



LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Published during the Missouri Legislative Session by the

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

8706 Manchester Rd. Suite 104 St. Louis, MO 63144-2733

314-961-6869 (fax 314-961-8393)

Email: league@lwvmissouri.org Web: www.lwvmissouri.org

Volume XLV, Issue 4

March 9, 2015

UPCOMING EVENTS: MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 19, 2015 member organizations of the Medicaid Coalition, of which the League of Women Voters of Missouri is a member, will be participating in a DAY of ACTION at the Capitol in Jefferson City.

Plan to attend the DAY of ACTION from 9:00-2:30 at the Capitol. Buses will be going from KC/STL/Springfield/Joplin/Columbia. Lunch will be provided. RSVP- <http://bit.ly/MOlobby2015>
More details will be sent.

April 14, 2015 the League of Women Voters of Missouri will join with other organizations to rally for the Equal Rights Action Day and Equality Payday, the day **when** women's wages equal that of male employees. Watch for more information in the MO Voter.

Electoral Process- Kathleen Farrell and Linda McDaniel, Directors and Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) Chairs

MORE ON VOTER PHOTO ID

As reported earlier, the Missouri House passed HJR 1 and HB 30 to require a valid photo governmental identification for voting. These measures are now in the Senate.

Meanwhile the Senate is advancing some of their bills, SJR 5(Kraus) and SB170 (Kraus) and SB169 (Schaaf). These bills were heard on February 23, 2015 in the Senate Financial and Governmental Organizations and Elections Committee. The committee members are:

Jay Wasson 20th, Chairman

Mike Cunningham, 33rd, Vice-Chairman

Dan Hegeman, 12th

Will Kraus, 8th

Jeanie Riddle, 10th

David Sater, 29th

Wayne Wallingford, 27th
Paul Wieland, 22nd
Joe Keaveny, 4th
Paul LeVota, 11th
Scott Sifton, 1st

SB 169 includes more acceptable forms of photo IDs and the signing of an affidavit at the polling place allowing the voter without a valid photo ID to cast a provisional ballot.

The League opposes these Senate bills. They could be voted out of committee at any time. Please contact your senator NOW or any committee member to vote NO on the required photo ID legislation!

Health Care – Barbara Davis, Director and Health Care Chair

Testimony was submitted to the Senate Small Business, Insurance, and Industry Committee on March 4 in opposition to SB51 (Sen. Bob Onder) and in support of SB89 (Sen. Paul LeVota).

SB51 prohibits the state from implementing insurance exchanges, prohibits insurers from accepting remuneration, and prescribes duties of the Attorney General for enforcement. SB89 requires health carriers to submit premium rate changes and supporting actuarial information to justify the premium rate increases to the Department of Insurance.

The testimony for each bill was sent to the following:

TO: House Committee on Small Business, Insurance and Industry
Sen. Mike Parson, Chair
Sen. Doug Libla
Sen. Brian Munzlinger
Sen. Wayne Wallingford
Sen. Jay Wasson
Sen. Paul. Wieland
Sen. S. Kiki Curls
Sen. Gina Walsh

RE: SB51 – “ Modifies Missouri’s Health Care Freedom Act by prohibiting the state from implementing a health insurance exchange, prohibiting insurers from accepting remuneration and prescribing duties of the Attorney General for enforcement of the act.” (Sponsor-Sen. Bob Onder)

In 2015 one of the Legislative Priorities for the League of Women Voters of Missouri is “Affordable, comprehensive health care for all Missouri citizens.” Therefore, we strongly recommend that you oppose SB51 because it could prevent more than 217,000 Missourians who currently receive subsidies which enable them to afford insurance purchased through the Health Insurance Marketplace from being able to afford the same policies they now have. It has also

been estimated by the reliable RAND study that approximately 152,000 of these Missourians would be unable to afford any health insurance without the subsidies.

With fewer people purchasing insurance because they could no longer afford it, premiums for others would go up in order for the insurance companies to afford to offer insurance. In addition, the economy of Missouri could be greatly affected by having a less healthy population because of citizens being unable to purchase the insurance they need.

We believe that the policies which would be in effect if SB51 were to be enacted would have a negative on both the health of Missouri citizens and the economy in the state. Therefore, the LWVMO therefore urges that it not be enacted.

