

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Published semi-monthly during the Missouri Legislative Session by the
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Volume XXXVII Issue 5

March 9, 2007

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HB808 has been defeated. Educational vouchers are not publicly supported in Missouri. Constructive or creative remedies for the crisis in urban education have not been forthcoming either. This situation may change with the introduction and assigning 3/05 to the Senate Education committee **SB688**(Gibbons) which would create a ten member legislative task force to study and analyze the challenges of improving the education system in urban areas of MO. Improving education service delivery is the task of **SB652**(Coleman)also referred to the Senate Ed.Com 3/05/07. **SB690**(Smith) creates the Metropolitan School District Improvement Act which would apply as written only to the St Louis public school district. This is a lengthy bill which provides for mega looping, performance pay for teachers and schools, student and teacher assessments, alternative education; early childhood education, school uniforms as well as a longer school day and year. Referred to the Sen. Ed. Com 3/08. League will follow these developments as well as **HB 690** (Baker) which allows open enrollment.---Laura Worstell

SCR7 (Bray) Equal Rights Amendment.No further action.

HB427(Ruestman) which revises the responsibilities of the Missouri Women's Council . No further action.

Death penalty bills **SB354, SB439 and HB445** have had no further action. LDW

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH--LAEL VON HOLT

Restructuring Medicaid continues to challenge all sides. It's been two years - since 2005 - when **SB539** (Perguson) and House Concurrent Resolution 15 initiated this process. Numerous plans have been offered and numerous bills have been filed. Debate has been intense.

League's preferred position on national health care remains, but this option does not enjoy strong legislative support. Plans for universal health care in Massachusetts and California may well impact Missouri at some point, but legislative energy is focused now on MO HealthNet – the restructured plan that promotes prevention, responsibility, incentives, and wellness.

League will continue to support strong legislation that promotes access to health care, protects vulnerable populations, and controls cost and fraud. Several of those bills have been brought to your attention in prior bulletins.

Just recently, we've seen two important policy bills emerge, one in the Senate and one in the House, competitive in nature, and focused on restructuring health care.

SB 577 (Shields), the Missouri Health Improvement Act of 2007, is the major policy bill that sets guidelines for MO HealthNet. It identifies three Health Improvement Plans as the core of health care. Recipients will gradually enroll in the plan of their choice, assisted by a health care advocate and by

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH--LAEL VON HOLT (CONTINUED)

electronic access Medicaid as we know it will end on June 30, 2008, and the restructured plan will take effect at that point. **SB577** was heard by the S Health and Mental Health Committee on 3-6-07.

HB 1019 (Baker), currently untitled, is an alternative plan that promotes affordable, high quality health care for all Missourians, protecting children especially. This plan would void the Medicaid end date of June 30, 2008, currently in statute, and replace that date with June 30, 2009 to begin the alternative plan. **HB1019** has been read twice in the House, but has yet to be referred to a committee.

CHILDREN- LAURA PITTS

SB1 (Gibbons) requires criminal background checks for anyone hired with “substantial contact with children”. It places more accountability on employers and employment agencies that hire or place convicted abusers. Referred to Judiciary, Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction Committee. Voted do pass by committee 2-21-07. No change

SB84 (Champion) modifies provisions of criminal background checks for emergency placement of a child outside the family. It removes the exception for checks on family members. Complies with FBI regulations. 2/1 reported to the House floor as a consent bill. Passed House and was second read in House 2-21-07 no change.

SB5 (Loudon) modifies laws on child pornography to allow a child victim to recover damages through civil courts. Voted out of committee do pass 2/26.

SB16 (Scott) Requires all children in kindergarten or first grade to have a comprehensive vision test. 3/12, on Senate calendar for 3rd reading.

SB25 (Champion) Prohibits closing a child abuse investigation prior to the completion of the investigation, in the event of the child’s death. Passed Senate and second read in House 2-21-07. No change.

SB 161 (Shields) Creates a quality rating system for child care facilities beyond licensing requirements. Passed Senate 3/01 and 3/5 first read in House.

ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION--LAURA WORSTELL

SB160(Rupp) which adds vocational and technical schools to the A+ Scholarship Program. 3/12 Senate Calendar for Perfection. League supports.

SB149, SB6, HB228, HB110, SB228 and HB498 as reported in LB#4 have had no change in status.

