. The Missouri Farm Bureau, Missouri Soybean Association, the Missouri Corn Growers Association, a Callaway County Commissioner, and numerous farmers testified in support of the bill, stating they have no representation on the PSC and highlighted the need for geographic representation on the commission is warranted with all the transmission projects in the queue for Missouri. Supporters also stated since most transmission lines run through farms in rural Missouri, the additional commissioners should have a background in agriculture. The Missouri Energy Development Association, the Consumers Council of Missouri, Spire Inc., the Sierra Club, and the Missouri Coalition for the Environment opposed the bill and stated the change was not needed and the increase in the number of commissioners would do more harm than good.

PSRS Time and Salary Limitations

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Pensions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1286](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). Currently, a retired member of the PSRS may work after retirement in a certified position without impacting his or her retirement benefits if a certain number of hours are not exceeded each school year and does not reach over 50% of the annual compensation of the person who last held that position. The bill allows a retired member to earn up to 50% of the annual compensation of the person who last held the position or 50% of the limit set by the school board. Additionally, if a member of the PSRS or PEERS does exceed the allowable hours or allowable compensation, the member will not be eligible to receive retirement allowance for any month this excess occurs or allows the retirement system to recover the excess amount earned, whichever is less. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

Public Education – Parents Bill of Rights

The House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2160](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). The bill requires school districts to post the salaries, compensation, and benefits of public-school districts on the Missouri Accountability Portal and requires school districts to provide parental access to review curriculum. Additionally, school districts are required to provide annual parental authorization for student participation in athletics, extracurricular, or classroom-related field trips, requires governing boards of school districts to provide a public comment period during public meetings and requires school districts to promptly notify families of an incident of criminal activity on a campus or building or threat to the safety of students. Finally, the bill outlines certain penalty provisions for a school district's failure to comply with provisions of the bill and prohibits a school district from compelling any school employee or student to adopt or affirm any

theory, belief, or idea that an individual of any race, national origin, ethnicity, or color is inherently better than, less than, or responsible for actions committed in the past against any individual of an opposite race, national origin, ethnicity, or color. Several parents and teachers, Missouri NAACP, PROMO and Missouri NEA provided opposing testimony. Missouri School Boards Association provided informational testimony.

Public Safety Omnibus

The Senate dedicated floor time Monday evening to debate [SB 754](#) sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). The bill as originally filed, establishes Max's Law, which would increase the penalty for assaulting a law enforcement animal by making it a class a misdemeanor if the animal is injured, a class e felony if the animal is severely injured, and a class d felony if the assault results in the animal's death. During the bill's progression through the committee process, the bill was modified to reflect [SB 189](#) (2023), which was TAFP'd and then vetoed by the Governor. Specifically, the bill now includes [SB 841](#), modifies provisions relating to funding for the Office of Public Defender; [SB 887](#), modifies provisions relating to certification of juveniles for trial as adults; [SB 765](#), establishes a conviction review unit; [SB 861](#), modifies provisions relating to expungement; [SB 746](#), modifies provisions relating to eligibility for parole; and [SB 760](#), modifies provisions relating to the critical incident stress management program. After several hours of debate, the bill was returned back to the calendar. The Senate dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to revisit the bill. During debate, the sponsor offered a floor substitute to further amend the bill to include [SB 1070](#), establishes a statewide task force focused on addressing cybercrimes and stalking; [SB 788](#), creates "Blair's Law"; and [SB 901](#), establishes "Valentine's Law" which creates the offense of aggravated fleeing a stop or detention of a motor vehicle. After brief debate, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Recovery High Schools

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1393](#), sponsored by Senator Cindy O'Laughlin (R-Shelbina). The bill changes the deadline for a school district to submit a proposal to operate a recovery high school from December 1st of the school year preceding the beginning of operation of the recovery high school to July 1st. The Missouri NEA and Aspire Advocates provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee. The committee then immediately moved into executive session, and, after a brief discussion, the bill was passed consent by an 11-0 vote.

Residency Requirements

The House Rural Community Development Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2286](#), sponsored by Representative Tim Taylor (R-Bunceton). The bill will change the requirement of being a resident of the city to be appointed to a local board or commission. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted that outlines how a person satisfies the requirements of being a resident. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-2 vote.