RE: SB89 – “This act requires health carriers to submit premium rate changes and supporting actuarial information to justify the premium rate increase to the Department of Insurance (the “Department”) for approval prior to issuing or renewing plans with the premium rate changes. Information contained in this filing shall be posted on the Department’s website and available to the public. The filing must contain a certification that rates are not excessive, inadequate, or unfairly discriminatory by a qualified member of the American Academy of Actuaries. The director shall disapprove rates found to be excessive, inadequate, discriminatory, unjustified or unfairly discriminatory. Any violation of this section is determined to be a level two violation.”

In 2015 one of the Legislative Priorities of the League of Women Voters of Missouri is “Affordable, comprehensive health care for all Missouri citizens.” This act, filed by Sen. LeVota, adds a section to Statute 376, RSMo, related to insurance premium rate reviews. We support this addition to the Statute, believing that it brings accountability to the process of health insurance rate changes.

###

Tax Policy – Nancy Copenhaver, Director and Tax Chair

The House Select Committee on Financial Institutions and Taxation voted to approve HCS/HJR 34 (Burlison) on March 5. HJR 34 is a constitutional spending limit similar to the Colorado provision known as “TABOR”, or the so-called “Taxpayer Bill of Rights.” It probably isn’t going too much further but keep an eye on it. The HJR would impose a permanent, constitutional spending limit on state government and would limit annual growth in state appropriations to a cost of living adjustment factor plus a population growth factor. The HJR also mandates automatic, permanent income tax reductions based upon yearly revenue growth conditions.

Also, the House Ways and Means Committee heard HB 590, the “Everything Tax” which shifts from the progressive income tax to more regressive sales tax, about a \$6 Billion shift. It is also unclear which services would be taxed and which would not, it will head now to Dugger’s Select committee, again a “watch” for this one.

The House passed a tax amnesty bill which means about a \$20 million increase in revenue which the House included in their budget. The Senate probably won’t pass it or include it in theirs.

Death Penalty – Sydell Shayer

There has been no action on the three bills, HB 420, HB 561, and HB 837, since the last bulletin.

SB 240 and SB 39 were referred to the Senate Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight Committee. SB 447 was referred to the Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.

Other Legislation of interest:

Ethics bills: SB 11(Richard) passed the Senate, and heard in House Government Oversight and Accountability Committee on Feb. 17. Reported Do Pass on Feb. 23- last action.

SJR 13 (Schaaf) contains many sweeping changes affecting lobbyists' gifts, campaign contribution disclosure and many more provisions. First read on Feb. 3 – no further action.

Education

HB 42 and SB1- Student Transfer/tuition/other provisions.

It appears that HB 42 that passed the House and assigned to the Senate Education Committee with a hearing scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, may be the one most likely to receive final passage. At least at this time!

SB 271 and HB 584 HCS/HBs 578, 574 and 584 (Swan) -These bills address proposed civics education legislation to replace the current required test on U.S. and Missouri Constitutions and American history with a test based on the questions used for becoming an American citizen. The HCS retains the existing test over U.S. Constitution and Missouri Constitution as a local option. The HCS also grants local control over the number of questions used from the American citizenship test.

Helpful information:

To find your state officials go to www.moga.mo.gov Click on member look-up and then follow prompts to either put in your mailing address or your 9 digit zipcode.

WRITING STATE LEGISLATORS (and other elected officials)

The salutation is **Dear Senator (last name) or Dear Representative (last name)**

Be specific. Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph. If it pertains to legislation identify the topic and House Bill: HB#, Senate Bill: SB# , HJR or SJR.

State your position and explain why you support or oppose this particular issue. Keep it focused on one issue. Be brief and to the point. A personal story, and or, local examples concerning the impact of the legislation are very powerful.

Ask for a response. Indicate you would very much appreciate a reply stating his/her position on the issue.

Sincerely or Sincerely yours are appropriate closings.

Follow up with a thank you if you agree with your legislator's vote. Similarly, if you disagree with his or her vote, inform your legislator.

Always include **your name, address, phone number.**

(Some say to state whether you are or are not a constituent.) But some legislators say that statement makes them feel threatened implying loss of an election vote.)

PLEASE SAVE YOUR LEGISLATIVE BULLETINS TO USE FOR REFERENCE AS LEGISLATION TRACKING CONTINUES THROUGH THE 2015 SESSION.