

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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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

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This session has ended and the officers of the House and Senate will meet May 25 to officially witness and sign all “truly agreed and finally passed” legislation. Delivered to the governor, he has until mid July to sign or veto each bill. The veto session this year begins September 12th. I hope you have the opportunity to thank the Directors for their study of the legislation in their area and reporting to you via this Legislative Bulletin every two weeks the progress of the bills League supported and opposed.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH – LAEL VON HOLT

Truly Agreed To and Finally Passed!

LWVMO has highlighted three health care bills this session that have advanced to the level of Truly Agreed To and Finally Passed, including:

CCS HCS#2 SS SCS SB3 (Gibbons), the mental health reform bill that protects residential care clientele from abuse, neglect and fire; also sets out penalties for infraction.

CCS HCS SS SCS SB577 (Shields), the controversial MO HealthNet bill that restores certain medical benefits; promotes health improvement plans, emphasizing prevention and wellness; controls fraud; advances health technology; and includes numerous other components of a comprehensive bill. Not all Medicaid benefits, however, have been restored and not all Missourians are satisfied. Reciprocal blaming is heard everywhere. The legislative environment for negotiation and compromise was intense, but the Conference process brought forth a substitute bill that passed in the final hours of May 18th.

SS#2 SCS HCS HB818 (Ervin), the complex health insurance bill that was passed with bipartisan support but, after the fact, there emerged a serious controversy over two amendments on midwifery and medical debt. Nevertheless, this bill has been Delivered to the Governor but his response is not assured at the time of this writing.

The 94th General Assembly comes to a close on a mixed note of legislative advance and legislative languish. The session has been variously referred to as acrimonious as well as victorious.

LWVMO thanks all of you who responded to the mental health call, who kept in touch with your legislators, and who worked in community groups on behalf of health and mental health care for needy Missourians.

CHILDREN - LAURA PITTS

SB1 (criminal background checks for those with substantial contact with children) remained in committee.

SB84 5/16 Truly Agreed To & Finally Passed after growing exponentially to include a broader range of child placement issues--Points added were from **SB531, SCS/SB67, SB935, SB292, HB954 and HB1210.**

SB5 5/18 House Calendar for S Bills Third Reading.

SB16 4/19(requires all children in kindergarten/first grade to have comprehensive vision tests) Truly Agreed To & Finally Passed.

SB25 5/16 Truly Agreed To & Finally Passed after becoming **HCS/SB25**--a combination of **SB25, SB603,** and **HB936.**Adding additional child support enforcement issues.

SB161 After Passed H 5/17 with HCS, as amended, 5/18 was on S Calendar S Bills with H Amendments. This bill grew substantially to include a broad range of education elements.

ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION- LAURA WORSTELL

SB389 (Nodler) Truly Agreed To and Finally Passed 5/7/2007. Modifies the powers of Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority(MoHELA). Beyond the controversy of selling assets, this act requires the Joint Committee on Education to monitor the establishment of performance measures required and reporting on these measures to the General assembly and the Governor. Creates the Missouri Teaching Fellows Program which for qualified graduates who are hired to teach in school districts not accredited may enter into an educational loan repayment plan. Increases the Bright Flight Scholarship amount \$1000 in 2011. Other changes and additions are in this bill also. To comment on **SB161** (Shields)-This bill began simply as creating a quality rating system for child care facilities and became a “catch all” for many education issues. For example this bill was amended to include--- School emergency procedures, Charter schools, mentors for teachers and principals, reimbursement for college remedial courses, open enrollment, education of children in juvenile court, student transportation, teacher certification and licensure, teacher strikes and compensation of school administrators. Small wonder it failed to be “truly agreed to”. LDW

ENERGY - WIN COLWILL

The Net Metering and Easy Connection Act (**HB869**) was Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed on 5/19 as part of a 57 pg. bill that includes **SB54** and **SB328** amended, which LWVMO has been monitoring throughout the session. See details below:

HB869 (SB674) requires utilities to give customer-generators full credit for the electric power they send back to the grid from their renewable energy systems. It also simplifies application and interconnection procedures. LWVMO strongly supported the original bill.

SB54 asks the regulated electric utilities (in the aggregate) to make a “good faith effort” to increase their use of renewable energy sources (4% of total retail sales in 2012 to 11% by 2020). The first progress report is due to the governor in 2010. LWVMO considers

this to be a weak measure unlikely to produce much renewable energy unless strengthened in future years.

SB328 allows yard waste to be disposed of in certain municipal landfills approved by MO DNR to be developed as “bioreactors” for generation of electricity. This presently affects only Columbia.

Other sections of this lengthy bill authorize month grants to ethanol producers of up to \$10 million per year through 2018 and stiffen penalties for illegal dumping of demolition and solid wastes. Another section establishes permit fees for surface mining (limestone, sand, gravel, barite, etc.) with a 9 member advisory council representing the various mining industries and DNR, but not the public. The full implications of these sections are not known at this time.

On a lighter note - House bills truly agreed to and finally passed include HB272 makes the three-toed box turtle the official reptile of Missouri, HB351 the crayfish the official invertebrate, HB575 the Bobwhite quail the official game bird of Missouri and HB680 Big Blue Stem the official state grass. Thought you'd like to know.-- Laura Worstell