Residential Care Facility Inspections

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 813](#), sponsored by Senator Mary Elizabeth Coleman (R-Arnold). The bill allows assisted living facilities that have already been through an accreditation process with an accrediting entity, and have documentation, to not have to have a duplicative state survey of assessment. The bill does not bar the

Department of Health and Senior Services from conducting inspections for violations of standards or requirements at any time.

Rural Access to Capital

The Senate dedicated floor time Wednesday afternoon to debate [SB 802](#), sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield). The bill establishes the “Missouri Rural Access to Capital Act” and creates tax incentives for investing in businesses located in rural areas. The tax credits are equal to the percentage of the fund investment, with no more than \$16 million dollars in total combined tax credits authorized per year. During debate, the sponsor offered a substitute to provide a technical change. Senator Bill Eigel (R-St. Charles) further amended the substitute to include language specifying that investments and investors cannot be alien, a foreign entity or foreign-owned entities, or a foreign government. Senator Brian Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City) then attempted to modify the bill to reduce the population requirements from 50,000 to 20,000. After considerable debate, the amendment failed, and the Senate then provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

Rural Workforce Housing Investment Fund

The House Rural Community Development Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2240](#), sponsored by Representative Greg Sharpe (R-Ewing). The bill establishes the "Rural Workforce Housing Investment Act," creating a workforce housing grant program in the Department of Economic Development (DED) to foster and support the development of workforce housing in rural communities. Grant maximums shall not exceed \$1 million to any one nonprofit development organization over a two-year period, with no more than \$2 million cumulative for any single grantee through FY 2027. Additionally, the bill contains guidelines for the awarding of grants and establishes the "Rural Workforce Housing Investment Fund". After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

Sales and Use Tax Collection

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday to discuss [SB 1264](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2503](#) sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler). In 2021, legislation referred to as “Wayfair” was passed allowing cities and counties to seek voter approval to collect a use tax for online purchases. While cities and counties already had the ability to pass a use tax, “Wayfair” was specifically passed to address online purchases. When that language was passed, it specifically related to the state, cities, and counties because they already had the ability to propose a use tax on the ballot. It did not include other specialty districts, such as 911, fire districts, or ambulance districts that do not have the authority to propose a use tax on the ballot. This bill seeks to amend the use tax laws to now include any taxing jurisdiction authorized to impose a sales tax on emergency services. The MO Ambulance Association, MO Association of Career Fire Protection Districts, Noel T. Adams Ambulance District, Fire Service Alliance, MO State 911 Service Board, MO 911 Directors Association, and the Cass County Emergency Service Board supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform convened on Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2503](#) sponsored by Representative Dane Diehl (R-Butler). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1264](#), highlighted above. During committee discussion, Representative Bishop Davidson (R-Republic) stated he plans on offering an amendment during floor debate which would move these measures from

the municipal election to the general election. After committee discussion and no changes, the committee passed the bill by a 9-0 vote.

Sales Taxes

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1091](#), sponsored by Senator Karla Eslinger (R-Wasola). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 2077](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Smith (R-Dora) and upon voter approval, the bill increases the rate of sales tax from 1% to 1.5%. Additionally, the bill clarifies that all sales tax elections for law enforcement purposes conducted during the November 8, 2022, general election shall be deemed in compliance with state law if the aggregate sales tax rate is not in excess of 1.5%. During bill presentation, the sponsor informed committee members that Ozark County residents approved a 1.5% sales tax increase for law enforcement, and the MO Department of Revenue stated the increase would exceed the current 1% cap. The sponsors intent it to allow the county to collect the voter approved tax. The City of Hannibal and City of Moberly supported the bill and stated the sponsor has agreed to offer a committee substitute to include [HB 2290](#), which would allow the City of Hannibal and City of Moberly to place a ballot measure to the voters to enact a sales tax for public safety purposes. No opposing testimony was presented.

