



Missouri Society of Professional Engineers

Weekly Legislative Report January 9, 2018

GENERAL SESSION OVERVIEW

The Missouri legislature officially began the Second Regular Session of the 99th General Assembly last week. President Pro Tem Ron Richard gave no opening speech even though this is his final year of sixteen years of service in the General Assembly. He did, however, release a statement to the press along with Senate Majority Floor Leader Mike Kehoe (R-Cole) saying that “Step-by-step, we have been making Missouri a more attractive place to live, work, conduct business and invest in the future, but, there is some unfinished business that I would like us to accomplish in my last year.” Richard went on to say that, prevailing wage and tort reform issues will be top priorities as well as finding a funding source to restore the cuts to in-home and nursing home care. Senator Kehoe was also quoted in the statement saying that tax reform would be debated in the Senate. Kehoe said, “The most important issue is putting more of people’s own spending money back into their pockets. Numerous tax reform bills have been filed, and I’m sure we will have robust conversations about possibilities in the coming weeks.”

IN THE NEWS

- *A Dime and A Dozen.* The 21st Century Transportation Task Force, a 23-member panel of lawmakers, state officials and other appointees, presented its recommendations to state lawmakers. The recommendation for 10-cents per gallon tax increase on gasoline and 12-cents per gallon increase on diesel would raise about \$430 million annually for road needs, the panel’s report stated. The task force also recommended doubling the current fee of \$37.50 for hybrid vehicles and \$75 for electric cars. Funding for other transportation needs, for airports, river ports and rail, would be supported by eliminating or reducing the timely filing discount for retailers on the state sales tax. Retailers currently retain 2 percent of the money received from consumers for sales taxes, or about \$115 million annually.
- Governor Eric Greitens withdrew and then reappointed his five interim appointments to the State Board of Education stating that he would like the Senate to have more time to meet with the candidates. Had he not withdrawn the appointments, the Senate would have had to act on them within the first thirty days of this legislative session. Now the Senate has until the May 18th deadline to approve of the appointments. Senators Rob Schaaf (R-Buchanan) and Gary Romine (R-Ste. Genevieve) stated on the Senate Floor that they would not support any appointment who voted to remove State Education Commissioner Margie Vandeven. The Board will not have a quorum to meet until the appointments are finalized.
- The Senate gave its approval to two of Governor Greitens appointments. Senator Ryan Silvey (R-Clay) who was appointed to the Public Service Commission and former Senator Will Kraus (R-Jackson) who was an interim appointment to the State’s Tax Commission. The Senate swore-in Kraus’s successor Mike Cierpiot who won the November 7th Special Election. Governor Greitens will call for a special election to replace Sen. Silvey whose district covers part of Clay County.

- Picking up right where he left off, Senator Rob Schaaf (R-Buchanan) held the Senate Floor for about an hour discussing various issues with several members of his caucus and the minority party. His topics included gubernatorial appointments to the State Board of Education, managed care expansion, collateral source legislation passed last session, and various shots at Governor Greitens. The diatribe culminated with a veiled threat when the Senator said, “This year, it won’t be so easy to get this stuff passed”.
- Speaker Todd Richardson (R-Poplar Bluff) and Speaker-Elect Elijah Haahr (R-Springfield) laid out their legislative priorities for the 2018 session. Speaker Richardson’s priorities include a lobbyist gift ban, lessening regulations on small business owners, reductions in human trafficking, and tax policy reform. Speaker-Elect Haahr’s priorities include tax reform, elimination of occupational licensing restrictions, repair and repaving of infrastructure, education, and utility grid modernization.
- Governor Eric Greitens will deliver the 2018 State of the State address at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 10th. If you would like to hear the address, please go to the Missouri House website <http://www.house.mo.gov> and click on the Live Debate link.

BILLS FILED OF INTEREST

HB 1850 - **McCreery, Tracy(D)** - Modifies the membership of the Clean Water Commission.

HB 1878 - **Miller, Rocky(R)** - Establishes the Rate Case Modernization Act, relating to rate making for gas corporations.

HB 1912 - **Brattin, Rick(R)** - Changes the laws regarding tax increment financing and transportation development districts.

HB 1928 - **Ross, Robert(R)** - Changes the laws relating to professional registration.

SB 835 - **Rowden, Caleb(R)** - Establishes legislative procedures for regulating previously unregulated professions.

UPCOMING COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Senate – Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy and the Environment

WEDNESDAY - 01/10/18

1:00 PM, Senate Lounge

SB 564 - **Emery, Ed(R)** - Modifies provisions relating to public utilities rate adjustments outside normal rate proceedings for investor-owned utilities.

MAJOR DATES OF INTEREST

January 2018

10 – State of State Address

15 – Martin Luther King Holiday — No Session

March 2018

- 1 – Last Day to File Senate Bills (Rule 48)
- 15 – Last Day to Place Senate Consent Bills on the Senate Calendar (Rule 45)
- 15 – Spring Break Begins Upon Adjournment
- 26 – Legislature Will Reconvene

April 2018

- 2 – Easter Holiday — No Session
- 12 – Last Day to Place House Consent Bills on the Senate Calendar (Rule 45)

May 2018

- 11 – Last Day for Floor Action on Appropriation Bills
- 18 – Last Day of Session (Article III, Section 20(a), Const.)