

Over the course of the seventy-four day legislative session, 1,936 bills were filed by members of the House and Senate. Of those, 139 bills were Truly Agreed To And Finally Passed and will be sent to Governor Matt Blunt for his signature or veto.

As the last week of session progressed intra-party, as well as partisan disagreements in the House became evident and put a halt on much of the action one would anticipate. Most progress on bills also stalled in the Senate on Thursday as a filibuster ensued over opposition to the repeal of 2007 village law legislation. Several Senate members including the bill sponsor, Senator Jack Goodman, felt that a number of members in opposition to repealing the village law struck a deal with the repeal's primary opponent, Speaker of the House Rod Jetton. It was also rumored that the intent of the filibuster was to force action on the immigration bill in the House. Unlike last year, the Senate refrained from using the parliamentary step of cutting off debate to push through desired legislation. The House on the other hand reached an all time high on the number of times the parliamentary step was used to force a vote. Compromise in the Senate was reached around 4 a.m. Friday, which opened the door to a rush of movement on other legislation between the House and Senate.

Some of the prominent items Truly Agreed To And Finally Passed this session include repeal of the village law, illegal immigration reform, repeal of campaign contribution limits, property tax reform, consumer fraud protection, monitoring procedures for over-the-counter drugs used to produce meth, an extension and expansion of the Missouri Quality Jobs Act and an incentive package that could trigger Bombardier, an aircraft manufacturing company, to invest \$400 million into building a passenger jet assembly plant at the KCI Airport that would employ approximately 2,100 people and offer up to \$240 million in tax credits over eight years, beginning in 2013.

A few of the prominent issues brought forth and defeated this session include a minimum wage fix, proof of citizenship when seeking to vote in a public election (Voter ID), Insure Missouri, repeal of the Missouri Non-Partisan Court Plan and a helmet law repeal for individuals over the age of 21.

Following are the summaries of the bills, which were Truly Agreed To And Finally Passed this legislative session. If there are specific questions or if you would like to review one of the bills in printed form, we urge you to go to the Missouri General Assembly web site at www.moga.state.mo.us. You may download a copy of the Truly Agreed To And Finally Passed versions of the legislation from this site. The bills that did not pass this legislative session can also be accessed from this website.

WHAT PASSED

Property Tax – SB 711 (Gibbons)

Legislation requiring every political subdivision in a reassessment year to roll back its prior year's tax rate regardless of whether the political subdivision was levying the tax at its tax rate ceiling received final approval on the last day of session. Several representatives including Joe Aull and Maynard Wallace urged fellow House members to vote no on the legislation indicating it was deeply flawed and would have unintended consequences on school districts and taxpayers. The bill will also require voter-approved property tax rate increases to be applied to a political subdivision's most recent total assessed valuation and increases the Senior Citizen Property Tax Credit from \$750 to \$1,100, and expands those eligible to include homeowners with an income of up to \$30,000 for singles and \$40,000 for married couples.

Alternative Certification – SB 1066 (Ridgeway)

Legislation establishing an alternative certification route was signed by Governor Matt Blunt in early May. The bill requires the State Board of Education to issue an initial four-year teaching certificate to an individual

who completes certification with the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, except in the areas of special education, early childhood and elementary education. The candidates will be required to complete 60 contact hours in specified activities. To be eligible for a career continuous certificate, candidates must complete 30 hours of professional development within four years, two years in an approved mentoring program, have a successful performance-based teacher evaluation and participate in a beginning teacher assistance program. The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education to present a proposed delineation of the programs to be funded in the areas of critical need to the Joint Committee on Education. The Committee will review and approve the spending proposal before any disbursements are made.

Rebuild Missouri Schools Program – SB 1170 (Mayer)

A program which will allow no-interest funding to rebuild certain damaged school facilities was also passed on Friday with an emergency clause. The bill gives school districts with one or more school facilities declared a disaster area by the Governor or President the opportunity to apply for no-interest loans through a 20-year repayment agreement.

A+ Schools Program – HB 2191 (Nasheed)

Unaccredited and provisionally accredited school districts will be eligible to participate in the A+ School Program. The bill clarifies that a school district may participate regardless of its accreditation status by the State Board of Education if the district meets all other requirements. The Kids' Chance Scholarship Fund, which receives a yearly \$50,000 transfer from workers' compensation premiums, was also extended until 2018. The transfer was scheduled to end this year.

