



## Governmental Services Group

This week the Missouri General Assembly continued at a rapid pace. After a heavy lobbying effort in the House, the special interest groups backing video lottery terminals narrowly attained a slim majority vote out on Wednesday. The bill, with multiple amendments, would bring \$350 million a year for school systems in the state according to the groups backing it.

By an 83-73 vote, one vote over the minimum needed to pass, the House approved the bill. Some amendments were poorly written and led to a lot of misinformation during the vote. The bill also faces an uncertain future in the state Senate, where Senator Denny Hoskins, now Secretary of State, had been a major proponent for years. Three video lottery bills have been proposed in the upper chamber, but none have been given a hearing, which speaks volumes.

In the final House vote, 54 Republicans were joined by 29 Democrats to pass the bill, while 18 Democrats and 55 Republicans opposed it. The VLT lobbying groups have certainly courted both sides of the aisle and it has been a sustained effort years in the making. The vote tally board was opened for an incredibly long time and many members changed their vote in real time, which illustrates how many legislators did not want to take this tough vote.

Meanwhile in the Senate, a bill aiming to regulate intoxicating hemp products like Delta-8 seltzers and hemp-THC gummies stalled on Wednesday after a seven-hour bipartisan filibuster. Critics argued it was an attempt by the marijuana industry to stomp out competition, while proponents see it as a necessary public safety measure.

Senator May offered an amendment after the House had spent many hours earlier in the year on similar legislation. The House had debated two bills backed by hemp industry leaders, which were both defeated in committee. Those bills established a similar regulatory framework as proposed by Senator May. However, there was a good deal of infighting from various hemp affiliated groups which contributed to the bill not going far. The bill was laid over by Sen. Schroer, the sponsor, just before 8 p.m. Wednesday.

The Senate Appropriations Committee now has the House-passed budget, and it is expected that working on the Senate version is likely to take up a major part of the coming weeks. With only five weeks left in session alongside a shortened Easter week there is limited time to pass the budget, as well as take up the issues of minimum wage adjustments and abortion restrictions which are top Republican caucus priorities.

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

### **Healthcare**

HB 943, sponsored by Representative Peters, modifies several provisions relating to health care.

**SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (Section 191.648)** Currently, a physician may utilize expedited partner therapy, meaning the practice of treating the sex partners of persons with chlamydia or gonorrhea without an intervening medical evaluation or professional prevention counseling, to prescribe and dispense medications for the treatment of chlamydia or gonorrhea even without an established physician/patient relationship. Under this bill, certain health care professionals may use expedited partner therapy, and the therapy may be used for designated sexually transmitted infections beyond chlamydia and gonorrhea. The bill repeals the requirement that antibiotic medications prescribed and dispensed through expedited partner therapy for the treatment of chlamydia or gonorrhea be in pill form.

**ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS (Sections 196.990 and 335.081)** The bill adds licensed long-term care facilities to the definition of "authorized entity" in current law permitting the entities to stock a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors for use in an emergency. Additionally, the administration by technicians, nurses' aides, or their equivalent in long-term care facilities of epinephrine auto-injectors and subcutaneous injectable medications to treat diabetes are not to be prohibited by nurse licensing laws.

**PRENATAL TESTS FOR CERTAIN DISEASES (Section 210.030)** Currently, a physician or other health care provider must draw and test a pregnant woman's blood at or soon after her first prenatal examination, with her consent, for syphilis, hepatitis B, or other similar diseases.

**ADMINISTRATION OF CERTAIN VACCINES (Section 338.010)** Currently, the practice of pharmacy includes the ordering and administering of vaccines, with exceptions. This bill adds the vaccine for chikungunya to the exceptions and those vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration after January 1, 2025, instead of those approved after January 1, 2023.

This bill had a hearing in the Senate Families, Seniors, and Health Committee this week.

In support of the bill was Consumer Healthcare Products Association, Missouri Chapter of The American Academy of Pediatrics, Planned Parenthood of Great Rivers, St. Louis County, BJC, St. Louis Children's Hospital, VOYCE, Missouri Ambulance Association; Missouri Nurses Association, Missouri State Medical Association, Missouri Ambulance Association; American College of OBGYNs, MO Center For Public Health Excellence, MO Health Care Association, Missouri Assisted Living Association, Centurion, Missouri Ambulance Association, NTA EMS, Ambulance District Association of Missouri, Missouri Ambulance Association, and Missouri Ambulance Association.

### **Child Care Contribution Tax Credit Act**

HB 269, sponsored by Representative Shields, authorizes the "Child Care Contribution Tax Credit Act", the "Employer-Provided Child Care Assistance Tax Credit Act", and the "Child Care Providers Tax.

This bill had a hearing in the Senate Emerging Issues Committee this week.

In favor of the bill was Missouri Grocers Association, Missouri Chamber of Commerce, Missouri Catholic Conference, Associated Industries of Missouri, NFIB, JE Dunn Construction, Missouri Hospital Association, Kids Win Missouri, Missouri State, Alliance of YMCA,

Northland Chamber of Commerce, City of Kansas City, Greater KC Chamber of Commerce - Branson, and MO Boys & Girls Clubs.

There was no opposition to the bill.

### **Tobacco Products**

HB 344, sponsored by Representative Keathley, specifies that the state preempts the sale of tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, and vapor products, including local ordinances that deal with ingredients, setting the age to sell or purchase to 21 years and above, licensing and products bans, and supersedes any local laws, ordinances, orders, rules, or regulations enacted by a county, municipality, or other political subdivision regulating the sale of tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, or vapor products. This bill was perfected on the House floor this week.

### **Coverage for Anesthesia Services**

HB 1126, sponsored by Representative Hruza, prohibits health carriers or health benefit plans from establishing or implementing any policy or practice that imposes a time limit for the payment of anesthesia services provided during a medical or surgical procedure. Moreover, health carriers or health benefit plans are prohibited from establishing or implementing any policy that restricts or excludes all anesthesia time in calculating the payment of anesthesia services. This bill was voted out of the House Health Insurance Company DO PASS.