

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF MISSOURI

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LWV Legislative Bulletin **February 17, 2020**

LWV members are encouraged to personally communicate, as individual voters (not as LWV members), with their legislators on the various legislative bills. Previous issues of the Legislative Bulletin can be found at this link: <https://lwvmissouri.org/legislative-bulletin/>

INITIATIVE PETITION PROCESS

Proposals to make it harder for citizens to bring forward and enact relevant policies via initiative petition are moving in Jefferson City.

HJR102 (Simmons): Upon voter approval, this Constitutional amendment modifies provisions for initiative petitions for Constitutional amendments by requiring that the petitions be signed by 8% of the registered voters in each of two-thirds of the state House of Representatives Districts, and changing the required vote for passage of the measure from a majority to two-thirds of the votes cast.

ACTION ALERT There will be a hearing of **HJR 102** on **Thursday, February 20 at 8 a.m. in HR 6 (House Elections and Elected Officials Committee)**

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee met on February 5 and voted to approve the following two measures regarding approval of initiative petitions. Both bills have been referred to the House Rules -Legislative Oversight Committee.

HJR 60 (Billington) requires signature collection for initiative petitions to meet signature thresholds in all eight Congressional Districts of the state, rather than the current requirement of at least six of eight Congressional Districts. This requirement would make an already difficult and expensive task much harder to complete.

HCS/HJR 97 (Eggleston) to require the sponsor of any initiative petition proposing Constitutional amendments to collect signatures in every Congressional district and then to submit any approved petition to the General Assembly for consideration in a manner similar to a bill. The legislature would be allowed to interfere with the process by passing, amending or blocking the petition. Only a petition approved by the legislature could be approved by a simple majority. Any version not approved by the legislature would have to be approved by a two-thirds supermajority.

On the Senate Side

SJR 31(Seder). Missouri House website summary:

Under current law, initiative petitions proposing constitutional amendments shall be signed by 8% of the legal voters in each of two-thirds of the Congressional districts. This constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, requires such petitions to be signed by 15% of the legal voters in each of the Congressional districts.

Furthermore, current law provides that initiative petitions proposing constitutional amendments shall take effect when approved by a simple majority of the votes cast thereon prior to taking effect. This amendment requires such initiatives to be approved by at least two-thirds of the votes cast thereon prior to taking effect, with the exception that an amendment proposing solely to repeal any amendment adopted through the initiative process prior to December 3, 2020, shall be approved after receiving a simple majority.

VOTER ID

HB1600 Sponsored by John Simmons (R) 109, no co-sponsor. On January 30, this bill was referred to Rules/Legislative Oversight.

“In essence, by eliminating non-photo IDs, this measure would attempt to reinstate a strict voter ID requirement (similar to one that was found unconstitutional in *Weinschenk v. State*, 203 S.W.3d 201 (Mo. 2006)). It would require voters to show a non-expired state issued photo ID to vote or cast a provisional ballot, that would only be counted if the voter returned with photo ID or if the voter’s signature on the provisional ballot envelope matches the signature on their voter registration.”

Members should contact their state representative to oppose this bill.

SENATE ADVANCES ATTACKS ON THE REFORMS OF CLEAN MISSOURI

The Senate gave first round approval (Perfection vote) to SS#3/SJR 38 (Hegeman) on February 4 and is expected to take a final vote early this week. SJR 38 is similar to HJR 76 and HJR 101 and would undermine the redistricting reforms of Amendment 1, also known as CLEAN Missouri. The SS#3 still removes the nonpartisan demographer created under Amendment 1 and opens the possibility for the population count to be skewed to exclude non-citizen or non-voting-age residents from the data used for drawing districts. The SJR also makes it harder to file suit against a faulty map and limits the remedies available to a judge in such a case. **The League opposes SJR 38.**

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

HB 1949 (Morgan) has been introduced to propose a National Popular Vote Act in Missouri. There is information about this movement at this link: [National Popular Vote](#) **We encourage members to write to their state representatives to support this bill.** Here is a sample letter, although we suggest that you create your own version.

My name is I live in (town), (County). I am writing to ask you to support the National Popular Vote bill HB 1949. It is a more democratic method of electing the President of the United States than the present method. Right now our state gives its presidential vote to the candidate who wins the most votes in Missouri and the minority vote of either party never gets assigned to a candidate. This does not seem fair.

I believe that every vote should be of equal value as it is in local and state elections. In a representative government such as ours it is important for the voters to know that their votes are distributed equitably. Please support HB1949 so that Missouri can join the 16 other states and the District of Columbia who have already signed it.

The following items are repeated from last week. We did not notice any new activity since then. If you haven’t contacted your legislator, you might consider doing so now.

“GUNS EVERYWHERE”

SB 663 (Senator Eric Burlison, sponsor) A “Guns Everywhere” bill. This bill modifies provisions relating to the concealed carrying of firearms, allowing guns in hospitals, churches, public universities, day care sites, amusement parks, bars, and meetings of local governments, sporting venues. Counties, cities, or other political subdivision are prohibited from establishing no carry zones. Private property electing to ban concealed carry would have to be posted with 11 by 14 signs.

SB 588 (Senator Eric Burlison, sponsor) This bill is called the Second Amendment Preservation Act. It claims that Missouri does not have to follow any federal law regarding firearms. It prohibits any law enforcement officer in Missouri from complying or enforcing a federal law under threat of termination.

These bills were referred to the Senate Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety. A hearing that was set for last week was cancelled due to the weather.

Contact your Senator, even if it is Senator Burlison. Call each member of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety. Here is a link to the members of this committee:

<https://www.senate.mo.gov/TRAN/>

We would oppose these bills based on the LWV Policy statement on gun control: *Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.*

CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION

Two charter school expansion bills have been approved by Senate committees and could be taken up soon for Senate debate, perhaps as early as this week. The Senate Government Reform Committee approved SCS/SB 603 (O’Laughlin) on February 3 and the Senate General Laws Committee approved SB 649 (Eigel) on January 28. The bills have roughly similar provisions regarding expansion of charter schools. Both bills would allow charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in districts around the state. (continued)

Charter schools should be subject to the same standards of accountability, transparency and respect for the rights of students, parents and staff as are applicable to traditional public schools. The League supports criteria for governance and operations similar to those of traditional public schools. ***SB 603 and SB 649 do not enact these reforms. Contact your state senator to oppose these bills.***

You can find your legislator(s) at this link. Although it says “Senate,” it will give you all your state and national elected officials: [Find your legislator](#).

You can also use [FastDemocracy.com](https://www.fastdemocracy.com) to track bills.