Military Children – HB 1678 (Day)

A bill that includes several provisions to facilitate the education of dependent military children was also passed last week. One of the provisions will allow these children who do not meet our state's age requirements to enter kindergarten or first grade if the child has completed an accredited pre-kindergarten or kindergarten program in another state. It also authorizes the State Board of Education to develop recommendations regarding alternate assessments for military dependents who relocate to Missouri during the school year and requires the Board to establish a rule to allow the issuance of a provisional teacher's certificate before the completion of a background check to the spouse of a military member who holds a teacher's certificate in another state that requires a background check and who has relocated within the last year.

Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder – SB 768 (Rupp)

Under this bill, the Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders will be established within the Department of Mental Health to advise and make recommendations regarding all levels of Autism Spectrum Disorder services. A report of the preliminary findings and recommendations to the General Assembly is anticipated by July 1, 2009.

WHAT DID NOT PASS

Considerable time and energy was spent early in the legislative session to defeat special education voucher bills. The harmful provisions contained in HB 1886 (Scharnhorst) and SB 993 (Crowell) were eventually added to a HCS for HB 2040 (Jetton), which contained the original minimum teacher's salary language. Several other controversial provisions were also added in the substitute including salary stipends and performance pay incentives. The bill was debated on April 9 for nearly 5 hours where 12 amendments were offered of which 10 were adopted including one that removed the tax credit voucher section from the bill. It became unclear if House leadership would bring the bill back up for discussion as House Majority Floor Leader Steven Tilley reiterated his intent to keep the bill on hold unless the voucher language was included. The bill was not brought back up for further consideration.

Throughout the last week of the legislative session it became more difficult to determine which education related bills would be brought forward for consideration. A Senate Substitute for the education omnibus bill (HB 1722 – Wallace) found its way to the Senate floor for debate late in the week where 21 amendments were

offered of which nine were adopted. In consideration of other priorities, the bill was ultimately laid over after nearly five hours of debate.

With HB 2040 on hold due to the voucher language being removed, it also became unclear if the teachers' minimum salary initiative would move forward as a separate piece of legislation or as an amendment on another education related bill. Senator Jeff Smith drafted a lengthy amendment, which he intended to offer during the debate on HB 1722. The amendment included a slightly different version of the minimum salary schedule language in addition to other provisions including salary stipends. However, the amendment was ultimately withdrawn.

One piece of harmful legislation that stalled in the Senate during the last week of session was HJR 70 (Icet) better known as "TABOR" or the "Taxpayer Bill of Rights." The bill was met with considerable opposition during a Senate Committee hearing, but was ultimately voted "Do Pass." There seemed to be speculation over the last two days of session that a deal had been struck on a SB in the House with the condition that HJR 70 be granted a small portion of time for debate in the Senate without the expectation of it being brought to a vote. Needless to say, the bill was not brought forward for consideration.

In response to a Missouri Supreme Court ruling which provided that teachers and other public employees have a constitutional right to engage in collective bargaining, several bills were filed in an attempt to clarify the how bargaining units will operate within our school districts. Bills were filed on behalf of both Missouri National Educational Association and Missouri School Teachers Association. Cooperating School Districts of St. Louis testified in support of MSTTA's version of the legislation (HB 2059 – Kevin Wilson), which set up representative councils made up of all teacher associations and prohibited striking and binding arbitration. The Senate Education Committee completed its hearing on a HCS for HB 2059 on May 7, but no motion was made to vote the bill out of committee after the hearing was completed. Similar legislation is likely to be filed next year.

HJR 43 (Portwood) was also stalled in the Senate thanks to efforts of those in opposition to the resolution. CSD – St. Louis expressed their concern with two of the provisions including one to remove the M&M Surtax, which would result in significant losses in revenues to school districts, particularly in metropolitan areas. The second dealt with language that would be added to the State Constitution that would essentially allow general laws to exempt certain forms of personal property from taxation thereby increasing the burden on local taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the much needed provision providing a motor fuel tax exemption for school buses was removed from the transportation omnibus bill (SB 930 – Stouffer) during Conference Committee as a result of the associated fiscal note. On a brighter note, however, the driver's license language originally included in Representative Hubbard's HB 2078 was also stripped from the Conference Committee Report. The school bus endorsement language, which waives renewal fees for applicants age 70 and over was retained in SB 930, which was Truly Agreed To And Finally Passed on Friday, May 16.