SALT Parity Clean-up

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [SB 1250](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 1912](#), sponsored by Representative Mike McGirl (R-Potosi) and seeks to provide clarifications and clean-up language for the SALT Parity Act ([HB 2400](#)), which was signed into law in 2022. The SALT Parity Act allows certain S corporations to receive a tax credit for income earned in another state in an effort to retain existing businesses and attract new ones and also establishes the SALT (State and Local Tax) Parity Act, which allows businesses to elect to be taxed at the entity level and permits business income to be taxed to the entity itself instead of being taxed to its individual owners. MO Society of CPAs, and Associated Industries of MO supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

The House dedicated floor time Thursday to revisit [HB 1912](#), sponsored by Representative Mike McGirl (R-Potosi). The bill is the House companion to [SB 1250](#), highlighted above. After a brief debate, the House passed the bill by a 151-0 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

School Accountability Measures

The House Committee on Elementary & Secondary Education convened on Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2184](#), sponsored by Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill). The bill modifies school accountability metrics to emphasize student growth and achievement for public and public charter schools in the state. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which modifies the definition of "school building" and requires DESE to define a standard for attainment of grade level achievement by students. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-2 vote.

School Bus Endorsements

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to debate [HB 1626](#), sponsored by Representative Danny Busick (R-Newton). The bill would raise the age to 77 from 70 for those with school bus endorsements, would waive the renewal fee and may only renew the license for one year at a time. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approvals by a 125-12 vote. The

House revisited the bill on Thursday morning and after a brief debate, was passed by a 114-29 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

School Cardiac Emergency Response Plan

The House Crime Prevention Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of [HB 1991](#), sponsored by Representative Sherri Gallick (R-Belton). This bill requires public schools to develop Cardiac Emergency Response Plans. Beginning in the 2025-26 school year and all subsequent school years, this proposes to require every public school to develop and implement a cardiac emergency response plan that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents involving an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency while on a school campus. A public school with an athletic department or organized athletic program shall also develop and implement a plan specific to life-threatening emergencies that may occur at an extracurricular event or school-sponsored event on campus. Finally, the bill requires school districts to establish protocols for the placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) throughout each school campus and associated annual training programs for staff to become certified in AED use. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 19-3 vote.

School Employee Retirement Systems

The House Pensions Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1722](#), sponsored by Representative Aaron Crossley (D-Independence). The bill seeks to address critical teacher shortages while protecting retired teachers' retirement benefits. When a Public School Retirement System school district has declared a shortage of noncertified employees, it may employ a retired noncertificated employee for up to four years without affecting his or her retirement benefit. Currently, a cap of the lesser of 10% of noncertificated staff or five employees is in place. The bill changes the cap to the greater of 1% of the total of certificated teachers and noncertificated staff or five employees. Independence School District, Missouri National Education Association, Missouri State Teachers Association, Missouri Retired Teachers Association, Missouri Alliance for Arts Education, PSRS/PEERS, and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony stating this would allow districts to address critical teacher shortages. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

School Medical Mandates (Public)

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 1807](#), sponsored by Representative Kurtis Gregory (R-Marshall). Beginning in the 2024-25 school or academic year this bill prohibits school districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education from requiring any employee or student to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or gene therapy treatment in order to be physically present at any events, premises, or facilities. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

School Technology

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2612](#), sponsored by Representative Tricia Byrnes (R-Wentzville). The bill requires the Literacy Advisory Council to also review the best practices for the use of technology for instruction in schools. During committee discussion, the makeup of the council was modified to ensure virtual educators were included and removed duplicative language. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

School Term Minimums

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 784](#), sponsored by Sen. Doug Beck (D-Affton). The bill modifies the definition of "school term" by requiring school districts located in charter counties or cities with more than 30,000 residents to have a school term of at least 169 school days, unless the district has adopted a four-day school week, in which case the term shall consist of a minimum of 142 school days, and requires a majority vote of the qualified voters of a school district to approve the adoption of a four-day week. Several committee members expressed concern over preempting local governing bodies from deciding whether to participate in 4-day school weeks and that the State Board of Education had recently conducted a study of 4-day school weeks. After discussion the bill was voted DO PASS 9-1 with 1 abstention.

School Training Requirements

The House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1568](#), sponsored by Representative Ann Kelley (R-Lamar). The bill modifies the number of DESE-required training hours teachers and certain staff must complete each school year to instead require annual training for the first three years of employment and then allow individual school districts to decide how frequently to require training as appropriate for their individual district thereafter. Additionally, the bill adds active shooter response training to the mandated schedule of training. The Missouri State Teachers Association and Missouri NEA provided supporting testimony stating it will help teachers allocate time more effectively. An advocate for students with special needs provided opposing testimony stating it risked jeopardizing the safety of special needs students who have changing needs.

