

# **LWW** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup> OF MISSOURI

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## **LWV Legislative Bulletin January 21, 2019**

Welcome to the first edition of the LWVMO Legislative Bulletin for 2019. This issue will introduce you to the make-up of the Legislative and Executive Branch of Missouri, what has happened and what the schedule will be for this session. Next week we will focus on some of the issues League will be following this year. As the session continues, if there is a bill that has a hearing or needs action from our members, we will send out an Action Alert.

### 100<sup>th</sup> SESSION, MISSOURI LEGISLATURE

On January 9 the newly-elected and returning members of the Missouri House and Senate were duly sworn in and the 4 ½ month 2019 Session of the Missouri Legislature was off and running.

#### *Overview of Members of the Legislature*

There are 62 new members of the House (out of 183) with 115 Republicans, 47 Democrats and 1 vacancy. There are 9 new Senators (out of 34) with 24 Republicans and 10 Democrats. The Republicans hold a super majority in both houses, often defined as over two thirds, also sometimes referred to as “veto-proof”, assuming that the party members vote together. This is not always the case in Missouri where urban/rural splits and some “wedge” issues can skew this assumption.

#### *Governor Mike Parson’s State of the State*

The Governor gave the State of the State address on January 16. He cited a number of his priorities for the session, including improvements in state infrastructure and workforce development. After his address the proposed budget for FY 2020 was released.

#### *Restructuring of Four State Agencies*

On January 18 during a press conference, the Governor announced a restructuring of four state agencies in an effort to improve economic and workforce development in Missouri. The Department of Economic Development will have a new Regional Engagement Division, located in the regions they serve. The Division of Workforce Development will be moved under the Department of Higher Education to focus more on workforce development. Other new initiatives in this area will be forthcoming as well.

Also included in the Governor’s executive orders are changes in alignment of existing state agencies. The Division of Energy will shift to the Department of Natural Resources. The Public Service Commission and Office of Public Counsel will move to the Department of Commerce and Insurance, formerly known as the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration, and the Missouri Arts Council will be housed under the Lt. Governor’s Office. These changes will take effect 60 days from the date the order was issued.

*Elections for leadership positions* have been held and they are:

#### *House Leadership:*

Speaker of the House, Elijah Haar (R, Springfield); Speaker Pro Tem, John Wiemann (R-O'Fallon); Majority Floor Leader, Rob Vescovo (R-Arnold); Assistant Majority Floor Leader, J. Eggleston (R-Maysville); Majority Whip, Steve Lynch (R-Waynesville); Majority Caucus Chair, Sonya Anderson (R-Springfield); Majority Caucus Secretary, Chris Dinkins (R-Annapolis); ); Majority Caucus Policy Chair, Jeffrey Messenger (R-Republic). Minority Floor Leader, Crystal Quade (D-Springfield); Assistant Minority Floor Leader, DaRon McGee (D-Kansas City); Minority Whip, Brandon Ellington (D-Kansas City); Minority Caucus Chair (Tommie Pierson, Jr. (D-St. Louis); Minority Caucus Vice-Chair, Kevin Windham (D-St. Louis); Minority Caucus Secretary, Barbara Washington,(D-Kansas City); Minority Caucus Policy Chair, Sarah Unsicker (D-Shrewsbury).

The Speaker of the House not only presides over the House, but appoints all committee chairs and committee members, and serves as an ex-officio member of all committees. The Majority Floor Leader directs the action on the House floor by setting the schedule for the day, calling up bills, and other management duties.

#### *Senate Leadership*

The Senate Leadership consists of: President Pro Tem, Dave Schatz (R-Sullivan); Majority Floor Leader, Caleb Rowden (R-Columbia); Assistant Majority Floor Leader, Wayne Wallingford (R-Cape Girardeau); Majority Caucus Chair, Dan Hegeman (R-Crosby); Majority Caucus Secretary, Jeanie Riddle (R-Callaway); Majority Caucus Whip, Sandy Crawford (R-Buffalo); Minority Floor Leader, Gina Walsh (D-Spanish Lake); Assistant Minority Floor Leader, Kiki Curls (D-Kansas City); Minority Caucus Chair, Karla May (D-St. Louis); Minority Caucus Whip, Jamilah Nasheed (D-St. Louis). During the budget year, the Lieutenant Governor can preside over the Senate and can cast a vote in case of a tie, but the everyday management of the Senate is the responsibility of the President Pro Tem while the Majority Floor Leader determines the order of business daily.

#### *Executive Branch*

The Executive Branch's six elected officials currently serving are: Governor Mike Parson, Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe, Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft, Auditor Nicole Galloway, Treasurer Scott Fitzpatrick, and Attorney General Eric Schmitt.

Gov. Parson (R-Bolivar) became Governor on June 1, 2018, on the resignation of former Gov. Greitens. Former State Senator Mike Kehoe (R-Jefferson City) was appointed to fill the Lt. Governor spot when Gov. Parson became Governor. Jay Ashcroft, (R-St. Louis) was elected in 2016. Auditor Nicole Galloway (D-Columbia) was appointed in 2015 after the death of the former auditor, then was elected in 2018. Treasurer Scott Fitzpatrick (R-Cassville) took office in January 2019, appointed to fill the opening created when Treasurer Eric Schmitt resigned to become Attorney General. Attorney General Eric Schmitt (R-St. Louis) took office in January 2019 after former Attorney General Josh Hawley was elected U. S. Senator.

*Thus, four of the six executive officials are fairly new in their jobs, along with the leadership of both the House and the Senate, and a large freshman class in the legislature, which should make for an interesting year for the political observer.*

*Changes*

In its second full day, the Senate spent many hours debating (and filibustering) changes in committee structure. The House spent time its first days changing some of the rules of the House. **At this time, leadership in the House and Senate are finalizing committee assignments so there has not been much action yet.**

### *Committees*

The Senate Gubernatorial Appointments Committee has met and will continue for the next few weeks as they must approve appointments made by the Governor during the interim within 30 days of the opening of the Legislative Session or these appointments lapse. Several committees are scheduled to meet in the coming week, with the Senate Appropriations Committee taking up the Governor's Recommendations for FY 2020 (the budget year starting July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020).

Senators and Representatives have been pre-filing bills since December 1 and will continue to do so for the next few weeks. Bills are first read in the appropriate chamber. *After the bill is "second read" in the chamber, it may (or may not) be assigned to a committee. Once assigned to a committee, the bill may be given a hearing in the committee at the discretion of the committee chair.*

***It is at this point that League members who are interested in particular bills will want to consider contacting committee members, providing testimony (in person or in writing, e-mail, or phone), and follow the actions taken. This legislative bulletin will try to follow several issues of importance to League members around the state and keep members apprised of what is happening.***

### *Keeping Up*

League members can access much information on the State website for both the House and the Senate. Many of our members are signing up for a free service (FastDemocracy.com) which can help them track legislation of interest.

Go to <https://fastdemocracy.com/> to access the homepage. From there, you can search for any bill or bills by topic, by using the drop down boxes to select Missouri, then search by the topic/name of the bill, the session, or the sponsor. From here, you can read about any bill in the House or Senate and check its current status.

In the search boxes on the screen, you can register to create an account. Creating an account allows you to receive email updates and save legislation that you would like to track. After creating your account, you can search for legislation and then click the "Track Bill" button to add it to your tracked bills. This provides easy access to go back and look at the status of the bills you are tracking.