HB670 (Muschany) requires DESE to create additional procedures for teacher certification and mentoring standards for beginning teachers and principals. Reported to Senate and 1st read 3/8/07.

ELECTIONS, ETHICS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM--NANCY COPENHAVER

Updates on Senate bills noted in the last bulletin:

SS SCS SBs 49, 65, 210, & 251 have passed the Senate and in committee in the House—good news for people who want to know who is paying for those “robo” political calls as well as people on the no-call list who prefer not to get them (may also apply to faxes)

SBs 128, 271, 409, 410, and 438 are all moving, although none are high priority (refer to last report for details). No action on **SBs 126, 183, 229, 263, 367, 487.**

ELECTIONS, ETHICS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM--NANCY COPENHAVER (CONTINUED)

SBs 37, 219, 408, and SJR 6 are sitting in committee, with **SB 37 (Days) the advance voting system** one that we will strongly support--contacting the committee chair (Scott) to move the bill might help.

The last group of bills in this category filed in the Senate:

SB's 592, 593, 594 (Scott) are technical ethics clean-up; **SB 598** (Engler) restricts petition circulators somewhat;

SB 710 (Coleman) requires testing of voting machines; **SJR 15** (Green) increases term limits from 8 to 12 years;

SJR 21 (Clemens) reduces size of House and increases size/length of terms, both would be voted on as constitutional amendments.

The big issue from last year, declared unconstitutional by the courts, has resurfaced—requiring a picture ID to vote. Senator Scott has filed **SB 596** but also **SJR 28** which would require a vote of the people to amend the constitution to **require a picture ID to vote**. This one requires the state to pick up any cost, which is an attempt to answer part of last year's challenge to the measure. This is one to watch, although folks may be tired of fighting this battle.

TAXES--ELAINE BLODGETT

SB 590 -Michael Gibbons This bill eliminates the corporate franchise tax over a five year period. This significantly reduces state General Revenue and corporations, as well as individuals, benefit from public services and public investment in Missouri and should be expected to contribute, based upon their ability to pay, to support those services. The fiscal note indicates a net loss of about \$117 million per year for the fifth year and thereafter. This cut will force the state to reduce money allotted to education and other vital public services.

HB 621 Scott Muschany The bill repeals the **SB 380** tax increase from 1993 by allowing full deductibility from state income tax of all federal income tax liability. The problem is that it will reduce state general revenue by at least \$450 million per year and force the state to slash spending in important public services and needs.

HJR 20, has not yet been assigned a committee hearing. However, a new TABOR bill has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Lager: **SJR 24**. This is the first year that TABOR has been introduced in both the house and senate in Missouri

ENERGY--WIN COLWILL

SCS SB 54 (Koster) Creates renewable energy targets (voluntary) for electric companies. SCS Do Pass Commerce, Energy and Environment Committee. 3/12/07 Senate Calendar for third reading **SB 328** (Engler) Bio-Reactor Landfill Permit for a Columbia renewable energy pilot project. Allows the city to deposit yard waste and other recyclable organic materials in the landfill to increase methane production for electricity generation. 3/12/07 Senate Consent Calendar. LWV SUPPORTS.

ENERGY--WIN COLWILL (CONTINUED)

HB 869 (Holsman and 52 co-sponsors) Easy Connection Act. This true “net-metering” bill would replace Missouri’s present ineffective, so-called net-metering law and encourage the installation of renewable electricity systems. It enables utility customers with on-site renewable energy systems up to 100 KW to have a single bi-directional meter that spins backwards when the system generates more power than it can use, so that the customer receives full credit for excess power returned to the electric grid. The system is required to meet all applicable national interconnection, reliability and safety standards. PSC will establish rules for simple contracts and procedures. Limits the number of systems the utility is required to accept. LWV SUPPORTS. Referred to Special Committee on Energy and Environment Hearing set for 3/13/07.

REMINDER-

LWVMO LEGISLATIVE DAY, THURSDAY, MARCH 29.

GOOD LOBBYING, FUN TIME

AND A TOUR OF THE “GREEN” DNR BUILDING.

SEND YOUR RESERVATIONS (AND CHECK FOR \$10 TO COVER THE COST OF THE PACKET) IN TO THE LEAGUE OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

—LAURA WORSTELL