School Transportation Network System Background Checks

The House Committee on Elementary & Secondary Education convened on Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2423](#), sponsored by Representative Kurtis Gregory (R-Marshall). The bill transfers the authority of conducting background checks for employees of school transportation networks to the network company rather than a school district. During discussion, substitute language was adopted which removes the modified definition of school bus and clarifies that the Missouri Highway Patrol will be the only entity responsible for conducting the background check. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 14-0 vote.

Self-Storage Insurance

The Senate Insurance and Banking Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [SB 927](#), sponsored by Senator Sandy Crawford (R-Buffer). The bill increases, from \$5,000 to \$15,000, the maximum insurance coverage that may be offered by limited lines self-service storage insurance producers and their associates. American Self-Storage Association, the Missouri Self-Storage Owners Association and a state public advocate provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Social Media Safety Instruction and STEM Career Awareness in Schools

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 976](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill requires DESE to develop a model curriculum for school-district instruction on safe social media use and appropriate online behavior to students in grades 6 through 12 and to develop a "STEM Career

Awareness Program" to increase awareness of STEM careers and relevant training or education programs for students in grades 9 through 12. The Gifted Association of Missouri, BioSTL, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, ScienceCoach, and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce provided supporting testimony stating the bill would increase awareness of the STEM careers available to students and help students to learn responsible use of social media and develop healthy online behaviors. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Solar Energy Projects

The House Utilities Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2651](#), sponsored by Representative Kent Haden (R-Mexico). The bill seeks to align solar with wind energy and places it on the same tax schedule. Additionally, the bill clarifies that the assessment of solar needs to be assessed at the county level not on a statewide assessment. Also, the bill specifies that 75% of all solar equipment associated with projects must be made in or sourced from the United States. Lastly, the bill places a 2% cap on property used for solar energy per county. Committee members had a lengthy discussion regarding everything from property rights, to voicing concerns with limiting business owners purchasing powers, to discussing eminent domain. Several county commissioners and private citizens from around the state supported the bill and informed committee members that solar companies are overtaking farmlands, and the bill provides necessary guardrails. The MO Association for Solar Energy, Renew MO, opposed the bill and stated this bill is an attempt to single out the solar industry and overregulate. Ameren MO supports aligning solar with wind energy, however expressed concern with placing the assessment at a county level instead of a statewide assessment and expressed concern with placing a 75% requirement on sourced materials.

Solar Property Assessment

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [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 bill presentation, the sponsor informed committee members that ultimately, the Missouri Supreme Court’s decision means that developers who have installed solar equipment in Missouri since 2013 have not be able to rely on the property tax exemption as they had anticipated, which has also left several projects in limbo. Clean Grid Alliance, Arevon Energy, Strata Solar, MO Solar Energy Industries Association, and Renew MO supported the bill and advocated the need for a consistent tax rate and highlighted that a task force was created previously to examine this issue. No opposing testimony was presented.

Southern State University Mission

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Wednesday morning to consider passage of [SB 907](#), sponsored by Senator Jill Carter (R-Granby). The bill proposes to expand the mission of the Missouri Southern State University to include health and life sciences and immersive learning experiences. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-1 vote.

Special Road Districts

The House Rural Community Development Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2570](#), sponsored by Representative Gary Bonacker (R-House Springs). The bill removes a restriction for special road districts within a city which prohibits them from spending one-fourth of the district's revenue. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which changed the limit of revenue that the board is authorized to spend on road repairs from one-fourth of the district's revenue to the percentage equal to the road mileage divided by the total road miles located within the special road district. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-0 vote.

Special Victims

The House Children and Families Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1537](#), sponsored by Representative David Casteel (R-High Ridge). The bill adds to the definition of "special victim" any staff member of the Division of Youth Services within the Department of Social Services who is assaulted while performing official duties or as a result of performing such duties. After a lengthy committee discussion, the bill was passed by a 5-4 vote.

St. Louis Police Retirement “Earnable Compensation”

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Pension Committee convened on Wednesday afternoon to discuss [SB 1267](#), sponsored by Senator Nick Schroer (R-O’Fallon). The bill modifies the definition of “earnable compensation” as used by the St. Louis Police Retirement System to bar funds received through a judgement or settlement from a claim brought by a member of the retirement system against the City of St. Louis if those funds are intended to retroactively compensate that member at a different salary differential. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 4-0 vote.

