

February 16, 2023

Go Chiefs! Who doesn't love a parade?! It was a short week so legislators could attend the parade in Kansas City on Wednesday. The House held hearings this morning and tackled some issues on the floor. On Monday, the Senate returns and the House is off in honor of President's Day. It's President's Day Lite in the Capitol.

All the things are below. The last day to file bills is March 1. We hope you have a great weekend and look forward to touching base next week!

### Floor Debate Notes

#### **MoDOT and HSP Retirement System**

The Senate dedicated floor time Tuesday afternoon to debate SB 20, sponsored by Senator Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City). The bill would allow active employee members of the Board of Trustees of Missouri Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol Employees' Retirement System to continue their term until June 30, 2028. After no debate, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes.

### Committee Hearing Notes

#### **Show-Me MyRetirement Savings Plan**

The House Pensions Committee convened Tuesday morning to discuss HB 155, sponsored by Representative Michael O'Donnell (R-St. Louis). The bill establishes the "Show-Me MyRetirement Savings Administrative Fund," which attempts to pool several small employers (those with 50 or less employees) from across the state into one multiple-employer retirement saving plan. Employees would be allowed to opt out of the plan at their discretion. Additionally, the bill creates the "Show-Me MyRetirement Savings Board" within the Office of the State Treasurer, to design, develop, and implement the plan. During the bill presentation, the sponsor informed committee members that currently 40% of MO workers have no access to retirement savings through their employers. Additionally, 67% of MO workers employed by businesses with fewer than 100 employees do not have a pension or retirement savings plan. In contrast, 87% of businesses with over 100 employees offer employees some type of retirement plan with their benefits plan. MO AARP supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.

#### **Modifying Board Terms**

The House Pensions Committee met Tuesday morning to consider passage of HB 923, sponsored by Representative Barry Hovis (R-Whitewater). The bill modifies terms of active employee members of the Board of Trustees of the Missouri Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol Employees' Retirement System by offsetting board members to two year staggered terms. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 10-0 vote.

#### **CCP Platforms on State Devices**

The House Special Committee on Homeland Security convened Monday afternoon to discuss HB 919, sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelling (R- St. Charles). The bill restricts any elected or appointed member or employee of any state agency from using or downloading on any social media platform owned by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or a company that shares user data with them on state electronic devices. During the bill presentation, the sponsor informed committee members that the bill applies only to state agencies and not for consumers, and that it is now in use in 25 states. The committee suggested that the bill be expanded to include other communist countries in addition to China, and questioned about other programs that share data with the CCP. The bill sponsor stated that his main focus is China because they are gathering data through various apps at the moment, and he would be interested in changing the language. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

### Tidbits

- This week the Missouri Capitol's Legislative Library closed indefinitely as a result of "Life safety concerns" according to an email sent to legislators and their staff. Contractors investigated a crack in the dome above the library and conducted a structural analysis of the area on January 24<sup>th</sup> and released the preliminary report of their findings this week. According to a report, they found enough points of failure in the dome to suggest the immediate evacuation of personnel due to safety concerns and the library and bridge walkway above the library were officially closed Tuesday.
- A controversial change to how public libraries operate in Missouri may go into effect without any public hearings, despite generating record-setting amounts of public comments. Representative Alex Riley, R-

Springfield, said Tuesday he hasn't made a decision on whether to schedule a hearing where people can further weigh in on Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft's proposal to block public funding for libraries if they offer books that are pornographic for minors or labeled as obscene under state statutes. Riley's decision is key to whether a 10-member panel of members of the House and Senate consider testimony on an issue that drew an estimated 20,000 comments in support and in opposition to the rule Ashcroft proposed last year.

- This week, Attorney General Andrew Bailey filed an amicus brief with 17 other attorneys general supporting an injunction against a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA") rule that forces Missouri taxpayers to fund abortions. The brief has been filed with the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas in support of a VA nurse who opposes the new rule
- The Missouri Office of Administration is finalizing its renovation plans for Jefferson City's historic Union Hotel. But it could be another three years before the Amtrak station is moved back inside. Lawmakers appropriated \$14.3 million last year to fix structural integrity issues within Union Hotel. Once fixed, the state plans to use the 168-year-old building for office and educational space, a museum gallery and to house the Amtrak station. The Union Hotel and Amtrak station on its ground floor were closed to the public in 2019 after a state inspection found issues with the building's exterior masonry walls and overall structural integrity. The Amtrak station was relocated to a temporary shelter across the street in the Lohman Building parking lot.

### **Budget Update**

The House Appropriations Subcommittees continued to mark-up their assigned department's budgets this week and the Senate Appropriations Committee continued to hear from the various departments regarding their FY 2024 budget requests. As this was a shortened week, several departments have yet to present their requests to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Also, the full House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit HB 14, sponsored by Representative Cody Smith (R-Carthage). The bill is the Emergency Supplemental bill which was requested by the Governor and includes an 8.7% pay raise for all state employees, plus an additional \$2 increase for those state employees working late night or overnight shifts in certain departments. The bill also includes \$20 million for school safety grants, \$275 million in spending authority for SEMA to be able disperse federal payments, and \$629,000 for black vulture migration. The bill total amounts to roughly \$627 million with approximately \$121 million from general revenue. After considerable debate the House passed the bill by a 151-2 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

### **Hearings**

House: <https://house.mo.gov/AllHearings.aspx>

Senate: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/hearingsschedule/hrings.htm>

### **Key Upcoming Dates**

- February 20, 2023 – Presidents Day Slightly Observed – No Session for House, the Senate is scheduled as usual
- March 1, 2023 – Last Day to File Bills
- March 9 – 20, 2023 – Legislative Spring Break
- April 10, 2023 – Easter Break – No Session
- May 5, 2023 – Constitutional Deadline to pass the FY2024 state budget
- May 12, 2023 – Last day of Legislative Session
- July 1, 2023 – First day of the new fiscal year
- July 14, 2023 – Last day for Governor Parson to sign or veto legislation
- September 13, 2023 – Veto Session

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