



March 29, 2024

The Missouri State Legislature returned from spring break without a bang. At this stage of the game, the real work is now happening behind the scenes and on the floors. It's all about amendments, amendments, amendments. The House Budget Committee finalized its proposed budget. You can expect that thing to be rolled out on the House floor next week.

Tuesday was the last day of candidate filing for the 2024 elections. While the majority of people were eyeing the 3-CD race, the Secretary of State race has now become the hot race to watch. Within the last couple of hours of filing, House Speaker Dean Plocher pivoted from his previous Lieutenant Governor bid to Secretary of State. Additionally, Senator Mary Elizabeth Coleman pivoted her 3-CD race to also bid for Secretary of State, joining an already crowded GOP race for Secretary of State.

Seven weeks in the 2024 regular session remain. Committee notes will begin to dwindle and it will be all about the floor debate recaps. Be on the looksee for amendments you care about.

Thanks for your time! We hope you have a great weekend!

Floor Debate Notes **Employment Security**

The House dedicated floor time Tuesday morning to debate HB 2098, sponsored by Representative Terry Thompson (R-Lexington). The bill modifies the definition of "wages" to include vacation pay, termination pay, severance pay and holiday pay for the week that it is payable. After a brief debate, the House provided the first of two necessary approval votes. On Thursday, the House revisited the bill and with no further debate, passed the bill by a 98-45 vote. The bill now will be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Committee Notes **Missouri State Employees Retirement System**

The Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and pensions Committee convened Thursday morning to consider passage of SB 1401, sponsored by Senator Rusty Black (R-Chillicothe). Beginning on August 28, 2024, in the event that the Board of the Missouri State Employees' Retirement System ("MOSERS") certifies a contribution rate that exceeds 28.75%, the Commissioner of the Office of Administration shall include in its appropriation request an amount equal to the difference between the certified contribution rate and 28.75% of the compensation of members who are employees of the public higher education institutions. During committee discussion, substitute language was adopted which emphasizes and clarifies the funding must be appropriated by the legislature for the contribution to occur or the schools will make the contribution. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 5-0 vote.

Utility Facility Relocation

The Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee met Tuesday morning to discuss SB 1018, sponsored by Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla). The bill is the Senate companion to HB 2056, sponsored by Representative Ben Keathley (R-Chesterfield) and requires municipalities and the State to reimburse all internet and video service providers for all relocation costs whenever the state or a municipality requires a broadband or a video service provider to relocate their telecommunications infrastructure installed for the purpose of delivering internet and video service to customers. The MO Cable Telecommunication Association, Associated Industries of MO, MO Broadband Providers, Gateway Fiber, Bright Speed, AT&T, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the MO Association of Electrical Cooperatives supported the bill. A private citizen opposed the bill. The MO Municipal League, and MoDOT provided informational testimony and stated that cable companies and telecoms currently use the public right-of-ways and receive savings for using the public right-of-way instead of acquiring an easement from private landowners.

Present and Future Road Projects

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee convened Wednesday afternoon to receive a presentation from MoDOT Director Patrick McKenna. The presentation highlighted programs such as the Bridge Program that have generated a great amount of funds from infrastructure grants. He further stated the department's debt from the 200 Bridge Projects is expected to be paid in full by 2027. He also discussed the \$100 million appropriation over the FY23 and FY24 fiscal years for low-volume roads. The committee learned 68% of the funds went to low-volume roads north of I-70 and the work has now been fully completed on roads rated in poor condition. The next round of contracts for roads with 1,000 or fewer vehicles traveling are also currently being identified and will have a 50% north of I-70 allocation and 50% south of I-70 allocation.

Tidbits

- Attorney General Andrew Bailey has filed suit against Media Matters to compel the nonprofit to submit documents related to his investigation into its alleged fraudulent business practices. The investigation began in November 2023 after evidence surfaced that Media Matters solicited donations from Missourians under false pretenses, aiming to influence advertisers to withdraw from X, formerly known as Twitter, in direct violation of the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act. The Attorney General is seeking a court order mandating Media Matters to comply with the Civil Investigative Demand within 20 days.
- Late withdrawals from four congressional races, four state House races and the Lieutenant Governor's race means filing for those offices will resume on Tuesday. Filing for those offices will occur during business hours and will open at 8 a.m. on Tuesday and close at 5 p.m. on April 5 at the Secretary of State's office in Jefferson City. Under Missouri law, when candidates withdraw within two days of the close of filing, a special filing period opens for four days in the following week.
- On Wednesday, it was announced Missouri cannabis regulators have revoked nine of the 48 social-equity cannabis licenses issued in October, after finding the companies that obtained them didn't meet eligibility requirements. Eight were dispensaries linked to out-of-state groups and one was a wholesale facility. According to the Division of Cannabis Regulation, the "purported majority owners" of the eight revoked licenses lacked knowledge of agreements or

operations of the license — and in some cases did not know the person who applied for the license on their behalf.

Budget Update

As the House Budget Committee adjourned Monday evening after completing the markup process for the FY2025 budget, Chairman Cody Smith (R-Carthage) had trimmed nearly \$2 billion from Governor Parson's original \$52.7 billion spending plan. The largest part of the deduction is from a decline in Medicaid enrollment. What is usually a marathon hearing lasting well into the evening and consisting of contentious debate on the Chairman's changes, was condensed into less than five hours. Committee members drafted over 100 amendments, but after Chairman Smith announced the four-hour time-limit, only fifteen additional amendments were offered in committee. Still included in the budget is a 3.2% pay raise for state workers, an increase in base pays for teachers of \$40,000, a fully funded foundation formula and a 3% increase for institutions of higher education.

The 17 budget bills are expected to be brought before the full House chamber next week. Typically, appropriations bills have a set time limit for full debate, with each party having a predetermined amount of time for each bill which is determined by the Majority and Minority Floor Leaders. It is highly anticipated Democratic members will be drafting and offering numerous amendments in an attempt to further modify the \$50.7 billion dollar budget.

The complete listing of committee changes from the Governor's recommended FY 2025 Budget can be found [Here](#).

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:

- 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 Elections

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