State Department Mail

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1489](#), sponsored by Representative Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City). Currently, a notice of deficiency from the Department of Revenue must be sent by certified mail. The bill would remove that requirement for commercial entities and allow notice to be sent by electronic means. For individuals, they may opt-in to receive notification electronically or by first class mail. The Department of Revenue provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

State Funds Prohibition

The House dedicated floor time Wednesday morning to debate [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. During debate, the sponsor successfully amended the bill to make a technical correction. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes.

Sunshine Law for State Parks

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 1553](#), sponsored by Representative Bruce Sassman (R-Bland). The bill is the House companion to [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. Division of Missouri State Parks, Conservation Federation of Missouri, Missouri Park, and Recreation Association provided supporting testimony stating this would protect private information and reduce the selling of personal information. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

“Swatting”

The House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [HB 1653](#), sponsored by Representative Lane Roberts (R-Joplin). The bill establishes a person commits the offense of making a false report if he or she knowingly makes a false report or causes a false report to be made to emergency responders with reckless disregard that bodily harm or death may occur to another person. Additionally, the bill sets for both criminal and civil penalties. Anti-Defamation League and Missouri Prosecutors Association provided supporting testimony stating swatting has been on the rise and harsher penalties may help deter this trend. A private citizen provided opposing testimony.

Task Forces

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1814](#), sponsored by Representative Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal). The bill creates seeks to create seven various task forces to study everything from technology to security to social service systems in Missouri to evaluating various functions of government and specifies the composition, responsibilities, reporting requirements and sunset provisions relating to the task forces. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which requires those with technological expertise be added to the task forces. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Tax – Private Pensions

The House Ways and Means Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2657](#), sponsored by Representative Mike McGirl (R-Potosi). The bill increases an individual’s income tax adjustments related to private pensions by increasing from \$32,000 to \$64,000 for married filing combined, \$25,000 to \$50,000 for single, and \$16,000 to \$32,600 for married filing single. During bill presentation, the sponsor stated the intent of the legislation is to provide parity with all pensions. A state public advocate supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented. The committee reconvened Thursday morning in executive session to consider passage of the bill. After no committee discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Tax – Recreational Sales

The House Local Government Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2348](#), sponsored by Representative Barry Hovis (R-Whitewater). Currently, certain adjoining counties may jointly impose a sales tax throughout each of their respective counties for public recreational purposes including the financing, acquisition, construction, operation and maintenance of recreational projects and programs. This bill changes the authorization language so that the counties do not have to act jointly and allows each county to individually impose, upon voter approval, its own tax for public recreational purposes. If enacted, this bill will initially only apply to Bollinger and Cape Girardeau counties. A state public advocate provided supporting testimony and encouraged the committee to consider expanding the provisions to include all counties, not just Bollinger and Cape Girardeau. No opposing testimony was presented.

Tax – Transient Guest

The House Local Government Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 2687](#), sponsored by Representative Richard West (R-Wentzville). The bill authorizes the City of Weldon Spring to place on the ballot a transient guest tax for tourism. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Credit – Child

The House Ways and Means Committee convened Tuesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1973](#), sponsored by Representative Alex Riley (R-Springfield). Currently, the Champion for Children Tax Credit is set to sunset at the end of 2025 and is capped at \$1.5 million. The tax credit is designed to encourage private donations to agencies that serve kids that have experienced trauma, and the program provides a 50% credit for contributions to certain qualified entities in the state of Missouri. The bill extends the sunset from 2025 through December 31st of 2029, raises the cap from \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million, and it increases the credit amount from 50 to 70% of a taxpayer's eligible contribution. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to provide clarifying language and also included [HB 2089](#), sponsored by Representative Michael O'Donnell (R-St. Louis), which seeks parity for the benevolent tax credits by increasing the total amount contributed from 50% to 70%. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by an 8-0 vote.

