



LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

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MISSOURI NON-PARTISAN COURT PLAN – Sydell Shayer

An effort is underway to eliminate the Missouri Non-Partisan Court Plan by initiative petition. The deadline to submit the necessary signatures is 5 p.m. on May 2, 2010. A group calling itself “ShowMe Better Courts” is trying to dismantle the present system of merit selection of judges and return to the older method of electing judges.

The League opposes this petition, supporting the present judicial selection system. The present system provides for a commission to select three candidates for a judicial post based on qualifications and experience. The commission sends the list to the Governor to make the appointment. The process provides a non-partisan approach to judicial selection.

The Missouri Plan as the Non-Partisan Court Plan is frequently referred to, is a model for thirty other states who have adopted a similar plan. Among the Non-Partisan Court Plan supporters are the Metropolitan St. Louis Bar Association, the ACLU, and past and present Supreme Court Judges, the League and almost thirty other organizations. They are working in coalition in a group called “Fair and Impartial Courts.”

The petitioners are out collecting signatures. The League urges members and friends to bypass this petition. Our advice is **DECLINE TO SIGN**.

ENERGY/GLOBAL CHANGE – Win Colwill

The Omnibus Energy Bill, **HCS HB 1871**, passed the House and is now in the Senate Commerce Committee. It includes two measures that have the potential to markedly reduce energy waste and greenhouse gas emissions in Missouri:

1. The bill requires new state-funded buildings and major renovations to meet nationally-recognized Green Building Standards (i.e. LEED Silver level or 2 Green Globes) which would improve energy efficiency of state buildings and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other adverse environmental impacts.

2. **HCS HB 1871** also includes the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Act enabling cities to issue bonds to implement a funding program that pays all the upfront costs of energy efficiency projects for homes and businesses. The project's costs are then repaid over 20 years through the home owner's property taxes. The obligation stays with the property when it changes hands. Nineteen states have adopted PACE in some form.

YOUR ACTION NEEDED: Call Senate Commerce Committee Chair and Vice-Chair and your state senator. Ask them to support **HCS HB 1871**, the bill that includes PACE and Green State Buildings. Ask the Chairman to set a hearing next week to ensure action before the session ends. Ask your senator to push for a hearing on the bill as well.

Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy & the Environment Committee: Brad Lager, Chair, 573-751-1415; Kurt Schaefer, Vice-Chair, 573-751-3931, Bartle, Dempsey, Griesheimer, Lembke, Ridgeway, Bray, Green, Justus.

MENTAL HEALTH/HEALTH – Lael Von Holt

Legislative advance can be noted this week for the following bills:

HCS HB 1311 & 1341 (Scharnhorst), establishes provisions for the diagnosis and treatment of autism, continues in the Small Business, Insurance, and Industry Committee. Executive session has been held and a Senate Committee Substitute passed on April 20. This bill seems to be more tempered than the Senate companion, **SB 618** (Rupp), which has slowed.

HB 2123 (Cooper) authorizes the Mo HealthNet Division to implement a statewide dental delivery system. Assignment is to the Health Care Policy Committee with a hearing on April 14. League Supports.

SCS SB 639 (Schmitt) authorizes certain individuals to sue for Mo HealthNet fraud under a false claims act. This bill continues in the Judiciary, Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee and is on the Senate Informal Calendar for Perfection, with SS pending. AS noted in the last bulletin, state intervention on fraud is supportable but League takes no position at this time on legal procedures. This bill is of interest and will be followed to closure of the session.

DEATH PENALTY – Sydell Shayer

HB 1683 (Deeken) – Moratorium on the death penalty with concurrent study of all aspects of the death penalty: no hearing has been scheduled and it is not on the calendar. League would support this bill if it were going anywhere

TABOR – Sydell Shayer

HCS HJR 87 – This bill is identified as TABOR or Taxpayers Bill of Rights.

It is a proposed constitutional amendment prohibiting appropriations in a fiscal year from exceeding certain limits. The Hancock Amendment which was enacted many years ago puts limits on revenue. This constitutional amendment would put limits on expenditures. The League, unfortunately, was not able to keep the Hancock amendment from being enacted, despite a noble effort. We will try again to prevent TABOR from passing.

This amendment would further limit the ability of our state to support the many programs and services that the League supports. Any laws that prevent the state from allocating money to keep the government running works against the economic well being of that state. Colorado passed a similar bill several years ago. It took only a few years for the citizens of that state to realize the economic disaster that it caused and they repealed it.

HJR 87 went through several House committees, each voting it out DO PASS. It had a hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday April 7, 2010. There is no hearing scheduled and it is not on the calendar. It never hurts to let your senator know that you are opposed to this bill.