



Governmental Services Group

This week in the Missouri Capitol, the congressional redistricting map has been the main political football passed around. The Missouri House rejected the congressional map proposed by the Senate this morning, again requesting a conference.

This follows events Wednesday where the Senate's conservative caucus threatened to stall the rest of the Senate's remaining floor time over the maps. They rejected the House's original offer to go to conference, hoping the House would approve the Senate's version of the map while declining to negotiate. The Thursday morning vote in the House was 26-129 against the Senate map, and then quickly voted to request a conference. The Senate, however, had already gone home which ensures at least another week of session where the congressional map is front and center.

The 6-2 versus 7-1 conversation at this point is all political showmanship. The truth is that there are a ton of state representatives and senators with higher ambitions, paired with sitting congressmen and congresswomen that are trying to preserve favorable districts. Most in Jefferson City still fully expect this to go to the courts and wonder how a Republican majority in both chambers and the Governor's mansion allowed this to transpire the way it has.

Meanwhile, the House took up the budget early this morning for mark ups. Roughly \$1.1 billion has been cut from the Governor's recommendation to the chagrin of many legislators. The budget is already very far behind the typical process due to the influx of federal funding via the American Rescue Plan. At this point the budget will not be passed by the House and sent to the Senate before April. Given the slow pace of policy items and the redistricting fight, re-writing the House budget by Senators is likely to eat up a lot of time and cause further chaos. We will continue to keep you updated on the latest in Jefferson City.

Tobacco 21

SB 1158, sponsored by Senator Brown, modifies provisions relating to tobacco products. Under this act, no person shall sell, provide, or distribute tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, or vapor products in this state to an individual under the age of 21. Additionally, the state's laws shall preempt any local laws, ordinances, orders, rules, or regulations enacted by a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the state regulating the sale of tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, or vapor products. This bill had a hearing in the Senate Families Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

Testifying in support of the bill was Missouri Smoke Free, Missouri Grocers Association, and Missouri Retailers Association.

In opposition to the bill was the American Cancer Society, Missouri Hospital Association, American Heart Association, Missouri State Medical Association, and Missouri Municipal League.

Covid-19 Vaccine

HB 1686, sponsored by Representative Hardwick, creates provisions relating to the right to refuse the COVID-19 vaccine and medical treatment. This bill states that no public entity as defined in Section 290.210, RSMo, political subdivision, public school district, state department or agency, public official, peace officer, or any person appointed by the Governor acting in an official and public capacity under such appointment may require for employment a COVID-19 vaccination or otherwise impose a fine, tax, or criminal or civil penalty based on a person's COVID-19 vaccination status. An employee shall be exempt from an employer's requirement to receive medical treatment, as defined in the bill, and free from adverse action by the employer if the employee claims a religious objection or has received a recommendation from a licensed physician not to receive the required medical treatment. This bill was voted out of Committee DO PASS.

Masking Ordinances

HB 1960, sponsored by Representative Murphy, creates provisions relating to masking requirements. This bill was voted out of the House Judiciary Committee this week DO PASS.

Link to bill summary: <https://house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills221/sumpdf/HB1960I.pdf>

Immunizations

HB 2009, sponsored by Representative Pollock, makes changes to existing statute regarding immunization requirements. Currently, immunization requirements apply to children attending private, parochial, or parish schools. This bill removes such schools from immunization requirements, and instead applies immunization requirements to just public schools. The bill

prohibits the Department of Health and Senior Services from promulgating rules regarding immunization requirements for any immunization not specifically listed in the bill. The bill allows a student to attend school if he or she can provide evidence of acquired immunity.

The bill clarifies that a student at a public elementary or secondary education school, a public institution of higher education, or a daycare can attend school by submitting a written religious or conscientious belief statement or submitting a religious or conscientious belief exemption form developed by the Department subjected to the description of the form in the bill; the school or daycare cannot require any additional conditions before accepting the exemption.

Currently, students of public institutions of higher education residing in on-campus housing are required to get a meningococcal vaccine. This bill changes that requirement to require the vaccine only for students living in publicly-owned property.

Currently, immunization requirements apply to a child attending private or parochial daycare centers, preschool, or nursery schools caring for 10 or more children. This bill removes such schools from immunization requirements, and instead applies the requirements to all public daycare centers, preschools, or nursery schools.

Current law also requires immunizations for such children against any preventable childhood illness specified by the Department; this bill changes the immunization requirement to the same illnesses required to be vaccinated against for public school children.

Currently, a child who does not receive medical treatment for the sole reason of the legitimate practice of religious beliefs of the child's parents cannot be found to be an abused or neglected child. The bill says that a child not receiving immunizations due to religious or conscientious beliefs of the child's parents, cannot be a contributing factor for a finding of abuse or neglect. Additionally, a child not receiving immunizations cannot be a contributing factor in the Children's Division's decision to accept a report of abuse or neglect or to investigate or conduct a family assessment.

HB 2009 has been placed on the formal perfection calendar.

MO HealthNet Eligibility

SB 935, sponsored by Senator Author, modifies provisions relating to annual income and eligibility verification for MO HealthNet by repealing language requiring the Family Support Division to annually send a re-verification letter to a recipient and receiving the recipient's response within 10 days. This act requires the Division to follow federal regulations for the eligibility redetermination and renewal process, which includes making the determination based on information to which the Division may already have access rather than requiring information from the recipient.

This bill was voted out of Senate Committee DO PASS.