



## LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

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#### PHOTO ID – Nancy Copenhaver

There has been no action on this issue. The Legislature has been busy with the budget, redistricting, and other issues.

#### HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH – Lael Von Holt

Significant action can be noted on several bills League has been monitoring in the past two weeks.

**HCS#2 HB 609** (Molendorp) establishes the Show-Me Health Insurance Exchange Act, mandated by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Details were noted in the last bulletin. **HCS#2 HB 609** passed in the House 157-0, advanced to the Senate, and is now scheduled for committee hearing on Thursday, April 21. LWVMO SUPPORTS.

**HCS HB 411** (Wyatt) and **HB 421** (Stream) regarding transition of residents from state developmental disability facilities to the community were defeated in the House on April 7. These were companions to **SB 56** (Rupp) which has stalled since passing in committee on March 29. League's concern about the bill's fiscal note and the lack of family support has been extended to Sen. Rupp.

It's time to recap **SR 27** (Cunningham), a resolution that urged Attorney General Koster to challenge the federal health reform law (PPACA) by joining other attorneys general in the law suit, file an independent lawsuit, or join Lt. Gov. Kinder's lawsuit. **SR 27** was passed in the Senate on Jan. 19. Last week AG Koster filed an appeals court document in support of those 26 states in Florida who have challenged the constitutionality of part of the PPACA. This action is clearly controversial, but League remains in support of the federal law.

**HCS HB 236** (Kelly) extends federal reimbursement allowances, including MO HealthNet, until September 30, 2016. League supports. This key bipartisan bill passed 25-0 in the House Budget Committee, but has stalled in the Rules Committee since February 8.

## **DEATH PENALTY – Sydell Shayer**

**HB 799** (Carlson), to abolish the death penalty and **HB 700** (Colona) death penalty moratorium, both supported by LWVMO, are sitting in committee, with time quickly expiring.

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

**SJR 8** (Kraus), a proposed constitutional amendment requiring tax refunds, not a good idea when the state so desperately needs revenue, has been passed out of committee in the Senate and could be brought to the floor at anytime. League members should contact senators to **OPPOSE** if it starts moving.

**SB 19** (Schmitt) eliminates the corporate franchise tax in Missouri, a tax paid by large companies doing business in Missouri. When fully phased in (over 5 years) it will cost Missouri \$85 million in state general revenue annually. It has passed both houses and was sent to the Governor on April 18. League members should contact the Governor to encourage a veto of this bill. Talking points: Missouri can ill afford losing \$85 million in revenue, corporations should be responsible for paying income tax as individuals are, it is part of the revenue mix, and corporate taxes in Missouri are already the 7th lowest in the country.

**HB 966** (Funderburk), Streamlined Sales Tax, is supported by League but stalled in committee.

**HJR 8** (Funderburk) is the evil “mega tax” (action alert sent earlier) was heard on the House floor briefly and laid over.

**HB 181, 343, 342**, cigarette tax bills are not even scheduled for committee hearings.

**HJR 11** (Burlison) was defeated in committee (good news). This is the first time in several years of proposed TABOR measures in Missouri that a legislative committee has voted officially to oppose the measure and is a significant step for Missouri.

## **THE BUDGET**

On April 20 the Senate advanced the 13 budget bills totaling \$23.2 billion for the fiscal year beginning July 1. Several sections of the budget passed earlier by the House were trimmed and some increases for education were added in the Senate. More accurate budget numbers are usually available by the time the Senate passes a budget. Critical to this budget decision was the Senate’s passage of **HB 15** on April 18, accepting an additional \$189 million in federal funding to go toward maintaining K-12 school funding. Differences in the House and Senate versions of the budget bills will now be ironed out by lawmakers in conference committees. Both Houses must pass the negotiated versions by 6 p.m. on May 6, as required by the constitution, and then send them to the Governor.

## **FROM MISSOURI NEA – Otto Fajen**

[Note: Because League has previously studied charter schools, this is provided for your information.]

The House gave first round approval to **HCS/HB 473** (Tishaura Jones) on April 19. The bill expands the authority for charter schools to cover the entire state, expands the list of entities allowed to sponsor charter schools, creates a statewide chartering commission and makes a number of changes designed to improve the accountability and transparency of charter sponsors and charter schools. The bill allows charter schools in unaccredited and provisionally accredited districts and, after three years, expands the authority statewide, but leaves school boards as the only sponsors in districts that have been fully accredited for at least five years.

HA 1 (Mike Thomson) revised the expansion of charter authority in provisionally accredited districts. The amendment was adopted. HA 2 (Tishaura Jones) revised provisions relating to special education and financially-stressed charter schools. HA 3 (Rick Stream) would have addressed transfers of students from unaccredited districts under the Turner v. Clayton decision, but the amendment was withdrawn to avoid possibly being ruled out of order. HA 4 (Chris Carter) allows the Special Administrative Board of St. Louis City school district to sponsor charter schools. The amendment was adopted. HA 5 (Matt Colona) would have allow the Mayor of St. Louis City to sponsor charter schools, but the amendment was defeated.

The Association believes that charter schools need to meet the same standards of accountability, transparency and respect for the rights of students, parents and staff as apply to district-operated public schools. Currently, serious remedial action is needed to improve that accountability for sponsors and charter schools. The Association opposes HB 473 because it expands charter sponsorship and allowed locations prior to ensuring that improvements to accountability and transparency are implemented and verified. Missouri NEA believes the state should adopt and implement those reforms and verify that they are working to ensure charter schools meet those standards before considering expansion of charter school sponsorship or geography.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Due to the Easter holiday, this bulletin is a day early. There are 3 weeks left in the session, and things may be moving very quickly. Watch for action alerts or quick updates.