



February 23, 2024

The Missouri Senate passed a bill. On Tuesday, the long debate over modifying Missouri's initiative petition process came to an end. Currently, constitutional amendments must win a simple majority of voters statewide. As originally filed and upon voter approval, SJ474 requires ballot initiatives to receive a majority vote in at least five of the state's eight congressional districts. A watered down version passed after 21 hours of debate this week. The House continues to keep it moving. The lower chamber passed 6 bills. A summary is in your recap.

In response to the mass shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl victory parade last week, Democrats filed over 40 bills related to firearms and gun reform. In response, House Majority Floor Leader Jon Patterson (R - Lee's Summit) told reporters legislation easing regulations on guns in churches, schools and on public transport is dead.

Senate Appropriations Chair Senator Lincoln Hough (R - Greene County) is running for Missouri Lieutenant Governor. His team made the announcement yesterday afternoon in a press release. Hough is one of the most well liked and charismatic members for the state legislature. Hough joins a crowded field late in the game. Senator Holly Rehder (R - Sikeston), Missouri House Speaker Dean Plocher (R - Town and Country), and three other randoms Paul Berry, Tim Baker, and David Wasinger have announced candidacies. Bill filing starts on Tuesday, February 27. The 2024 Primary Election in Missouri is August 6.

A complete recap of the week is below. Thanks and have a great weekend!

Floor Debate Notes

State Treasurer Ability to Invest

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit HB 1803, sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington). This legislation specifically relates to the state treasurer's investment in linked deposits and raises the cap to \$1.2 billion from \$800 million. After no debate, the House passed the bill by a 138-10 vote.

Committee Notes

Earnings Tax

The House Economic Development Committee convened Wednesday morning to consider passage of HB 1516, sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis). Current law

authorizes the cities of Kansas City and St. Louis to levy earnings taxes, which are imposed on salaries, commissions, and other compensation earned by nonresidents for work or services performed in the city. This proposal disallows earnings taxes being assessed on work rendered outside city limits through telecommuting or other remote means and allows all residents of impacted counties to request refund for any earnings tax levied. Additionally, effective September 30, 2024, as long as the City of St. Louis imposes an earnings tax, the bill requires the City of St. Louis to submit a quarterly report detailing receipts from the earnings tax. After brief discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 12-4 vote.

General Assembly Vacancies

The House Elections and Elected Officials convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss HB 2136, sponsored by Representative John Voss (R-Cape Girardeau). Currently, when a vacancy occurs in the General Assembly, the Governor must issue a writ of election "without delay." The bill removes "without delay" and specifies that in odd-numbered years, the Governor shall issue the writ within seven days of notification of a vacancy and in an even-numbered year the Governor shall have discretion to issue the writ. A private citizen provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented. The Secretary of State provided informational testimony regarding the process of filing vacancies and nomination of candidates for special elections.

Election Reform

The House Elections and Elected Officials convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss HJR 104, sponsored by Representative Ben Baker (R-Neosho). Upon voter approval, this resolution seeks to modify several provisions regarding elections in Missouri. Specifically, the resolution requires the use of paper ballots or ADA approved machines, removes ranked choice voting from primary elections, requires all voting machines used in an election to be tested and certified before their use, and requires voting machines to keep a permanent paper record for election audits. Liberty Link Missouri, Opportunity Solutions Project, Heritage Action for America, and several private citizens provided supporting testimony. Missouri Voter Protection Coalition, League of Women Voters of Missouri, and several private citizens provided opposing testimony.

Jaxx's Law

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of HB 2578, sponsored by Representative Dean Van Schoiack (R-Savannah). This bill creates Jaxx's Law and prohibits a business located in the State or conducting business in the State or a state agency of Missouri from considering an unborn child as an employee in a civil action, including those arising from acts or omissions that may include a wrongful death. After no committee discussion, the committee passed the bill by a 16-0 vote.

Utility Facility Relocation

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of HB 2056, sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield). This bill requires municipalities and the Missouri Department of Transportation to reimburse non-rate regulated utility providers, including telecommunications, Internet, and cable providers, for facility relocation due to road maintenance or construction. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to narrow the definition for reimbursement eligibility to "telecommunications" providers. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 15-0 vote.

State Funds Prohibition

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of HB 2634, sponsored by Representative Cody Smith (R-Carthage). The bill prohibits public funds being expended to any abortion facility, or affiliate or associate thereof, including for MO HealthNet reimbursement. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to narrow the definition of "affiliate". Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-4 vote.

