



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 63144-2733

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

Email: league@lwvmissouri.org Web: www.lwvmissouri.org

Volume XXXX, Issue 3

February 19, 2010

EXTREMELY URGENT!

According to the Missouri Budget Project, it appears that **SJR 29** has been placed on the Missouri Senate Calendar for Monday, February 22. Please contact your senators immediately (this weekend or early Monday) and urge **OPPOSITION** to this measure. This is the so-called “fair tax”, also referred to as the really big tax, which could be devastating. If you need additional information you can contact Heather Lasher Todd in the Missouri Budget Project office on Friday at hlashertodd@mobudget.org. More information is available on the website: www.mobudget.org or phone 314-652-1400.

PHOTO ID STRIKES AGAIN – Nancy Copenhaver

A hearing on **HJR 64** (which has an **HCS** not available online) in the House Elections Committee was continued on February 16, with testimony in support and opposition. The previous week the only testimony heard was that of the sponsor. The Feb. 16 hearing had **NO** testimony in support and testimony in opposition by: Secretary of State’s office (Rich Lamb, Deputy); Missouri Association for Social Welfare (Bob Quinn); Service Employees International Union (Clark Brown); Missouri National Education Association (Otto Fajen); Missouri ACLU (John Coffman); Missouri AARP (Norma Collins); Missouri Advancement Project (Denise Leiberman); Missouri Immigrant & Refugee Advocates (Jenny Rafanan); and information purposes only, Wendy Noren, Boone County Clerk. Although LWVMO did not testify, written testimony has previously been submitted.

From Paula Hodges’ report (and our coalition partner the Civic Engagement Table):

The debate continues to be highly politicized and circular. It was unclear whether or not the original **HJR 64** or the substantially changed **HCS HJR 64** (including allowances for photo ID AND early voting) was the bill being heard. The photo ID proponents continue to change their position on why photo ID is necessary. The message is no longer about mass voter fraud, rather we need government issued photo ID in order to gauge and measure fraud levels. The debate continues to be highly politicized and circular. It was unclear whether or not the original **HJR 64** or the substantially changed **HCS HJR 64** (including allowances for photo ID AND early voting) was the bill being heard. I’m guessing that Photo ID will be brought up in executive session in next week’s hearing on Tuesday February 23, 2010.

From Wendy Noren's testimony: While testifying for informational purposes only, she qualified her testimony by saying she believes all election administration reform should be done in statute not the constitution and that she has been adamantly opposed to past, more restrictive photo ID laws in Missouri. She commended the committee in making this revised HJR less burdensome, more vague, but didn't think it belonged in the constitution at all. She asked the debate be moved from photo ID laws to electronic verifications which is the direction all LEA's are headed anyway.

ENERGY/CLIMATE CHANGE – Win Colwill

HCR 46 (Funderburk) urges Missouri's Congressional delegation to reject EPA's endangerment finding that greenhouse gases threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations and urges the delegation to vote against the climate change bill passed by the U.S. House (H.R. 2484). For more information, see Leg. Bul. #2.

Heard by Energy & Environment Committee on Feb. 16; committee may vote on HCR 46 on Tuesday, Feb. 23.

ACTION: Call the office of Chr. Bivins (573-751-9766) and Vice-Chr. Schad (573-751-2077) and also your representative, if a committee member (Allen, Guernsey, Holsman, Jones, Oxford, Riffle, Schoeller, Shively, Storch). Suggested message:

“My name is ____, I live in ____ County. I am calling to ask Rep. ____ to vote NO on House Joint Resolution 46. It will undermine the Clean Air Act and EPA's ability to reduce pollutants that damage health and the environment—and it aims to block Federal action to curb climate change. This will mean more pollution and loss of clean energy jobs and damage to Missouri's economy from climate change impacts. I urge Rep. ____ to vote NO on HJR 46. Thank you for taking my message.”

HB 1851 (Nolte) changes the intent of Prop. C (the Clean Energy Initiative) by including *nuclear energy* in the definition of renewable energy sources that utilities may use to meet specified renewable energy targets. It was heard in the Utilities Committee on Feb. 16, and LWVMO OPPOSES.

Nuclear energy is not a renewable resource. No other state with renewable energy targets lists nuclear in the definition of renewable energy. **HB 1851** flouts the will of Missourians statewide who passed Proposition C just 15 months ago with a 66% majority. The purpose of Prop. C was to encourage development of clean, renewable sources of energy . . . and it's working.

There will also be a hearing on Feb. 23 at 8:00 a.m. on **HB 1667** that sets green standards for state-funded construction over 5,000 ft (summary looks ok).

MENTAL HEALTH/HEALTH – Lael Von Holt (*Autism bill passes House*)

Health reform is clearly struggling in Congress, and state budget cuts are clearly putting Missourians at risk. Cuts in mental health service are of particular concern. But one bright hope

emerges around health insurance coverage for the autistic child in Missouri. There are two bills, noted in our last Legislative Bulletin, that are moving convincingly in our Legislature, requiring health insurance carriers to cover the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. **SB 618** (Rupp) and **HB 1311 & 1341** (Scharnhorst) are advancing with bipartisan support. Remember to bring these bills forward during your legislative interviews. As of Feb. 18, **SB 618** is #1 on the Senate Formal Calendar for Third Reading. **HCS HB 1311 & 1341** passed the House this week and is headed for the Senate!

There are many favorable similarities in these bills, but also differences focused on financial benefit caps up to \$36,000 annually in the House and up to \$55,000 in the Senate. Age qualification varies up to age 18 in the House and 21 in the Senate. Accommodation regarding potential insurance rate hikes varies between 2.5% to 5.0% before carriers can opt out of the mandate. Conference committees will likely settle these differences. The League continues to support this critical effort. League will also monitor the controversial point which excludes the mandate for MO HealthNet.

Updating legislation on the False Claims Act for MO HealthNet, noted last time, shows very little progress. **SB 639** (Schmitt) has had no action since Jan. 13, when it was referred to the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee (will continue following). Budget cuts in the Department of Mental Health and Department of Social Service will be reviewed in the House Budget Committee in the coming week or two. Contact Rep. Allen Icet, Chair, to encourage preservation of those vital services and prevent risk to children at all cost (Allen.Icet@house.mo.gov).

LWVMO LEGISLATIVE DAY – March 23

This great opportunity to learn, participate, network, advocate, and have fun is only a month away! Plan on getting to bed early the night before so you can arrive in Jefferson City early for a full day. Breakfast and registration will begin at 8:30 and legislators have been invited to drop by informally and meet League members. They are most likely to be free from then until 10:00 a.m. when Sessions generally start. (You might even catch an Elections Committee Hearing at 8:00 that morning). Directors will provide “hot off the press” updates on issues we are following, and you’ll receive a packet of other information to help make your day easy and productive. We will have brief presentations from Paula Hodges from the Civic Engagement Table (required photo ID), Amy Blouin from the Missouri Budget Project on the “fair tax”, a representative from the Secretary of State’s office on election issues, Rep. Sara Lampe will give us the latest scoop on the budget, and Otto Fajen (MNEA) will share happenings regarding education/taxes.

Attendees will have time to observe action on the House/Senate floor and visit with legislators, gathering back in Hearing Room 2 for a box lunch and networking. We hope to have a tour of the Supreme Court following lunch (stay tuned for final arrangements). The only cost for the day is for food, \$15, with reservations accepted through March 19 at the LWV office. You can send in your money beforehand or pay at registration the 23rd.