

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 XXXVII Issue 9

May 3, 2007

There are only two more weeks of this Legislative session. May 18 is the final day for action on bills. The budget must be passed by next Friday the 11th. Early in the session many bills were introduced, assigned to committee and seemed to be moving right along. Now after several filibusters and long evenings in session much action has come down to combining numbers of bills and making clear-cut outcomes dubious. We will try to point out bills that appear to be moving, though now if a bill isn't on the calendar for third reading in the second chamber on the calendar for perfection, there isn't much hope of passage this time. There may still be some surprises.

Laura Worstell

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. Voted do pass by committee 2-21-07. Not on the Calendar

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. This complies with FBI regulations. 4/24 House Calendar for 3rd reading.

SB5(Loudon) modifies laws on child pornography to allow a child victim to recover damages through civil courts. 4/24 Hearing conducted H Crime and Safety Committee.

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. An amended version (with several add-ons to do with child support after the age 18, requiring the student to be accountable grade and health wise if the non custodial parent was to continue payment) passed the house 4/30.On 5/2 the S refused to concur and requested the House recede or grant a conference.

SB 161 (Shields) Creates quality rating system for child care facilities beyond licensing requirements. 4/18 reported do pass House Rules Committee. No change

ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION- LAURA WORSTELL

SB160(Rupp) which adds vocational and technical schools to the A+ Scholarship Program. 5/2 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.5/2/07

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 5/2/07

SB652(Coleman) Extensive changes in St Louis School administration No.6 on S formal calendar for perfection 5/2/07

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH – LAEL VON HOLT

For this report, only those bills that have shown significant progress will be included. At this point, however, the outcomes are still in doubt.

SS SCS SB3 (Gibbons), the mental health reform bill that enacts provisions for client safety in residential facilities. Referred to the Rules Committee, as of 5-2-07.

SCS SB122 (Bray) establishes the Mo. Universal Health Assurance Commission. On the S Formal Calendar S Bills for Perfection w/**SCS**, as of 5-2-07.

SB274 (Shields), the Healthcare Technology Fund. On the S Informal Calendar S Bills for Perfection, as of 5-2-07. Healthcare Technology Fund is also included in **SB577**.

SS SCS SB577 (Shields), the Missouri Health Improvement Act remains in the H Special Committee on Healthcare Facilities Committee. Hearing was conducted on 4-25-07.

SCS HCS HB39 (Portwood), the medical assistance bill for the working disabled. On the S Informal Calendar as of 4-25-07.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH – LAEL VON HOLT (continued)

SCS HCS HB818 (Ervin), the Missouri Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and the Missouri Health Insurance Pool. Reported Do Pass (S), as of 5-2-07.

ELECTIONS, ETHICS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM- NANCY COPENHAVER

Campaign finance oversight of ethics commission hearing scheduled on **SB594**(Scott)5-2-07 Third Reading calendar in House.

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 Pefection.

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. (This is to be on the Senate floor this next week. Watch for it. LDW)

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

Note: Committee amendments have altered these bills significantly.

HCS/HB 869 – Net Metering and Easy Connection Act; Substitute passed by Rules Com. 4/30

SCS/SB 674 – Similar to HB 869. Subst. passed by Commerce, Energy, Envir. Committee 4/12

HCS/SCS/SB54 “Green Power Initiative”. The original SB 54 asks regulated utilities to meet voluntary, rather than mandatory, renewable energy targets. The House Committee Substitute adds provisions to expand the membership and responsibilities of the Missouri Ethanol Commission and change the title to Missouri Alternative Fuels Commission. It also requires at least 70% of new state fleet vehicles to be flexible fuel vehicles capable of using fuel that is 85% ethanol (E85). Another provision states that air pollution fees will be set every 3 years instead of every year, unless increased need can be shown by DNR. Passed by House Rules Com. 5/1.

ENERGY- WIN COLWILL (continued)

HCS/SCB/SB328 – The original SB 328 allows yard waste to be put in municipal landfills approved by DNR to be used as “bioreactors” for generation of electricity. The House Com. Substitute adds monthly grants to ethanol producers of up to \$10 million/yr. from 2008 to 2018; allows ethanol feedstocks to include “qualified biomass” as well as corn (opening opportunity for development of “cellulosic” ethanol). Other new sections stiffen penalties for illegal dumping of demolition and solid wastes and give DNR new authority to seek penalties for landfill operators who violate fee provisions. Hearing House Rules Comm. scheduled for 5/3. WC

Legislative Bulletin No. 10 will be printed after the 18th, possibly May
21st,
so all of the data on the session will be complete.