



LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Published semi-monthly during the Missouri Legislative Session by the

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

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Welcome to the first issue of the League of Women Voters Legislative Bulletin for the 2011 Legislative Session. You are receiving this complimentary copy because you are a previous subscriber. If you wish to continue getting the Bulletin, see the form at the end. Later in the session we plan to also utilize a program (Salsa), which will allow for quick and easy responses from members to action alerts. Lobbying your legislator can be as simple as a few “mouse clicks” with this great program doing most of the work, yet allowing for personalization.

LEGISLATURE CONVENES

The 96th General Assembly convened on January 5, 2011 with 83 new Representatives and 11 new Senators—with one vacancy to be filled in February. There are 106 Republicans and 57 Democrats in the House and 26 Republicans and 7 Democrats in the Senate. Speaker Steven Tilley (R-Perryville) gave the opening address in the House (go to: <http://www.house.mo.gov/print.aspx?info=/bills111/speakersspeech.htm>). Senate President Pro Tem Rob Mayer (R-Dexter) gave the Senate’s opening address (go to: <http://www.senate.mo.gov/flashshow/images/ImageLinks/Mayer-OpeningDaySpeech-010511.pdf>).

Normally (and that word should probably not be used in reference to Missouri government) in the first year of a new term of the legislature, a slow start would be expected. This should be even more likely with the huge number of new legislators, but several things have changed “normal.” The large majority for the majority party in both houses, with leaders ready to go and committee chairs already appointed indicate that this legislature isn’t going to “ease into” session. The Senate has even been having “rebooting government” hearings this week, listening to ideas from the public on how to better manage state government. You still have time to make suggestions through the [Rebooting Government](#) link on the Missouri Senate website (www.senate.mo.gov). The working groups will present recommendations on January 19 in Senate Committee Room 1, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Contact persons are: Education, Sen. David Pearce; General Government and Office of Administration, Sen. Jim Lembke; Retirement and Employee Structure, Sen. Jason Crowell; Social Programs, Sen. Scott T. Rupp; Tax Structure and Economic Development, Sen. Brad Lager; Courts and Public Safety, Sen. Jack Goodman; Agriculture, Outdoors, Department of Natural Resources and Transportation, Sen. Bill Stouffer.

The Governor's State of the State Address is scheduled for January 19, at 7:00 p.m. It should be televised and will also be streamed live on the internet.

This issue will introduce you to the session itself (see calendar below) and the legislative priorities of LWVMO. Advocacy/Legislative Committee members will be reporting to you on the progress of bills and other activities. These volunteers (some board members, some not) study bills and report to you the action Leaguers need to take. We hope this is not a "one-way conversation," that you will inform yourself and help us urge passage of legislation that will best serve all Missourians. League's priorities were chosen based on member interest and timeliness. League's state and national positions guide us in selecting bills/issues to support or oppose throughout each legislative session.

League needs a vigorous grassroots lobbying effort this session. Our members must take the initiative to contact legislators about the key issues of interest to League. Here's what YOU can do to support our agenda:

- Subscribe to the Legislative Bulletin by e-mail or snail mail and read it carefully
- Take the initiative to contact local legislators now to discuss our key issues
- Attend Legislative Day in the Capitol on March 15
- Visit the new LWVMO website
- As priority issues move forward this session you will receive Action Alerts with links to the new Salsa program, which makes sending e-mail on an issue quick and easy.
- At the end of each week, committee schedules for the next week (along with the bills to be discussed) are on the Missouri House of Representatives and Senate website. If you have comments you can e-mail or call your representative or the chair of the committee (or all committee members) to have input before the issue gets to the floor. This is really the best way to influence legislation. You can even listen in to floor debate from the same websites, live, on your computer.

2010 SCHEDULE

Jan.	5	96 th General Assembly, 2nd Regular Session Convenes
	17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – NO SESSION
	19	Joint Session – State of the State Address, 7:00 p.m., in House Chamber
Feb.	2	State of the Judiciary, 10:30 a.m. in House Chamber
Mar.	1	Last Day to File Senate Bills
	15	LWVMO Legislative Day
	17	Spring break begins upon adjournment
	28	Session Reconvenes
Apr.	25	Easter Break
	26	Session Reconvenes

May 6 Appropriation Bills must be Truly Agreed and Finally Passed – 6 p.m.
13 Session ends – 6 p.m.
(Veto Session in September)

