



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

Legislative Update April 24, 2018

Tax Legislation

HB2540 – Tax Reform

The House Ways and Means Committee approved the bill on March 13 and the Rules Committee approved it on March 15. Fiscal Review – reported Do Pass with Amendments on April 10. Was reported to the Senate and was second read on April 23 and referred to the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

Information from the Missouri Budget Project:

HB 2540 passed the House and has moved to the Senate. This bill could possibly be changed in the Senate to make it more general revenue neutral and otherwise will have a tough time in the Senate. SP 674 (Koenig) passed in the Senate very quickly and has been sent to the Senate. The Missouri Budget Project suggests it might be stripped and have Haar's language attached and bears watching.

SB 617 (Eigel) is not moving because it was referred to fiscal oversight and couldn't even get a second so died in that procedural move. This may mean that Eigel won't be helpful to letting anyone else's tax bill pass the Senate.

While this bill would create a fairer tax structure, streamline sales tax collections and eliminate timely filing discounts, it would reduce state revenue for services by an estimated \$144 million. It would reduce the top income tax rate for individuals and corporations and eliminate the circuit breaker tax credit for seniors and people with disabilities who rent their homes. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Elijah Haahr.

All is slowed down now to get the Budget finalized. All in all, what we need to do is watch any movement or moderation of these tax bills after the Budget is thru the Senate—probably the end of this week.

According to the The Missouri Budget Project estimates the proposal would strip nearly 100,000 seniors of this tax credit. Here are details about this tax credit: ["Circuit Breaker"](#).

This major restructuring of the state tax laws would have an uncertain impact on state revenue collections and further complicates Missouri's ability to maintain a balanced budget and provide necessary services. Originally, HB 2540 was estimated to cost the state up to \$800 million a year in lost general revenue (GR). During debate, numerous changes were suggested and adopted. Lost GR under the current version is estimated to top out at \$237 million.

Appropriations

Information provided by the Missouri Budget Project:

Budget Bills Move to Senate Floor

The Senate Appropriations Committee made its changes to the budget bills, sending them forward for debate on the Senate floor. Some highlights of the Senate committee's recommendations include:

Education:

- Pre - K through 12 foundation formula was reduced \$50 million from the House recommendation, mirroring the Governor's budget proposal.
- \$30 million was added to school transportation line item.

Health Care

- In-home and home and community-based services provider rate increases of 1.5% were left in place.
- An attempt to change the Consumer Directed Services cost containment cap of 60% failed in a 5 to 4 vote.
- Language to restore income eligibility for MORx is included, but lacks an appropriation.
- In the MO Healthnet Division budget, the managed care is increased by \$50 million over the House position.
- The nursing home line is increased \$17 million over the House position bringing a total increase of \$25 million.
- Three lines for CHIP funding are zeroed out in the Senate position. However, the spending is mandatory, so it is believed that will be restored.
- Funding for extending postpartum coverage for new Medicaid mothers at risk of substance use disorders was zeroed out on the Senate side. This would allow for funding a new waiver opportunity if Representative Haefner's [HB2280](#) is successful.

Other Items

- \$21 million in new Federal funding was added to TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)

HB1936 – The Carrying of Concealed Weapons (“Guns Everywhere”)

Passed by the General Laws Committee on February 28. Passed by the Rules and Legislative Oversight Committee on March 29. Not currently on a House calendar. This bill expands the list of locations an individual can carry a concealed firearm. It would prevent political subdivisions and public institutions of higher learning from setting firearm restrictions on their own premises. This includes public facilities such as hospitals and amusement parks, possibly including the St. Louis Zoo.

The League position is to limit the accessibility of firearms to protect the health and safety of citizens. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Jered Taylor (R-Nixa).

Alert your House member to watch for this bill to be put on the calendar at any time.

[Click here for a link to Missouri General Assembly and Legislation](#)

HB 2523 and HB 2524
Open Records Law

Information provided by *Missourinet*

The Missouri House gave initial approval Tuesday to a bill that would “beef up” the state's open records law. The proposal would essentially give the attorney general's office subpoena power when investigating open records violations.

While Missouri has strict laws mandating that a government's actions and records be available to the public, typically the only way to hold violators accountable is to take them to court. Even then, a guilty agency might not be penalized.

If the bill becomes law, a state agency or department that knowingly violated the state's Sunshine law could be fined up to \$10,000, in addition to potentially having to cover attorneys' fees. Accidental violators could be fined up to \$1,000, plus fees.

There are only a few weeks left in the legislative session for bills to become law, and the bill must be voted on again before it heads to the Senate.

The proposal has received support from the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri, the Missouri Press Association, the Missouri Broadcasters Association and the Missouri Sunshine Coalition.