



Budget Advances Through House Committee

Committee Rejects Funding for Medicaid Expansion

The House Budget Committee passed the bills that comprise the SFY 2022 operating budget after hours of debate and amendments Thursday evening. On Monday, Budget Chair Cody Smith (R-Carthage) released his substitute versions of the budget bills. The committee then made additional modifications before passing out the bills.

In the current version of the budget, additional funding was added to better support foster families, including \$1.3 million to boost the monthly allocation for fostering infants, \$1.2 million to increase clothing allowances for kids in foster care, and \$12.8 million to increase monthly payments to foster families. Over \$2 million was added for a pay-for-performance program to reduce recidivism, and \$575,000 was included for officer safety equipment grants for local law enforcement. In committee, funds were added to conduct a disparity study based on new census data and to apply for a federal grant to provide farmers market vouchers to low-income mothers and children.

The Governor's budget recommendations included numerous increases for the Department of Mental Health. Parson's budget contained funding to expand mental health care homes, increase the number of community mental health liaisons, and create crisis stabilization centers to divert individuals with behavioral health needs from jails or emergency departments. Funding for these items was removed in the Chair's substitute budget bills.

The most significant debate in committee was around funding for Medicaid Expansion. In August 2020, voters approved a constitutional amendment to increase Medicaid eligibility for adults 19 to 64 to 133% of the federal poverty level, as outlined in the Affordable Care Act. This is expected to bring over 230,000 new adult Missourians into the program. Budget Chair Smith, who remains opposed to Expansion, moved the funding into a new bill, HB 20. This bill was voted down by the Budget Committee along party lines. Democrats contended Expansion is a sound investment for the state, and attempting to derail funding contradicts the will of the voters. Republicans argued that Expansion's passage did not obligate the Legislature to allocate funding and that extending eligibility would be costly for the state long term.

On Friday, Smith filed HB 21, a new budget bill that spends the money originally allocated for Expansion in HB 20. It restores some of the mental health funding proposed by the Governor, boosts the school transportation line, and increases money for the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

This is the first of many steps for the budget bills in the legislative process. The House will debate the bills on the floor this week, and then the budget will move to the Senate for consideration.

Dates of Interest

January

- **6** - First Day of Session
- **18** - No Session, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **27** - State of the State Address

March

- **1** - Bill Filing Deadline
- **12** - Legislative Spring Break Begins
- **22** - Legislature Reconvenes

April

- **5** - No Session, Easter Break

May

- **7** - Budget Bills Must be Passed
- **14** - Last Day of Session

Senate Defeats Local Public Health Bill

After an all-night filibuster, the Senate defeated legislation to limit the authority of local public health entities. SB 12, sponsored by Senator Bob Onder (R-St. Charles), was one of many bills filed in response to the perceived overreach of public health officials during COVID-19, especially related to business shutdown orders and occupancy limits.

As introduced on the floor, SB 12 would limit the length of public health orders that restrict business operations or other gatherings to 15 days without a vote of the governing body. Orders could be extended for additional periods with a two-thirds vote of the governing body. The legislation also creates a property tax reduction for non-residential property impacted by shutdown orders or occupancy restrictions.

The measure was defeated 19 to 11 on a roll call vote early in the morning. The Senate's ten Democrats were joined by nine Republicans to oppose SB 12's passage.

The lead House local public health bill, HB 75, sponsored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-St. Louis), passed that Chamber 114 to 44. It will be heard in the Senate Health and Pensions Committee, which Senator Onder chairs, on Wednesday.

News in Brief

- Governor Mike Parson issued an Executive Order extending the COVID-19 state of emergency through August 31, 2021. A state of emergency related to the pandemic was first declared on March 13, 2020. Extending the order allows regulatory flexibilities to remain in place and permits continued use of the National Guard.
- The Governor announced the creation of the Show Me Strong Recovery Task Force. The Task Force's role will be to study and develop recommendations on mechanisms to support small businesses throughout Missouri. The group will submit its findings to the Governor's office by the end of the year.
- The House Health and Mental Health Policy Committee is scheduled to consider legislation permitting pharmacists to prescribe and dispense insulin, inhalers, and epinephrine auto-injectors. The bill is HB 1428, sponsored by Representative Bennie Cook (R-Houston).
- On Tuesday, the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee will hear HB 465,

sponsored by Representative Patricia Pike (R-Adrian). Under current law, educators can count training on suicide prevention toward their professional development hours. This bill would require such trainings to include information on stress reduction strategies for faculty and students.

- The Senate General Laws Committee will hear two firearm bills that were passed by the House. HB 85, sponsored by Representative Jered Taylor (R-Nixa), would create the Second Amendment Preservation Act and declare certain types of federal gun laws void in Missouri. HB 52, sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles), would permit conceal carry firearms on public transportation.
- SB 16, sponsored by Senator Jill Schupp (D-St. Louis), would require certain employers to offer unpaid leave to employees if they, or a family member, were the victim of domestic or sexual violence. This bill will be heard in the Senate Committee on Small Business this week.



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