Tax Credit – Circuit Breaker

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 822](#), sponsored by Senator Tracy McCreery (D-Olivette). The bill is the Senate companion to [HB 1670](#), sponsored by Representative Mark Matthiesen (R-O'Fallon) and seeks to adjust the "circuit breaker" tax credit annually to account for inflation. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Tax Credit – Educational Expenses

The House Special Committee on Education Reform convened Monday afternoon to discuss [HB 1911](#), sponsored by Representative Doug Richey (R-Excelsior Springs). The bill proposes to establish the "Missouri Parental Choice Tax Credit" and authorize a tax credit equal to the minimum of the state adequacy target for education funding in the state for costs incurred by parents or guardians for expenses relating to a child's education. Additionally, the bill proposes to allow parents or guardians to claim the expenses associated with tuition, books, fees, or academic testing at public, private, homeschool programs, virtual education programs, or summer education programs, including computer software, tutoring services, and educational therapies offered in a traditional school setting. During the bill's presentation, committee members questioned why traditional school supplies like pens, paper, and notebooks were excluded from the eligible costs for reimbursement and whether programs in the state would be required to be accredited or under the supervision of any state regulating agencies. No supporting testimony was presented. The Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City, Retired Teachers Association, Missouri State Teachers Association, Missouri NEA, and Missouri Equity in Education Action provided opposing testimony stating the bill would take funds away from public schools and harm students.

Tax Credit – Engineering

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 849](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). Beginning on or after January 1, 2025, the bill seeks to create three tax credits for certain employers and employees with engineering degrees. The first allows a

qualified employer that reimburses tuition to a qualified worker, equal to 50% of tuition reimbursed and claimed the first four years of employment. The second allows a qualified employer that pays compensation to a qualified employee for the first 5 years, equal to 5% compensation not to exceed \$75,000. The third tax credit is provided to a taxpayer that becomes a qualified employee, in the amount equal to \$5,000 and can be claimed for 5 consecutive years up to \$25,000 in tax credits. The bill includes a sunset on December 31, 2030, unless reauthorized by the General Assembly. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to modify terms by changing references of “employees” to “workers”. Additionally, the committee substitute increased the credit from 5% to 10% of compensation paid to a qualified worker. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a narrow 4-3 vote.

Tax Credit – Food Pantry Expansion

The House Special Committee on Public Policy convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1730](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Amato (R-Arnold). Currently, the cap on the local food pantry tax credit is \$1.75 million. The bill increases the amount to \$3 million and extends the sunset to December 31, 2030. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 6-0 vote.

Tax Credit – Local Homestead

The House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2432](#), sponsored by Representative Wendy Hausman (R-St. Charles). The bill is similar to [SB 756](#), sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). Last year [SB 190](#), which authorized a property tax credit on any property taxes on primary residents for people that are 65 years of age or older and eliminated taxes on social security benefits, was signed into law. There was some confusion once [SB 190](#) passed rather if a person had to qualify for and be eligible to receive social security benefits in order to qualify for the tax exemption. The bill seeks to clarify that any person 62 years, or older, regardless of if they qualify for benefits, is eligible for the tax exemption. Additionally, the bill provides additional clarifications. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to combine [HB 2482](#) and [HB2543](#), sponsored by Representatives Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield) and John Voss (R-Cape Girardeau) into one legislative vehicle, which are both House companion bills to [HB 2432](#). Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 25-2 vote.

Tax Credit – Recovery Support

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to discuss [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. MO Coalition for Recovery Support Providers provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Credit – Work Opportunity

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1207](#), sponsored by Senator Denny Hoskins (R-Warrensburg). The bill establishes a state Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which is an existing federal tax credit available to employers for hiring and employing individuals from certain targeted groups that face barriers to employment. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Tax Credit – Work Opportunity

The House Economic Development Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2473](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Hardwick (R-Dixon). The bill establishes the Missouri Job Creators Tax Reduction Act, which creates a tax credit that is available to employers for hiring and employing individuals from certain targeted groups who have faced significant barriers to employment. The intent of the legislation is to create a workforce program that incentivize workplace diversity and facilitate access to good jobs for American workers. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Tax Credits – Benevolent

The House Corrections and Public Institutions Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1444](#), sponsored by Representative Travis Smith (R-Dora). The bill establishes a tax credit against a taxpayer's state tax liability of up to 50% of their contribution to a qualified organization that provides support services and assistance to justice-involved individuals and people in recovery from substance use disorders. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

Tax Deduction – Savings Accounts

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1010](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Cierpiot (R-Lee's Summit). Current law offers an income tax deduction for 100% of a participating taxpayer's contributions to a long-term dignity savings account and it is set to sunset on December 31, 2024. The bill extends the sunset on the deduction until December 31, 2029. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Tax Exemption – Childcare Property