DEI in State Departments

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of HB 2619, HB 2365, HB 2448, and HB 2569 sponsored by Representatives Cody Smith (R-Carthage), Doug Richey (R-Excelsior Springs), Brad Hudson (R-Cape Fair), and Ben Baker (R-Neosho). The bills are similar and seek to prohibit funds from any State department from being used for intradepartmental programs, staffing, or initiatives related to "diversity, equity, and inclusion" or similar initiatives that promote preferential treatment based on certain characteristics, concepts such as oppression as the sole cause of disparities, collective guilt ideologies, intersectional or divisive identity activism, and the limiting of freedom of conscience, thought, or speech. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to combine all four bills into one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 12-4 vote.

National Guard Education Assistance Grants

The House Special Committee on Tax Reform met Tuesday afternoon to discuss HB 1712, sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles). Currently, Missouri National Guard members can be awarded an educational assistance grant to an approved public institution or an approved private institution in Missouri. Beginning with the 2025-26 academic year, this bill allows those members to receive the grant for tuition costs at any public, private, or virtual postsecondary education institution in the United States. The MO National Guard Association supported the bill and informed committee members that the bill

would help with retention and provide another tool for service members. No opposing testimony was presented.

State Highways and Transportation Commission

The House Transportation Accountability Committee met Thursday morning to discuss HB 2568, sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill seeks to modify the structure of the State Highways and Transportation Commission. The sponsor's intent with the legislation is to provide more structure and establish a process in the event the Governor does not appoint a member to a vacancy. During committee discussions, committee members questioned if the 30 day timeline established in the bill is long enough for the Governor to consider and appoint a commissioner and questioned if that was enough time in order to vet a candidate. The sponsor informed members that he is open to any suggestions. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented. Missourians for Transportation Investment provided informational testimony, highlighting support for no more than one commissioner from one district can serve at one time, however expressed concern with the 30 day timeline placed on the Governor to appoint.

State Road Fund

The House Transportation Accountability Committee met Thursday morning to discuss HJR 127, sponsored by Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). Upon voter approval, the proposed constitutional amendment would require that the State Road Fund be subject to appropriation by the General Assembly, rather than standing appropriated without legislative action. Additionally, the resolution specific part of the Department and the Commission's responsibility is to create the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is used to determine what projects need to be completed. No supporting testimony was presented. Missourians for Transportation Investment, and the MO Concrete Association opposed the bill and informed committee members that the way the current system is established is to remove politics out of the process and stated this could delay projects or even interfere with contracts for existing projects.

Gas Tax Allocation

The House Transportation Accountability Committee met Thursday morning to discuss HJR 128, sponsored by Representative Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). Upon voter approval, the resolution would dedicate 1% of the collected gas tax money to counties based on the assessed value of agricultural land, instead of the total amount of agricultural land in the state. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented.

Budget Update

House Budget Chairman Cody Smith (R-Carthage) has now filed all of the FY2024 Supplemental and FY2025 Budget bills. Something to note is the filed bills reflect both the Governor's recommendations and updated department requests. Public testimony on the various budget bills was expected to take place this week but because of the delay on the filing of the bills, the testimony before the full Budget Committee will not take place until next week. Once public testimony has taken place, committee members will begin drafting amendments to ensure their priorities are included in the House version of the budget. A House rule requires that any item which utilizes General Revenue (GR) or what is called "General Revenue look-a-like" utilizes the balancing rule. This means, any amendment to add money to an item using GR must decrease GR elsewhere within the budget.

Procurement/State Contract Committee Notes

Post-Award Negotiation with Vendors

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to consider passage of HB 1818 and HB 2345, sponsored by Representatives John Voss (R-Cape Girardeau) and Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal). The bills are identical and seek to allow for post- award negotiations with the lowest and best responsive vendor if identified in the solicitation along with the time frame for post-award negotiations. The Commissioner may waive post- award negotiations. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to combine both bills into one legislative vehicle. Once modified, the committee passed the bill consent, by a 16-0 vote.

State Contracts for Certain Services

The House General Laws Committee convened Tuesday afternoon to discuss HB 2314, sponsored by Representative Donnie Brown (R-New Madrid). This bill authorizes the Division of Facilities Management, Design, and Construction within the Office of Administration to establish "master agreements" for architecture, engineering, or land surveying services on an as-needed basis for indefinite projects over a defined period. These agreements, not exceeding \$100,000 per project, are established through a qualification-based selection process outlined in a request for qualifications. The MO Chapter of American Council of Engineering, The Office of Administration, and the American Institute of Architects of Missouri testified in support of the bill. A state public advocate testified in opposition to the bill. The MO Press Association testified for informational purposes seeking to add public notices in newspapers.

State Government Task Forces and Audits

Task Forces

Representative Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal) appeared before the House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee Wednesday morning to present HB 1814. The bill seeks to create

seven various task forces to study everything from technology to security to social service systems in Missouri to evaluating various functions of government and specifies the composition, responsibilities, reporting requirements and sunset provisions relating to the task forces. ADL Heartland Region, Community Security, Jewish Communities Council of St. Louis, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Microsoft Corporation supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented. MO Foundation for Health provided informational testimony and highlighted the foundation would like to participate in the task force relating to social service systems in Missouri.

