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## **LWV Legislative Bulletin March 26, 2019**

The General Assembly was on Legislative Spring Break last week, and returned to the Capitol on Monday, March 25. Conventional wisdom says that most bills that have not been passed by one chamber by break week will have difficulty making it through the entire process by adjournment of the Legislative Session in mid-May, but when House and Senate leaders are determined to make an issue move, they can. Some lawmakers seem determined to overturn, either in whole or in part, the Amendment 1 (CLEAN initiative) and minimum wage increase victories we achieved at the polls in November.

### **CLEAN MISSOURI**

**HB48** – On Monday, March 25, there was a hearing on HJR 48 in the General Laws committee. As introduced, Rep. Dean Plocher's HJR48 includes tighter lobbyist gift rules and a lower campaign contribution limit for state senate candidates.

Although this sounds like a positive bill, the Clean Missouri campaign thinks this proposal may be a “Trojan horse” proposal that will be loaded up with language to roll back Amendment 1’s anti-gerrymandering language in committee. An overflow crowd of members of the League, Faith Voices, Jobs for Justice and other groups attended this hearing. The sponsor, who is also the chair of the General Laws Committee, refused to answer very basic questions about his intentions and expectations for what would happen to the bill if it passed out of the General Laws Committee. He would not commit to providing public oversight to amendments that could be added to the bill on the House floor, amendments that would undermine the will of the voters who passed Amendment 1. This would make them more of a “surprise” and harder for the public to see or comment on.

### ***State Demographer and Redistricting***

*SS/SB213 and HB973 deal with implementation of Amendment 1, CLEAN, supported by LWVMO:*

The Senate gave first round approval to **SS/SB 213** (Hegeman) on March 13. The bill requires the nonpartisan state demographer to establish the Redistricting Public Comment Portal for the purpose of publicly accepting any comments, records, documents, maps, data files, communication, or information of any kind relating to the redistricting process. Any such submissions shall be accompanied by a disclosure that indicates whether the person making the submission was responsible in whole or in part for the submission or another person contributed money that was intended to fund preparation of the submission and, if so, the disclosure shall additionally identify each such contributor. 3/20/2019 on the Formal Calendar Senate Bills for Third Reading

HB973—Same as SB 213

<https://house.mo.gov/Bill.aspx?bill=HB973&year=2019&code=R>

3/12/19 Reported Do Pass by House Rules Committee

***Tell your legislators you voted for fair maps in November, and you expect them to uphold Amendment 1.***

There are obvious problems with these bills:

SJR13 would put a measure on the ballot ***to wipe out the redistricting changes in Amendment 1.*** Makes several changes in addition to redistricting, including reducing the number of legislators, changing term limits, etc. Gives all the power for redistricting to the legislature; state house and senate boundaries would be dependent on federal congressional districts, which are established by the legislature. 3/20/2019 -- Formal Calendar S Bills for Perfection.

[https://www.senate.mo.gov/19info/BTS\\_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=170](https://www.senate.mo.gov/19info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=170)

SJR 23 Eliminates lobbyist gifts (even <\$5); lengthens cooling off period for legislators to become lobbyists to 4 years; eliminates the nonpartisan state demographer and changes the apportionment criteria. 3/14/2019 - Second Read and Referred S Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions and Ethics Committee

[https://www.senate.mo.gov/19info/BTS\\_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=4942341](https://www.senate.mo.gov/19info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=4942341)

Note that these two bills are Senate Joint Resolutions. It would require another constitutional amendment to make the changes. If passed, a “joint resolution” would place an initiative on the ballot. If a JR is passed by both houses the Governor has no veto power (unlike statutes).

### ***SUNSHINE LAW***

SB132 *This bill would exempt the general assembly from the Sunshine Law.* “This act authorizes the closure of public records under the Missouri Sunshine Law that are retained by the office of a member of the General Assembly that are related to a constituent of a member. The act defines the term "constituent." Further, any record may be closed that is retained in the office of a member of the General Assembly, or employees of the General Assembly, that contain information regarding proposed legislation or the legislative process. These authorizations to close records shall not apply if the record has been offered in a public meeting of either house of the General Assembly.”

### **ABSENTEE AND EARLY VOTING**

The House Elections Committee heard HB 992 (Price) and HB 994 (Price) on March 13. HB 992 allows voters to vote by absentee ballot without giving a reason. HB 994 creates a structure for early voting.

***LWVMO supports early voting options and the "no-fault" approach to absentee voting and believes that both bills will help encourage and support voter participation.***

### **PRIMARY ELECTION PROCESS**

SB 109 - Under current law, at each primary election voters are entitled to pick any ballot among the various established political parties, regardless of their political party affiliation or unaffiliation. This act stipulates that voters are **only entitled to cast a ballot in the primary of the political party with which they are affiliated** according to their voter registration. The act requires persons registering to vote to indicate a political party affiliation.

This act is substantially similar to HB 922 (2019).

***This bill would require voters to register with a political party. Some voters might want to cross party lines or are independent. This would clearly be a potential barrier to citizens voting.***

## **BUDGET**

The House Budget Committee completed committee action for the operating budget bills, HBs 1-13 (Smith) and approved HCS versions on March 11. The committee bills are now on the House calendar for upcoming floor debate. Floor action will probably take place during this week when the House returns from Spring Break.

The committee markup sheets remove \$100M in general revenue funds from various parts of the budget and moved the funding to the State Road Fund to fund road and bridge work. Among the reductions made to support this transfer was a \$5M reduction to pupil transportation, reducing the Governor's proposed \$10M increase to \$5M.

## **MINIMUM WAGE**

From Empower Missouri:

Thanks to citizen efforts in gathering signatures, educating neighbors, and voting, workers in Missouri will see a gradual raise of the statewide wage to \$12 an hour over several years. The victory on this, Proposition B, was decisive - 62.3 percent support on November 6.

However, under House Bill 858, which state Rep. Robert Ross, R-Yukon, filed on Feb. 11, Proposition B would be completely repealed. Even the 75-cents-an-hour increase that took effect in January would be rescinded. Note: this bill was read a second time on February 11 in the House.

State Sen. Cindy O'Laughlin, R-Shelbina, and state Rep. Tim Remole, R-Excello, have filed identical bills that would exempt religious schools from following Proposition B. Instead religious schools could pay workers the old \$7.85-an-hour minimum wage.

State Sen. Mike Cunningham, R-Rogersville, is seeking to allow employers to pay workers under age 18 just 85 percent of the state minimum wage. He would also freeze the minimum wage for tipped employees.