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee convened Thursday morning to discuss [SB 975](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). This is the Senate companion to [HB 2183](#), sponsored by Representative Wendy Hausman (R-St. Peters). Upon voter approval, the bill authorizes a property tax exemption of all property, real and personal, used primarily by a childcare facility for the care of a child outside of his or her home by a childcare provider. Campaign Life Missouri and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Tax Exemption – Disabled Veterans

The Senate Local Government and Elections Committee met Monday afternoon to discuss [SJR 58](#), sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). Upon voter approval, the resolution expands the current exemption from real property taxes for former prisoners of war with a total service-connected disability to all disabled veterans. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Tax Exemption – Medical Devices

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [SB 1180](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester). The bill allows for certain portable and wearable brain cancer treatment devices to be exempt from sales taxes. The bill also expands the sales tax exemption for certain durable medical equipment as defined by the federal Medicare program and includes manual and powered wheelchair parts. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Tax Exemptions – Bingo, Cancer Treatment, Auction, Research

The House Ways and Means Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss [HB 1427](#), sponsored by Representative Mike McGirl (R-Potosi). The bill repeals the tax imposed on the sale of bingo cards. St. Paul Knights of Columbus, and the American Legion Post 131 Warrensburg supported the bill. A state public advocate opposed the bill. The committee reconvened Thursday morning in executive session to consider passage of the bill. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to include [HB 1817](#), allows for certain portable and wearable brain cancer treatment devices to be exempt from sales taxes. Additionally, the committee substitute included [HB 1947](#), removes used tangible personal property from the requirement of the collection of sales tax, which applies to used property for auction items. Lastly, the committee substitute included [HB 2457](#), which seeks to decouple our state income taxes from Section 174 of the IRS tax code to allow taxpayers to deduct specified research and experimental expenditures from their federal adjusted gross income tax code. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 10-1 vote.

Telehealth Services

The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee convened Monday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 1421](#) and [HB 1873](#), sponsored by Representatives Mike Stephens (R-Bolivar) and Patty Lewis (D-Kansas City). The bills are identical and modify the definition of “telehealth services” to include audiovisual and audio only services and expands which third-party platforms “telehealth services” may be provided. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to combine both bills into one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-0 vote.

Telemedicine

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 851](#), sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). This is the Senate companion to [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. SSM Health presented supporting testimony stating it is using AI adaptive questionnaires in other states with no adverse reports. Additional supporting testimony was provided by Hims & Hers, Associated Industries of Missouri, and Missouri Hospital Association. The Missouri State Medical Association, Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, and Missouri Academy of Family Physicians presented opposing testimony stating this could compromise patient safety.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott – Expresses Support

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss [HR 4055](#), sponsored by Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St Peters). The resolution expresses support for Texas governor Greg Abbott and his actions at the border. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

TikTok Ban

The House Special Committee on Innovation and Technology convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of [HB 2141](#), sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). The bill prohibits the use of any Chinese-owned social media apps on state issued electronics. After no discussion, the committee voted the bill do pass with a 5-2 vote.

Time-Limited Settlement Demands

The House Committee on Insurance Policy convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2277](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Hardwick (R-Dixon). The bill replaces the term "time-limited demand" with "settlement demand". The bill specifies that, in any lawsuit alleging damages outside of the norm of the contracted insurer, any prior settlement demand to settle a claim will not be considered to have been a reasonable opportunity to settle the claim unless the demand was made in writing, was sent certified mail, or remained open for acceptance by the liability insurer for at least 90 days from the date the demand was received by the insurer. The chair stated that the different sides interested in this bill are continuing to discuss ways to find language that works for everyone, but that further changes will occur through floor amendment. After a brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-4 vote.

Tobacco Product Regulations

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss [SB 911](#), sponsored by Senator Ben Brown (R-Washington). The bill is similar to [HB 1484](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Christ (R-St. Louis) and 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. The Missouri Petroleum and Convenience Association, and MO Smoke Fire, City of Eureka, American Cigar Association, HUB Incorporated, Missouri Retailers and Wholesalers Associations, Studio 420, and Kum and Go Convenience Stores testified in support of the bill and informed committee members local ordinances and control adversely affects their small businesses. stating that a number of cities and counties around the state already have local ordinances in place to ensure sale of tobacco products to those who are 21 and older. Additionally, it was stated tobacco remains the number one preventable cause of death. Springfield Health Department and Missouri Local Health Association, Lee's Summit Family Physician, American Cancer Society, American Cancer Network, American Heart Association and Missouri State Medical Association, Missouri Center for Public Health, Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence advocate testified opposed the bill, stating that a number of cities and counties around the state already have local ordinances in place to ensure sale of tobacco products to those who are 21 and older. Additionally, it was stated tobacco remains the number one preventable cause of death.