Auditing State Departments

The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss HB 1815, sponsored by Representative Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal). The bill requires an audit of all state departments every four years. During the bill presentation, the sponsor stated these performance audits have saved Ohio \$1.4 billion in costs and these audits could help identify which State positions could be eliminated or modified to save taxpayer dollars. No supporting or opposing testimony was presented. The MO State Auditor's Office provided informational testimony and informed committee members that the auditors office is currently conducting audits and are currently focused on the Cares Act spending and also informed committee members that the Office has asked for a budget increase in order to hire additional staff to conduct more performance audits.

State Treasurer Ability to Invest

The House dedicated floor time Monday afternoon to revisit HB 1803, sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington). This legislation specifically relates to the state treasurer's investment in linked deposits and raises the cap to \$1.2 billion from \$800 million. After no debate, the House passed the bill by a 138-10 vote.

Tidbits

- The House Government Efficiency and Downsizing Committee met Wednesday morning to discuss HB 1471 sponsored by Representative Chris Sander (R-Lone Jack). The bill establishes the "Daylight Saving as New Standards Time Pact". The Medical Society, American Academy for Sleep Medicine, and the Permanent Standard Time Coalition supported the bill. No opposing testimony was presented.
- Governor Mike Parson announced in a press conference on Tuesday he would be deploying up to 200 Missouri National Guard members and 22 Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers to support Texas Governor Greg Abbott's "Operation Lone Star" mission at the Southern Border. He has issued **Executive Order 24-**

03 to activate the Guard and the Governor's Office's discretionary emergency response fund. He will also be making a \$2.3 million supplemental budget request to support border security efforts and backfill the emergency response fund expenditures.

- On Wednesday, Eastern Airlines, a domestic and international cargo airline, announced it has selected Kansas City as the location of its new headquarters. They will be investing more than \$4.7 million and creating 165 new jobs. Eastern Airlines has had a presence in Kansas City since 2021, when it purchased Alta Aero Technic and formed Foxtrot Aero, a passenger-to-freighter design company. The company's move of its headquarters will now consolidate all its operations to Kansas City.
- On Wednesday, Representative Bridget Walsh Moore (D - St. Louis) announced the **American Irish State Legislators Caucus** to promote Irish ancestry and heritage. Yes, please.

Ballot Measures

The Senate dedicated Monday and Tuesday debating SJR 74, sponsored by Senator Mary Elizabeth Coleman (R-Arnold). Currently, constitutional amendments must win a simple majority of voters statewide. As originally filed, the resolution, upon voter approval, would require amendments to receive a majority vote in at least five of the state's eight congressional districts. During the bill's progression through the committee process, the bill was amended to prohibit any constitutional amendments that would permit lobbyists gifts, provide exclusive authority to the General Assembly to enact laws enforcing provisions in the Constitution relating to initiative petitions proposing constitutional amendments, and prohibit foreign activity in the initiative petition process. During previous debate, the sponsor offered a floor substitute to further amend the bill to also ban initiative petitions on certain topics, including raising taxes on food, cutting funding for law enforcement, raising taxes on real estate, allowing lobbyist gifts to politicians, and cutting money to protect the country's borders. Senate Democrats held the floor Monday and Tuesday highlighting that voting is already restricted to U.S. citizens and criticized the proposal. After a total of about 20 hours, the sponsor offered a new substitute removing all of the previously proposed changes and limiting the resolution to voter thresholds and the resolution now only requires all such proposed constitutional amendments and new constitutions to receive a majority of the votes cast statewide as well as a majority of the votes cast in at least a majority of the Congressional districts, such approved amendments to take effect at the end of 31 days after the election. After brief debate, the Senate provided its first of two necessary approval votes, and the substitute was adopted by an 18-12 vote. The Senate dedicated floor time Thursday morning

to revisit the resolution. After no further debate, the Senate passed the resolution by a 22-9 vote. The resolution now will be sent to the House for further consideration.

Upcoming Hearings of Interest:

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

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

Calendars

[House](#)

[Senate](#)

Key Upcoming Dates:

- February 27, 2024 – First day of candidate filing
- March 1, 2024 – Last day of bill filing
- March 18-22, 2024 - Legislative Spring Break
- March 26, 2024 – Last day of candidate filing
- April 1, 2024 – Easter Break – No Session
- April 2, 2024 – General Municipal Elections
- May 10, 2024 – Last Day to Constitutionally pass the FY 2025 Budget
- May 17, 2024 – Last Day of the 2024 Legislative session
- August 6, 2024 – Missouri Primary Elections
- September 11, 2024 – Veto Session
- November 5, 2024 – Missouri General Election