

Missouri Budget Project E-News

State Policy Update

March 1, 2010

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1. **Budget bills progress**

There are no posted meetings of the Budget Committee at this time, but it is expected to meet this week to discuss bills put together by Chair Allen Ictet. It is likely that these bills will contain some of the recommendations made by the Appropriations Committees. The next step will be for the Budget Committee to offer amendments to the bills (a process called mark-up) presented by Chair Ictet. This will likely take place after the spring break, which begins this Thursday. Once the Chair's bills are available, the Missouri Budget Project will provide a summary and suggest ways to take action to assure that the budget reflects Missourians priorities.

2. **Update on Mega Sales Tax**

SJR 29 (Purgason) is on the informal Senate calendar and could be taken up at any time. It appears that there may be a substitute offered by SJR29. Rather than tweak a harmful idea, the Missouri Budget Project believes it would be better to defeat SJR29 outright. **Please contact your Senator (find their contact information at www.senate.mo.gov) and Senator Pro Tem Shields and urge them to oppose this constitutional amendment.**

SJR29 is a constitutional amendment that will greatly expand the state sales tax and eliminate individual and corporate income taxes. **The most recent MBP analysis indicates that the sales tax would need to increase to 11 percent to cover the costs in the bill.** Analyses and fact sheets that show how this proposal would affect seniors and families can be found on the Missouri Budget Project web site.

3. **Update on health care bills**

A substitute bill for **HB1918 (Sater)** is expected to be discussed by the Health Care Policy Committee on Wednesday, 3/3, but it is not posted at this time. HB1918 has been improved by removing a limit on personal care attendant hours, but there are still concerns about the effect of this bill on the health care services provided to low income Missourians and those with a disability. See information below.

The House Insurance Policy Committee will hold hearings on three bills (see information below). **HB1625 (Nance)** will improve outreach to parents of children eligible, but not enrolled in for the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid.

HB1964 (Ervin), which would likely increase the number of individuals participating in the High Risk Pool, will be heard on Wednesday. See information below. The high risk pool is currently unaffordable for many of those eligible.

4. **Other bills of interest**

SB1000 (Green), which will transfer stated amounts of money from 23 funds to the general revenue fund, will be heard this week. See information below.

5. **Committee hearings scheduled**

In the House

Tuesday, 3/2

The Health Care policy will likely take up a substitute for **HB1918 (Sater)** at noon on 3/2 in HR6.

The Insurance Policy Committee will hear **HB1625 (Nance)** at noon on 3/2 in HR 7.

The Healthcare Transformation Committee will hear **HB1694 (Ervin)** at 5 PM on 3/2 in HR6.

Other hearings will likely be posted later in the week.

In the Senate

Wednesday, 3/3

The Appropriations Committee will hear **SB1000 (Green)** at 8 AM on 3/3 in SCR2

Other hearings will likely be posted later in the week.

6. Inside scoop on the budget: Join a discussion in Springfield!

Strengthening Resources for Missouri Families & Our Economy

You've seen the headlines

- ✓ \$590 Million in state budget cuts so far this fiscal year
- ✓ Missouri unemployment stands at 9.5 percent
- ✓ Projected state revenue shortfalls of \$450 million for fiscal year 2011

Now learn more about Missouri's current budget situation and discuss how we can create opportunities to move Missouri forward.

PLEASE JOIN US

Thursday, March 11

Southwest Center for Independent Living

Penny's Place Community Room

2864 South Nettleton

Springfield, MO 65807

11:30 am – 1 pm

Lunch will be provided and there is no cost to attend this meeting.

Please RSVP by March 5th to: civeson@policyworks.biz, and indicate any need for meeting accommodations or accessible materials.

This event is co-hosted by the following organizations:

Association for the Education of Young Children, Missouri Chapter, Child Care Resource and Referral, Council of Churches of the Ozarks, Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri, Missouri Association for Social Welfare, Missouri Budget Project, Missouri Health Advocacy Alliance, Missouri Jobs with Justice's Public Good Project, NAACP Springfield, Missouri Branch, Southwest Center for Independent Living