

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Published semi-monthly during the Missouri Legislative Session by the

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

8706 Manchester Rd. Suite 104 St. Louis, MO 63144-2724

314-961-6869 (fax 314-961-8393)

email lwvmo@yahoo.com

web www.lwvmissouri.org

Volume XXXVI Issue 8

April 28, 2006

Make time to get outside and enjoy the beautiful wildflowers and the blooming trees.

They are just too pretty to miss and do so much to take away your stress, soothe your soul and make you smile.(Take your family with you too.)

Now for the latest in legislative progress or lack thereof.

Plenty of items for you to act on.

Laura Worstell

Mental Health and Health- Lael Von Holt, Director

We're glad to report this week that SB648 (Champion) is the first health care bill of those League has followed- to be Truly Agreed and Finally Passed.

SB648 replaces the term "lunatic asylum" with "mental health facility" in Section 320.010. RSMo. This may appear to be a rather innocuous bill. But, on the contrary, it reflects greater sophistication in attitude toward mental illnesses. Long over due! League has been confident in supporting this legislation.

Following up on SB SCS 1210,1244 &844 from our review in Leg. Bulletin 7 we're seeing this very significant bipartisan bill on Medicaid fraud moving convincingly through the legislative process. It is now in the House and scheduled for hearing in the H Special Committee on Health Care Facilities on May 2nd at 12 noon in HR5.

Remember to thank Senator Koster (R) Senator Graham (D) and Senator Loudon (R) for tackling this major problem and sponsoring these combined bills.

HB1742 (Portman) SCS (Shields), which establishes a medical assistance for disabled workers program, has moved rapidly recently and is on the Senate Calendar for House Bills for third reading. This bill mirrors SB1049 (Shields) which is on the S Informal Calendar for Senate Bills for Perfection. League has supported both bills and applaud these movements towards final passage.

Children- Laura Pitts-Director

As of 4/26/06/

SB588 Bartle's bill to strengthen sexual offender laws was referred to the House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee and was heard 4/25/06.

HB1698 Lipke's version to strengthen sexual offender laws was referred to the Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee and a public hearing was scheduled 4/24/06. (This is Missouri's version of "Jessica's" law and League supports it so let your Senator know we want this to pass. LDW)

SB916 Koster's bill to expand child passenger restraints has had no change since being added to the hwy worker's and emergency workers safety bill and being voted do pass House Rules committee 4/20/06.

SB687 Scott's bill to provide comprehensive vision exams for children in kindergarten and first grade is on the Informal Calendar for Senate Bills for Perfection 4/27/06.

HB1071 Phillip's bill to change immunizations for children remains on the House Calendar of House Bills for Perfection.

AGAIN, if you want more information before contacting your legislator, please go to www.moga.mo.gov. click on Joint Bill Tracking and type in the bill number.

Energy- Win Colwill- Director

Legislative Report April 26, 2006

HCS SCS SB915 (Koster) Green energy initiative. Voted Do Pass by the House Rules Committee on April 25. Has two amendments that have improved the bill but renewable energy targets are still voluntary. LWVMO will take a neutral position on this bill.

HB1384(Lowe) (previously discussed in LB) The public hearing was completed on 3/7/06. No further action to date.

Taxes- Elaine Blodgett- Director

The House Local Government heard SS/SCS/SB 832 John Griesheimer (Washington) on April 25. The Committee then voted out an HCS which includes the provisions of HB 1070 (Robert T. Johnson). We strongly support this bill to reform Tax Increment Finance (TIF) law. The HCS retains provisions to redefine "blighted area". The HCS retains provisions to redefine "blighted area" and ensure that schools have a way to require that Payment In Lieu Of Tax (PILOT) payments from residential parts of TIFs will go to schools. As of 4/25, this bill was referred to rules committee.

Taxation

HJR 48 Carl Bearden (St. Charles) Limitation on legislative appropriations. No action since April 11 when it was placed on Joint Resolutions for Perfection.

Both this bill and its sister initiative petition referred to as Article 14 Petition. The deadline for signatures is May 7, a week before the end of this legislative session. Possibly supporters of the bill will wait to see what happens to the petition. Again keep pressure on legislators, senators or reps if you see them. Look for further updates or alerts if the status of the bill changes.

Appropriations bills (budget) are to be finished by May 5th and then just one week to get all the business of the legislature completed. This is a furious time at the capitol. You can log on to the daily journals and join in the fun, Just go to the Senate web page and click on either house journals. Usually the previous day's journal is available by 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning the next day. If you can't sleep this is entertaining. Let me know what you think.

Laura Worstell lworstell@maain.com