



LWVMO Legislative Bulletin
January 16, 2023

THE SESSION CONTINUES

January 16, 2023 is the national holiday celebrating the inspiring work of Martin Luther King, Jr. A good time to keep our focus on our mission to ensure that “the voice of the people” must be heard and that every eligible citizen be able to vote without unnecessary restrictions.

The legislative session will be shortened this week by observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, and the chambers will convene at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, January 17.

GOVERNOR’S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Governor Parson will deliver his 2023 State of the State address and outline his budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year on Wednesday, January 18 at 3 p.m. in the Missouri House Chamber. The speech can be viewed live at mo.gov/live.

Brief Overview

The House

The House debated and adopted House Resolution 11 (Patterson) on January 11. HR 11 revises the House Standing Committees. Most of the floor discussion concerned changes to the rule establishing the dress code for women Representatives when they are on the floor during House session. As amended, however, the new rule does not significantly alter the dress code for women.

HR 11 does not change the committees pertaining to education. The Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education and the Committee on Higher Education will continue this year with the same name and the same duties as last year. Rep. Brad Pollitt will serve as Chair of the Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education.

Testimony: citizens are always welcome to testify in person when there is a hearing on a bill, and the Missouri House of Representatives also allows citizens the option of sending testimony online when a bill is heard in committee.

The Senate

The Senate debated Senate Resolution (SR) 7, offered by Sen. Karla May, on January 9. The resolution would have revised Senate Rule 29 regarding Senate seniority. Seniority is the primary factor used in selecting Senators' offices and Senate seats in the chamber. The resolution would have revised the role that the party caucuses have in determining Senate seniority. However, the Senate defeated the Resolution

The Senate approved a resolution to revise the Senate rules pertaining to committees for this session on January 5. The rules change added workforce development issues to the responsibilities of the renamed Committee on Education and Workforce Development. The Committee on Ways and Means was eliminated, and tax policy issues were moved to the renamed Committee on Economic Development and Tax Policy.

Testimony: The Missouri Senate only allows for in-person testimony when a bill is heard in a committee.

LEGISLATIVE TOPICS

VOTING & ELECTIONS

The governor and members of the state legislature have stated that a priority for this session is to make the citizen initiative petition process more difficult. Several dozen bills have been introduced that suggest varying methods to accomplish this. We will be watching how these bills come up in committee hearings and will inform members when action is necessary.

Enshrined in the Missouri Constitution for more than 100 years, initiative petitions have worked for both conservative and liberal causes. They are an important option for Missourians when they feel their voice isn't being heard in Jefferson City. It is a difficult process requiring hundreds of thousands of signatures and a majority vote in a general election.

HEALTHCARE

Postpartum Coverage Hearing

Despite a maternal health crisis in Missouri, women with MO HealthNet lose their coverage at just 60 days postpartum. Extending postpartum coverage helps both mothers and babies thrive, and more than 30 states have extended their state's Medicaid postpartum Medicaid coverage to one year. It is always a good thing when there is bipartisan support for an issue, especially if it falls under a League position. There looks to be bipartisan consensus on this healthcare issue. **League SUPPORTS.**

Wednesday, the [Senate Health and Welfare Committee](#) will consider two proposals that would do so. Here is an interesting fact: there are seven members on this committee; six of them are women.

Senate Health & Welfare Committee

Date: Wednesday, 1/18, 10:15 a.m. or upon adjournment

Room: Senate Committee Room 1

SB 45 (Gannon): Modifies provisions relating to MO HealthNet services for pregnant and postpartum women

SB 90 (McCreery): Modifies provisions relating to MO HealthNet services for pregnant and postpartum women

Medicaid

SJR 4. (This bill is the same as HJR 117 last year.) It will make funding for Medicaid dependent on the discretion of the Legislature, for their funding annually, and also imposes work requirements for eligibility. Under this amendment, eligibility for MO HealthNet services under the expansion provision shall be determined each fiscal year based on specific appropriations made by the General Assembly. This

amendment adds language specifying that nothing in the MO HealthNet expansion provision or any other provision of law shall be construed to mandate the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for MO HealthNet services for the expansion population.

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EDUCATION

Honesty in Education/Parent Information Access

The Senate Committee on Education and Workforce Development will meet for the first time this session on January 18, a different day because of the MLK holiday. The regular meeting time of this committee this session will be Tuesday morning from 8-10. Members are Chair Andrew Koenig; Vice-Chair Rick Brattin; Lauren Arthur; Doug Beck; Elaine Gannon; Denny Hoskins; Greg Razer; Nick Schroer; Curtis Trent.

At this meeting, the committee will hear TWO bills, SB 4 (Koenig) and SB 89 (Ben Brown), on the topics of curriculum restrictions and parent access to school information. Those bills would adversely affect the freedom of teachers to provide the honest education our students deserve and interfere with existing policies respecting student and school privacy. League OPPOSES.

Restrictions on Trans Athlete Participation

The early-filed Senate bills pertaining to restrictions on trans athlete participation were referred to the newly created Committee on Emerging Issues on January 12. No hearing is currently set in this committee on those bills. The committee will consist of the following Senators: Chair, Justin Brown; Vice-Chair, Mike Moon; Elaine Gannon; Andrew Koenig; Tracy McCreery; Greg Razer; Nick Schroer.

TAXES

Personal Property Tax

SB 8: This bill gradually does away with personal property tax as the growth of revenue in real property tax increases over a period of time.

Talking points:

- LWVMO supports a balanced tax policy and many entities like school districts, library districts, etc. rely heavily on property taxes.
- Reduction of this tax would be a problem for those entities without replacing lost revenue with other sources.

League OPPOSES.

Link to the summary of the bill:

https://senate.mo.gov/23info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=44415

Current Status

SB 8 is assigned to the

[Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee](#)

where it is expected to be heard in committee on Tuesday, January 17 at 2:00 PM.

Circuit Breaker – The “Good” Tax Break

Since tax issues seem to be up early in this session of the Missouri Legislature, here is some information from one of our trusted partners, the Missouri Budget Project.

The property tax relief offered by the Missouri “circuit breaker” property tax credit helps older Missourians and Missourians living with disabilities who have fixed incomes stay in their homes by offsetting costs related to property taxes. Though a modest amount, the credit is a critical lifeline for 131,145 households throughout the state.

League SUPPORTS.

However, it has not been adjusted since 2008, limiting its reach and impact. Missouri lawmakers could strengthen the circuit breaker by:

- expanding income eligibility,
- increasing the credit amount, and
- indexing the credit and eligibility to keep pace with inflation.

Learn more about the circuit breaker and the ways it can be improved in MBP’s updated circuit breaker property tax fact sheet, [Circuit Breaker Property Tax Credit Helps Seniors, Missourians with Disabilities Stay in Their Homes.](#)

In its hearing this Tuesday, the [Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee](#) will consider [Senate Bill 15](#), which would raise income eligibility limits and adjust both eligibility and benefits annually for inflation. [Senate Bill 15](#) (Cierpiot): Modifies the Senior Citizens Property Tax Relief Credit

Details on the hearing:

Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee

Date: Tuesday, 1/17, 2 p.m. **Room:** Senate Lounge