LWVMO LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2011

- Making democracy work with an electoral process that is fair, accurate, efficient, accessible, accountable and uniform including:
 - campaign finance reform
 - ethics reform
 - progress toward elimination of term limits
 - opposition to a required voter photo ID
 - changes to the voting process that encourage citizen participation
 - appropriate use of initiative petition
 - compact and contiguous redistricting
- Progressive tax policy promoting financial stability and adequate funding for state services

League supports and continues to monitor:

- Equal access to quality public education for all Missouri children
- Energy initiatives to reduce emissions that contribute to climate change
- Access to quality, affordable healthcare, including mental health, and preventive public health measures
- Maintaining the non-partisan court plan for selecting judges
- Death penalty moratorium
- Child safety and well-being

LEAGUERS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES

In mid-January, welcome letters were distributed to all 163 Representatives and 33 Senators along with LWV priority cards. A number of interviews with local representatives and senators have been conducted by Leaguers around the state and forwarded to the state office. If you haven't interviewed your legislators, it's not too late. Call them to arrange a 30-minute visit at a local coffee shop on a Friday, Saturday, or Monday morning, and make that important face-to-face contact. It makes you more comfortable calling them later in the session and it lets the legislator know what constituents expect of them and where they can go for information or help in promoting an issue.

LEGISLATIVE DAY IN JEFFERSON CITY – COMING MARCH 15

Save Tuesday, March 15 on your calendar for LWVMO Legislative Day in the Missouri Capitol. It promises to be stimulating and fun, well worth your time and effort. The day will start at 8:00 a.m. with breakfast provided in the Capitol basement, HR 2. It will include visits by legislators regarding issues of particular concern to League, updates on legislation, visiting the House and Senate chambers, and time to meet with individual legislators to promote League's positions.

You will receive packets of information with information about priority bills, lobbying tips, lists of legislators, and maps of the Capitol—everything you need for a successful day. Watch for details in subsequent Legislative Bulletins.

MISSOURI LEGISLATURE 101

New this year is an opportunity for new members—or those not familiar with the Capitol—to visit the Capitol and learn how to be effective as advocates for League priorities. Nancy Copenhaver has offered to do a “mini” Legislative Day tour for local Leagues interested in knowing more about the legislative process. Local leagues can bring a carload (or more) on selected Tuesdays, arranged in advance for an informal tour. Members can learn how to find places in the Capitol (offices, House and Senate chambers, café, hearing rooms, information center, etc.). Nancy will explain the committee process, how to be effective communicating with and testifying on bills, where to find help and information (research, leadership offices), and help you find your legislator(s). You can visit the House and Senate galleries (upper and side) and learn the rules under which each house operates—voting procedures, debate on the floor, who presides and who controls the process. Tuesdays are usually busy with committee hearings (early in session) and floor action (mid to late session). Some possible dates are: Feb. 1, 8, 22, Mar. 1, Apr. 5, 12, 26. Call Anna in the office if you are interested.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT . . .

LWVMO Legislative Director, Nancy Copenhaver (Moberly) will be editing the Legislative Bulletin. Feel free to contact her at copenhaver22@sbcglobal.net, including LWV in the subject line of the e-mail. We will be introducing the other contributors to the Bulletin in various areas as they “report in.” The Legislative Bulletin would not be possible without our able executive director, Anna Mennerick (MennerickA@lwvmissouri.org) who holds down the fort at the office in St. Louis.

SLOW ECONOMY, LACK OF REVENUE=PROBLEMS FOR THE SESSION

This will be a pivotal year for the future of many of League’s priorities. The recent economic downturn, along with tax cuts and tax giveaways enacted in recent sessions, significantly reduced state revenues. Governor Jay Nixon has been forced to withhold millions from current year spending authority because the money simply isn’t there to spend. The budgeting outlook for next fiscal year looks bleak, and many important programs have already lost funding.

League urges the General Assembly to address the structural budget deficit, enact more responsible tax policy and ensure adequate funding for vital public services. The League must depend upon a grassroots lobbying effort led by the Legislative Committee and carried out by our membership. Our members must take the initiative to contact legislators about the key issues affecting the issues important to League (and the citizens of Missouri).

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT BILLS

To find information about a specific bill currently pending before the Missouri General Assembly, go to:

<http://www.house.mo.gov/billcentral.aspx>

Type the bill number (example: HB1000) or sponsor name in the “search” box to find a link to the bill. This link will take you to a “home page” for the bill that provides bill text, bill summaries, fiscal notes and information on legislative action on the bill.

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