



WINTON POLICY GROUP

House Gives Initial Approval to Narcotics Control Act

HB 1693 Would Create a Statewide Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

The House perfected legislation, also known as the Narcotics Control Act, to enact a statewide prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) in Missouri. Missouri remains the only state without a statewide PDMP. However, over 80% of Missourians are covered by the St. Louis County PDMP, which has grown as other jurisdictions have elected to join.

HB 1693, sponsored by Representative Holly Rehder (R-Scott City), would create a statewide PDMP administered by the Department of Health and Senior Services. The bill requires dispensers to electronically submit information regarding each dispensation of a Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance. Prescribers would have access to view this information when making decisions about appropriate medications and dosage for patients.

Supporters contend this will help prescribers and dispensers identify patients who may be at risk for counteracting medications or substance misuse. The bill has been blocked for numerous years in the Senate over privacy and government overreach concerns. PDMP is again expected to face a filibuster by the Conservative Caucus in the Senate this year.

In the House, the bill was perfected by a 95 to 65 vote after an all-day debate. Two amendments were offered to the bill but defeated. The first amendment would require patients seeking controlled substances for pain to have two physicians from different practices deem the prescription necessary. The second amendment offered would sunset the PDMP after five years if overdose deaths increased by 5% during that time period.

A final roll call vote is required for HB 1693 to move to the Senate.

Dates of Interest

January

- **8** - First Day of Session
- **15** - State of the State Address
- **20** - No Session, Martin Luther King Jr. Day

March

- **20** - Legislative Spring Break Begins
- **30** - Legislature Reconvenes

April

- **13** - No Session, Easter Break

May

- **8** - Budget Bills Must be Passed
- **15** - Last Day of Session

Senate Perfects Criminal Offenses Bill

The Senate perfected legislation to increase penalties for certain violent crimes. SB 600, sponsored by Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville), is part of the Republican response to rising gun violence in Missouri.

Under current law, unlawful possession of a firearm is a Class D felony. This is punishable by up to seven years in prison. SB 600 would increase the penalty for unlawful firearm possession to a Class C felony, which carries a term of three to 10 years in prison.

Another significant change in SB 600 is increasing minimum penalties for individuals found guilty of armed criminal action. Currently, this carries a term of imprisonment of at least three years for the first offense, five years for the second, and ten for subsequent offenses. Under this bill, the prison term for armed criminal action would be three to 15 years for the first offense, 5 to 30 years for the second offense, and at least 10 years for additional offenses. Moreover, individuals convicted of armed criminal action would not be eligible for probation, parole, or a suspended sentence until they served the minimum statutory sentence.

The bill also creates the crime of vehicle hijacking, which would be defined as using or threatening force to take control of a vehicle. Without aggravating circumstances, vehicle hijacking would be a Class B felony, which is punishable by five to 15 years in prison.

SB 600 requires a final roll call vote in the Senate to move to the House.

News in Brief

- The Office of Administration announced the hire of Mark Waight as the state's Director of Operational Excellence. In this role Waight will guide continuous improvement and performance management programs across the state's departments. Waight previously worked as Director of Operational Excellence for Edward Jones.
- The State Board of Education approved the sixth iteration of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) standards. This program has been used to evaluate public schools since 1990. MSIP 6 includes six categories: leadership, effective teaching and learning, collaborative climate and culture, data-based decision making, alignment of curriculum and assessments to standards, and equity and access.
- The House Professional Registration Committee heard HB 2125, sponsored by Representative Chris Dinkins (R-Annapolis). This bill adds physician assistants to statutes related to staffing ambulances.
- The Senate Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure, and Public Safety heard two bills on firearms, both sponsored by Senator Eric Burlison (R-Springfield). SB 588 declares all federal laws that infringe on the Second Amendment to be void in Missouri. SB 663 repeals the statutory prohibition on conceal carry in certain locations, such as churches, amusement parks, and hospitals.
- The House General Laws Committee is scheduled to hear HB 2173, sponsored by Representative Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles). This bill replaces marriage licenses with domestic union contracts.
- The Senate Judiciary Committee is hearing SB 824, sponsored by Senator Wayne Wallingford (R-Cape Girardeau), on Monday. Under this bill, a youth between the ages of 12 and 18 may be tried as an adult for the offenses of unlawful weapon use and armed criminal action.