



Governmental Services Group

The Missouri legislature has one week to go until the legislative spring break, and the Senate has continued to operate more like it did 10 years ago. So far there has been a surprising amount of noncontroversial legislation to be perfected and passed out of the chamber. Last night, the Senate perfected Rep. Christ's omnibus crime bill after a long day and debate into the evening hours. This was one of the more sensitive subjects for the Democrats in the upper chamber but ultimately a deal was reached.

The substitute creates a new police board in St. Louis with the mayor and five other members appointed by the Governor, now subject to Senate confirmation. There was a controversial provision on policing "rioting" that was removed, and added in was Sen. Mosley's task force for "Missing and Murdered African American Women and Girls". It can be expected that we will face some more difficult items that will slow things down in the weeks after the legislative break but things are moving at the moment.

One issue that could grind the Senate to a standstill is a proposed constitutional amendment reinstating Missouri's abortion ban. This Wednesday, the bill cleared an obstacle in the Senate that could very well have doomed the effort. Sen. Moon, who considers himself deeply pro-life, opposed Sen. Schnelting's version of the bill that included exceptions for rape and incest. The bill could have stalled with a 3-3 vote had Moon voted no, so he petitioned the Pro Tem, Sen. O'Laughlin, to remove him from a committee. He had promised not to derail Sen. Schnelting's bill, and could not in good conscience vote it down, so Sen. O'Laughlin granted his request and replaced him with Sen. Brattin on the Senate Families, Seniors, and Health Committee. It was one of the rarer moments of procedure and politics blending and adding a little excitement to the week.

On the House side, the appropriations subcommittees of the larger House Budget committee presented their recommendations to the House Budget Chair, Rep. Deaton. It is expected that the full budget markup will take place next week. Rep. Deaton told members to expect to work the majority of next Thursday, and not to catch the first flight out that morning for spring break.

We will continue to keep you informed of the latest in Jefferson City.

Sewage Disposal

HB 200, sponsored by Representative Falkner, creates a mandatory registration program requiring continuing education until January 1, 2026, for on-site wastewater treatment system professionals qualified to perform percolation tests in accordance with the state standard. The administrative authority may accept a percolation test at its own discretion until January 1, 2026,

if a soil morphology evaluation cannot be reasonably obtained. This bill was voted out of the House Consent and Procedure this week DO PASS.

Women's Health

HB 398, sponsored by Representative Peters, modifies several provisions relating to health care. Included in the bill are provisions relating to blood testing for pregnant women and mammography screenings, and self-administered hormonal contraceptive coverage. This bill was voted out of the House Health and Mental Health Committee DO PASS.

Health Care

HB 943, sponsored by Representative Peters, modifies several provisions relating to healthcare. The bill contains provisions regarding operations and investments by hospitals, ambulance districts, community paramedics, ambulance licenses, ground ambulance service relief, health care records, sexually transmitted infection, specialty hospitals, administration of medication, long-term care facilities, MO Healthnet hearing aids, prenatal tests for certain diseases, dentistry in Correctional Centers, administration of certain vaccines, and RX cares for MO program.

HB 943 was voted out of the Fiscal Review Committee 7-0. The bill was third read and passed on the House floor 125-30.

MO Freedom Protection Act

SB 75, sponsored by Representative Loy, establishes the "Missouri Religious Freedom Protection Act". The bill specifies that no public official can issue an order that has the effect of limiting or prohibiting a religious group or place of worship from holding religious services or meetings. This prohibition does not apply to religious groups using places of worship to intentionally commit or plan acts of violence. This prohibition is not to be interpreted to exempt places of worship from complying with applicable building and fire codes. This bill had a Senate Hearing this week.

In support of the bill is Freedom Principal MO.

In opposition to the bill is Word&Way and ACLU of MO.

Prior Authorization

HB 618, sponsored by Representative Stinnett, creates provisions relating to prior authorization of health care services. This bill has been referred to the House Rules Administrative Committee.