

## 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 [lwwmo@yahoo.com](mailto:lwwmo@yahoo.com)

web [www.lwvmissouri.org](http://www.lwvmissouri.org)

Volume XXXVII Issue 8

April 20, 2007

Legislation is moving and we will try to point out bills that appear to be headed to the governor's desk. There are four more weeks in this session. Final day for action is May 18<sup>th</sup>. There may be some surprises (usually are).

#### **HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH- LAEL VON HOLT**

**SB3** (Gibbons), the mental health reform bill, is now in the House Health Care Policy Committee. Referred on 4-12-07.

**SCS SB122** (Bray) establishes the Missouri Universal Health Assurance Commission to study the possible implementation of a universal health assurance program. Please note the change in language from the original SB122. This SCS establishes a commission for study, not a program as intended by Senator Bray. This substitute was voted Do Pass on 4-17-07 by the Senate Health and Mental Health Committee.

**SS SCS SB577** (Shields) enacts the Missouri Health Improvement Act of 2007. This major health reform bill, MO HealthNet, has been amended many times and now includes fraud prevention, health care technology, and health care benefits for uninsured women and children. The basic premise continues to engender controversy. This bill was referred to the House Special Committee on Healthcare Facilities on 4-12-07.

**SCS HCS HB39** (Portwood) is the medical assistance bill for the working disabled. On 4-19-07, this bill was voted Do Pass by the Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight Committee of the Senate. HB39 has bipartisan support, League support, and an emergency clause.

**HCS HB818** (Ervin) establishes the Missouri Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and changes the laws regarding the Missouri Health Insurance Pool. It is now in the Senate Health and Mental Health Committee and is scheduled for hearing on 4-24-07.

## **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. 4/19 House Calendar for 3<sup>rd</sup> reading.

**SB5**(Loudon) modifies laws on child pornography to allow a child victim to recover damages through civil courts. 4/19 House Calendar for third reading.

**SB16** (Scott) Requires all children in kindergarten or first grade to have a comprehensive vision test. 4/19 Truly agreed and finally passed.

**SB25**(Champion) Prohibits closing a child abuse investigation prior to the completion of the investigation in the event of the child’s death. 4/19 House Calendar for 3<sup>rd</sup> reading.

**SB 161** (Shields) Creates a quality rating system for child care facilities beyond licensing requirements. 4/18 reported do pass House Rules Committee.

## **ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION- LAURA WORSTELL**

**SB160**(Rupp) which adds vocational and technical schools to the A+ Scholarship Program. 4/10 Senate Informal Calendar for Perfection. League supports. No change

**SB688** (Gibbons) Creates a ten member task force to study challengers of urban education systems. Hearing conducted 3/28 S Education Committee. No change.

**SB690** (Smith) Creates Metropolitan School District Improvement Act. Applies only to the St Louis School District. Hearing conducted 3/28 S Education Committee. No change

**HB807Cunningham** Allows open enrollment. 4/19 House Calendar Bills for Perfection.

**HB620** (Muschany) requires DESE to create additional procedures for teacher certification and mentoring standards for beginning teachers and principals. Senate Education Committee reported out do pass 4/12.

**SB236**(Shields) Requires DESE to develop standards for high quality mentoring procedures for beginning teachers and principals. Hearing conducted 4/04 House Special Committee on Student Achievement. No change.

**HB469** (Wallace) Changes law regarding school safety and liability. 4/12 reported out Senate Education Committee do pass. **SB652** (Coleman) Extensive changes in St Louis school administration. 4/23 /07 on Senate Formal Calendar for Perfection. Similar to **SB243** and **SB690**. Watch this one next week. LDW

## **ELECTIONS, ETHICS & CAMPAIGN FIN. REFORM- NANCY COPENHAVER**

**Campaign finance:** Oversight of ethics commission hearing scheduled on **SB594**(Scott) in House Rules Committee 4/23.

**Elections :** **SJR15** Increases term limits from 8 to 12 years in each house and total years from 16 to 24. 4/23 Senate Formal Calendar for Perfection.

LDW

## **TAXES - ELAINE BLODGETT**

**SJR 23, (Luann Ridgeway)** Limitation of reassessment of residential real property to years in which transfer of title occurs. Reassessment: The Senate Ways and Means Committee met on April 18 to hear **SJR 23**. For some, that could put the assessment off for 20 or thirty years.

**HJR 20**, TABOR Bill (now called COMPASS) still in the House, on the House Calendar for debate.

**HB 444** (Jetton), the exemption of Social Security benefits from state income tax remains in the Senate Ways and Means. Note that two of these bills cut more taxes, one from state income and the other from property tax which would affect school districts. These three are further examples of limitation on income for government. If all of the proposed should pass, government surely would be hindered in services to citizens.

## **ENERGY- WIN COLWILL**

**HCS/HB 869** (Holsman) Easy Connection Act (net metering for small renewable energy systems on homes and businesses).

House Special Comm. on Energy & Environment voted House Committee Substitute “Do Pass” 4/12; Referred to Rules Committee 4/12. LWVMO SUPPORTS.

*The substitute answers concerns of electric coops, e.g. coops and municipal utilities will have 9 months following bill passage to institute net metering systems; utilities may count customers’ systems toward meeting utility renewable energy targets, if state requires them in the future.*

**ACTION ALERT ON HCS/HB 869:** Please contact your state representative.

*Message: Easy Connection Act will help Missouri diversify its electric power sources by encouraging the installation of small solar and wind energy systems around the state.*

*Passage of net metering is important for economic, reliability, environmental and national security reasons. Please support HCS HB 869.*

**SCS/SB 674** (Bray) Easy Connection Act (companion bill to **HB 869**) S. Commerce, Energy & Environment voted “Do Pass” 4/12. LWVMO SUPPORTS.

**ACTION ALERT ON SCS SB 674:** Please contact your Senator. See message above.

**SCS/SB 328** (Engler) Allows Columbia to landfill yard waste and construct bioreactor to produce electricity. Process reduces methane gas released to atmosphere. Passed Senate 3/29. Hearing held 4/17 House Special Comm. on Energy & Environment. LWVMO SUPPORTS.

**SCS/SB 54** (Koster) Sets voluntary renewable energy targets for investor-owned utilities only. Hearing held 4/17 by House Special Comm. on Energy & Environment.

See you at Convention, May 5 and 6, with another Legislative Bulletin- Laura Worstell