



## LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

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### PHOTO ID is advancing – Nancy Copenhaver

**SJR 2 and SB 3** (Stouffer) were given final approval in the Senate and are now in the House. **SJR 2** has become House Committee Substitute (**HCS/SJR 2**) for **SJR 2**; on March 16 was returned to the Committee of Origin. **SB 3** (Stouffer) was also returned to the Committee of Origin. The two measures would create a photo identification requirement in order to vote in Missouri. Details were explained in an earlier bulletin. There is NOT an option for the Governor to veto a proposed constitutional amendment. There is a strategy session conference call on March 18 that LWVMO will participate in.

### HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH – Lael Von Holt

Thanks to those who traveled to Jefferson City on March 15 for the LWVMO Legislative Day at the Capitol. Lots of action was going on with plentiful hearings in education, health and mental health, budget, taxation, renewable energy, and photo ID. Leaguers brought their energy and expertise to the process of legislation and to making the event a valuable one for members who traveled that day.

Advancing bills of interest include **HB 10** (Silvey), the appropriations bill for the Departments of Mental Health and Health and Senior Services that was heard March 15 in the Budget Committee. It was referred to the Rules Committee, with the next hearing on March 17. Debate on the House floor should begin when legislators return from their spring break on March 28.

**SB 56** (Rupp) requires the Department of Mental Health to develop a transition plan for services of residents of state developmental disabilities facilities to the most integrated settings in the community, appropriate to their needs. Families are not supportive. More information is needed before League supports. The hearing was conducted on March 15 before the Senate Health, Mental Health, Seniors and Families Committee. **HCS HB 411 & 421** (Wyatt) is the companion bill, currently on the House Calendar, House Bills for Perfection.

**HB 631** (Grisamore) authorizes a check-off box for the newly created Developmental Disability Waiting List Equity Trust Fund to be added to income tax forms, and allows for a separate check

donation with tax payment. League SUPPORTS. The hearing was conducted before the Special Standing Committee on Disability Services on March 15, reported Do Pass and referred to the Rules Committee.

**HB 423** (Burlison) authorizes Missouri to adopt provisions of the Health Care Compact which pledges to improve health care policy by returning authority to regulate health care to the state legislators. League's position is to support the national health care law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. **HB 423** was reported Do Pass from the Rules Committee on March 14 and is now on the House Calendar, House Bills for Perfection.

League will continue to monitor these advancing bills when legislators return after break. Bring them to the attention of your legislators if you have interviews while your legislators are home on break during the next week or so. There are many bills in the legislative process, but only a few can be brought forth in this bulletin. One other of interest to bring to legislators' attention for comment is **HCR 30** (Jones), referred to the Health Care Policy Committee in the House. **HCR 30** urges the Governor and Attorney General to send a letter to the President of the United States expressing the urgency of resolving the constitutionality of the federal health reform act. The debate goes on . . .

#### **DEATH PENALTY – Sydell Shayer**

**HB 799** (Carlson) This bill repeals the death penalty and establishes the Cold Case Investigation Revolving Fund. Although bills to abolish the death penalty have been introduced in recent years, they have failed to advance. No hearing is scheduled on this newly-filed bill. The proposed bill also includes the Cold Case Fund, established in the state treasury. It is defined in the proposed law as "Moneys in the fund shall be used solely for the purpose of reimbursing law enforcement agencies in this state for the costs associated with reopening old investigations regarding homicides, missing persons, sexual assaults or child abductions. Law enforcement agencies may apply to the department of public safety for reimbursement. LWVMO SUPPORTS.

**HB 700** (Colona) places a moratorium on all executions until January 1, 2014 and establishes a commission on the death penalty to study the use of the death penalty. It describes the makeup of the committee including that is comprised equally of individuals in favor of and in opposition to the death penalty. It sets criteria to ensure that defendants are indeed guilty of first degree murder, defendants are provided adequate and experienced counsel, that race plays no role in sentencing, that procedures are adequate to correct errors, and that prosecutors who seek the death penalty use similar criteria. **HB 700** has been referred to the Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee. LWVMO SUPPORTS.

## **UPDATE ON TAX BILLS – Sydell Shayer**

**SJR 8** (Kraus), a proposed constitutional amendment, requires refunds to taxpayers in any fiscal year that total state revenues increase over the preceding fiscal year's total state revenue by five percent or more. There was a hearing scheduled **SJR 8** for Thursday, March 17. The League sent the following statement to the Senate Ways and Means

“The League of Women Voters of Missouri urges you to oppose SJR 8

With the dire financial situation that the state is now in which requires cuts in crucial programs, it would be folly to reduce the money available to pay for necessary governmental services. We believe that it would be detrimental to the state as a whole as well as to specific programs that will be under funded.

Missouri's revenue has been in decline for sometime. It will take years before it comes back to what it was several years ago. A tax system should be fair and flexible to meet changing conditions. Imposing artificial caps does not take into consideration the financial needs of the state at any given time.

The League believes that taxes are levied to support the needs of the people in the state for such services as health care, transportation, infrastructure, parks and recreation, safety and security among many other things. Not until all these functions are funded should we even consider providing tax refunds. At the moment excess taxes seem a millennium away.

The League believes that were we to have any growth or expenditure limits they should be placed in state statues, not the constitution. Therefore, the League urges you to oppose SJR 8.”

For information on the other tax bills we are following please refer back to previous legislative bulletins.

Updating bills mentioned earlier:

**HB 76** (Corporate franchise tax) is in the Senate Jobs, Economic Development and Local Government Committee after being passed in the House.

**SJR 8** (refunds to taxpayers) was heard in the Senate committee, no vote yet.

**HJR 8** (Mega tax) reported “do pass” from Rules on March 16 (Called the Missouri Jobs and Prosperity Act)

**HB 26, HJR 11, HB 52, HB 408, SJR 20**—no change

**NOTE:** The Legislature left on March 17 for Spring Break; will resume March 28. This would be a good time to contact your legislator at home for a conversation. The next Legislative Bulletin will be out April 8.