



Governmental Services Group

The Missouri General Assembly heads into the final six weeks of the legislative session with quite a bit more bills moving through the two chambers than in previous years. Still, cracks are starting to form in the productivity of the statehouse. Wednesday, Senator Moon began an hours-long filibuster trying to block the appointment of his former colleague, Senate Pro Tem Dave Schatz to a county office over a grudge that goes back more than seven years. Former Senator Schatz had been selected by Governor Kehoe to fill a vacancy on the Franklin County Commission.

Sen. Moon began his filibuster Wednesday afternoon, laying out grievances against Schatz and reading emails from residents of Franklin County who wanted the Senate to support another candidate. Ultimately, the one-man filibuster for grievance purposes only last until just after midnight, when Sen. Moon offered procedural motions that continued to be voted down by fellow Senators. Sen. Moon stood down and the Senate confirmed Schatz at around 1 a.m. The Senate then briefly adjourned and returned to approve the next day's journal and adjourned until Monday. Many in the building are hoping this was a one-off, but with controversial priority bills expected to hit the Senate floor in April there could be many more long nights ahead.

On Tuesday the House went through the various budget bills on the floor, with the current budget coming in at \$47.9 billion. House members, mostly Democrats, failed to add in proposals to shift money to the school funding formula and increase payments to childcare providers during the long afternoon of debate.

Few Republicans broke ranks with party leadership on those or any other proposal put forward by the minority party. Republicans had a few last-minute changes, such as the Medicaid program, attempting to find unused state dollars. The House cut about \$50 million in general revenue matches to federal funds, arguing the funds were not needed because enrollment is not meeting earlier expectations.

This budget plan debated by the House cuts almost \$800 million in general revenue and \$2.1 billion overall less than the operating budget proposed by Gov. Mike Kehoe in January. The spending proposal achieves those savings by cutting appropriations that had no funding available, reducing Medicaid matches as previously mentioned, and by slicing Kehoe's plan for state employee pay raises in half.

Meanwhile, language implementing capital gains tax reductions as well as the elimination of the state income tax are still floating around in the final months of session. State revenue numbers are holding but it is difficult to see whether the timing of a tax cut with this or the next fiscal year is going to be all that plausible paired with House cuts and looming federal funding cuts to states. All or many of these concerns are likely to be addressed on the Senate side.

Final votes on the 13 House spending bills were taken Thursday to send the budget to the state Senate, where Senate Appropriations members will have just five weeks to complete the process of passing the state budget before the constitutional deadline. Three more bills, HB 17-19, that allocate money to capital improvements, are still awaiting action in the House Budget Committee

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

Confiscation of Animals

HB 489, sponsored by Representative Schoiack, modifies provisions relating to the confiscation of animals. Link to full bill summary:

<https://documents.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills251/sumpdf/HB0489C.pdf>

This bill was Third Read and Passed 108-31 in the House this week.

Public Health Services

HB 973, sponsored by Representative Voss, modifies provisions relating to public health services. This bill authorizes the Department of Health and Senior Services to contract with a designated Missouri affiliate of the National Network of Public Health Institutes, or a similar or successor entity, to assist in carrying out its duties to promote the health and well-being of Missouri residents. Such contracts can include efforts to assist in the delivery of health services throughout the state and the administration of grant funds and related programs. The Department and the designated affiliate must provide a report to the General Assembly as specified in the bill.

This bill had a hearing in the House Health and Mental Health Committee this week.

In support of the Bill was Reach Foundation, National Association of Social Workers, Missouri Association of Rural Health Clinics, BJC Healthcare, and Cox Health.

Disease Reporting

HB 986, sponsored by Representative Overcast, modifies provisions relating to the list of diseases required to be reported to the department of health and senior services. This bill adds alpha-gal syndrome and Lyme disease to the list of diseases that must be reported to the Department of Health and Senior Services. Additionally, the bill requires the Department to submit an annual report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that summarizes its findings on the incidence of the diseases on the Department's list.

This bill had a hearing in the House Health and Mental Health Committee this week.

Several citizens testified in support of the bill.

There was no opposition.

Maternal Healthcare Services

HB 1095, sponsored by Representative Bosley, creates provisions relating to maternal health care services. This bill requires MO HealthNet coverage of doula services and childbirth

education classes for pregnant women and a support person. The Department of Social Services is required to study the impact of the childbirth education classes on infant and maternal mortality among pregnant women.

This bill had a hearing in the House Health and Mental Health Committee this week.

In support of the bill was the League of Women Voters of Missouri, Health Forward Foundation, and several citizens.

There was no opposition to the bill.