Tourism Supplemental Revenue Fund

The House Economic Development Committee convened Wednesday morning to discuss [HB 2719](#), sponsored by Representative Brad Hudson (R-Cape Fair). In 1993, HB 188 was signed into law, and it created the Division of Tourism Supplemental Revenue Fund for the purpose to maintain the operations of the MO Division of Tourism within the Department of Economic Development and it also created a revenue funding formula. Through this formula, a percentage of growth in tax revenues from tourism related businesses was supposed to be reinvested each year for tourism marketing. The formula went into effect June 1, 1994, and has been reauthorized in subsequent years and in 2013 the General Assembly approved a seven-year sunset, which expired on June 30, 2020. Although the Fund has sunset, it is still in operation and the intent of the legislation is to fix the sunset oversight and allow the Department to continue utilizing the Fund for tourism marketing purposes. The MO Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus, and the MO Hotel Lodging Association supported the bill and advocated the importance of tourism in Missouri. No opposing testimony was presented.

Utility Rates (Consumer)

The House Emerging Issues Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to discuss [HB 2613](#), sponsored by Representative Tricia Byrnes (R-Wentzville). The bill requires electrical corporations which offer multiple rate plans for time-of-use to include the cost of the service on each billing statement. Additionally, if multiple rate plans are offered, the bill allows the consumer to choose the plan and apply any discounts retroactively for 90 days. A private citizen provided supporting testimony. Evergy and Ameren Missouri provided opposing testimony stating consumers may already change their plans and the legislation should be made voluntary rather than mandatory.

UTV and ATV Regulations

The House Insurance Policy Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 2076](#), sponsored by Representative Kyle Marquart (R-Washington). Currently, people operating all-terrain vehicles are required to maintain insurance or some kind of financial responsibility policy. The bill modifies current statute to require insurance, various safety equipment be placed on the vehicles and require seatbelts with exception only when all-terrain vehicles are operated on highways. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 14-1 vote.

Virtual Course Program Assessments

The Senate Select Committee on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children convened on Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 1049](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit). The bill allows any virtual school or program that is part of the Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program to administer any statewide assessment virtually as long as the student being tested is monitored via a camera and proctored at a ratio of 10-1 or lower. Parents for Public School Options, Connections Academy and Stride provided supporting testimony stating virtual students residing in rural counties had difficulties other students might not, including transportation and travel time to testing locations. The Missouri NEA testified for informational purposes about the benefits of proctoring and ensuring that the ratio is maintained under best practice. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee.

Workers' Compensation

The Senate Committee on General Laws convened Wednesday morning to discuss [SB 935](#), sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). The bill reduces workers compensation benefits under certain circumstance based on marijuana usage. Currently, if Missouri employees ask for workers' compensation after an on-the-job injury, employers can require them to take a drug test for marijuana. If they test positive, even if they hadn't consumed marijuana for days, their compensation and death benefit may be reduced by 50%. Although, marijuana is legalized in Missouri, it's still a controlled substance on a federal level, and in the event the federal government legalizes marijuana, the sponsors intent with the legislation is to include current policies into state statute so it can remain in place if federal law changes. Employment law attorneys, Associated Industries of Missouri, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Missouri Association of Counties, and the Missouri Association of Counties Workers Compensation Trust testified in support of the legislation, stating the bill is already current policy and marijuana would continue to be treated the same as alcohol. Currently, if employees test below the intoxication level of alcohol of .08%, they still could have their benefits reduced. No opposing testimony was presented.

The House Insurance Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of [HB 1990](#) and [HB 2135](#), sponsored by Representatives Sherri Gallick (R-Belton) and John Voss (R-Cape Girardeau). Both bills are the House companion to [SB 935](#), highlighted above. However, [HB 1990](#) differs slightly and makes an exemption for medical marijuana patients who are following a doctor's prescription. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted to combine both bills into one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 13-2 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 1, 2024 – Last day of bill filing
- 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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