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Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - March 13, 2015

MARCH 14TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - March 13, 2015

151st District, Missouri - Capitol News

State Operating Budget Receives House Approval

After more than six hours of debate Tuesday and several more hours Thursday, the Missouri House gave its stamp of approval to the 13 appropriations bills that make up the state operating budget for Fiscal Year 2016. Checking in at slightly more than \$26.1 billion, the state spending plan that will begin in July of this year boosts funding for several vital state programs including our systems of K-12 and higher education, and services to some of our state's most vulnerable citizens. In many cases, we were able to increase funding beyond what the governor recommended in his budget proposal he submitted in January. Some highlights of the budget work completed this week are listed below:

\$74.2 million increase for Foundation Formula that provides funding for our K-12 public schools;

\$5 million increase for Early Childhood Special Education;

Nearly \$2.5 million in new funding for the Parents as Teachers program;

\$12 million increase for performance funding for Missouri's public institutions of higher education;

\$6 million increase for equity funding for Missouri's two-year colleges;

\$2 million increase for the A+ schools program;

\$1 million increase for autism regional projects;

\$7.2 million appropriated for the MOST intervention model for children who are trauma victims;
\$16.3 million in funding for MoHealthnet adult dental benefits;
\$13.7 million in funding for the Show-Me Healthy Babies program

The House version of the budget also restores funding to several programs that were targeted for core reductions by the governor. These include:

Elks mobile dental program - \$200,000 restored
Brain injury waiver services - \$350,000 restored
Area Health Education Centers - \$250,000 restored
Newborn screenings - \$191,400 restored
Area Agencies on Aging - Meals on Wheels - \$400,000 restored
Alzheimer's grants - \$50,000 restored
Community Health Access Programs - \$1 million restored
Medical and Behavioral health homes for foster kids - \$250,000 restored
Asthma-related services - \$400,000 restored
Regional care coordination - \$200,000 restored
Utilicare funding - \$4 million restored
Victims of sexual violence services - \$500,000 restored
Social innovation grants - \$1 million restored

These are just a few of the highlights of the balanced, fiscally responsible budget that is now on its way to the Missouri Senate. We will likely see changes made in the other chamber as they move the 13 appropriations bills through a process similar to the one they underwent in the House. Any changes made in the Senate will have to be approved, or negotiated in conference committees, before the budget is finalized and sent to the governor for approval.

House Gives Initial Approval to Legislation to Stop Bullying in School (HB 458)

While budget discussion took up most of our time this week, we also were able to debate and give first-round approval to legislation designed to promote a safer environment for students in our K-12 public schools. The bill would require our school districts to strengthen their policies against bullying. Some of the provisions in the bill would take steps like requiring schools to establish a procedure for reporting and promptly investigating acts of bullying, as well as adding the definition of "cyberbullying" in an effort to stop some of the bullying that occurs through social media and text messages.

We realize this legislation won't put a stop to bullying in our schools, but we do believe it is a positive step toward promoting a safer, more stable environment for our young people. The need for such steps was emphasized just a few weeks ago when a 12-year-old boy with Asperger's syndrome was bullied and beaten while at Liberty Middle School near Kansas City. The boy, whose older brother had also been the subject of attacks by the same bully, ended up with a broken jaw and fractured skull. This tragic story is a reminder that bullying does happen in our schools, and sometimes results in serious physical injury.

It may not be possible to prevent bullying or stop bad behavior, but we are committed as a legislative body to doing what we can to deter these kinds of acts in order to prevent similar tragedies from happening in the future. The bill, which is a positive step toward that goal, now requires one more positive vote in the House before moving to the Senate.

In District News:

Free Tax Preparation is available at Cox's Corner (in Dexter) from 8am to 3pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. This is offered by the Missouri Extension Service.

Upcoming District Schedule:

Friday 03-13-15

Advance area and Advance Senior Center at noon

Announcements:

New scholarship opportunity, for more information go to:

http://missouri.wgu.edu/tuition_financial_aid/scholarships/believe_in_missouri_overview

Lt. Governor Peter Kinder is looking for Outstanding Seniors. If you know of an Outstanding Senior, one who is at least 60 years old and volunteers at least 25 hours over the last year in the community, please nominate this individual by calling 573-751-4727 or email at ltgovinfo@ltgov.mo.gov.

Dexter-Richland Parents as Teachers is preparing for their annual KidFest/5K Strollerthon. If you would like to participate, please call 573-614-1004 for more information. It will be held on Saturday March 28th!!

Stoddard County Head Start Enrollment begins Monday, March 2nd. The child must be 3 years old by July 31st. For more information, call 573-624-8876.

There will be a SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) Training on April 9th at 6:30pm. This will be held at Cox's Corner in Dexter. Childcare Providers will have an opportunity to earn 1 CEU at the completion of this training.

Dexter Public Library is gearing up for the summer reading program, the theme this summer will be Every Hero Has a Story. You may call the Library for more information. The Mother 2 Mother Program, Patents and Teachers and Southeast Building Blocks has teamed together and received a grant to reduce Infant Mortality. This program will allow for the earning of a limited number of free cribs to parents of infants. If you would like more information, please call 573-614-1004 or 573-820-3021.

If you have an event that you would like to be listed in the Capitol Report, please email me at tila.hubrecht@house.mo.gov or louie.bench@house.mo.gov.

If you would like to set up an appointment to meet with me while I am In-District on the weekends, please call my office at (573)751-1494 or my cell at (573)820-6052. I will be glad to arrange a meeting with you or a group of people!

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Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - March 6, 2015

Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - March 6, 2015

151st District, Missouri - Let it Not snow! Let it Not snow! Let it Not snow! Winter is going out roaring like a Lion but thankfully the forecast is warming up! We are also warming up and moving a lot of legislation for the State of Missouri. Committee work is in full swing. We are hearing several bills on the House floor and sending some over to the Senate. Next week will be budget bills. I expect floor debate will be lively. My first bill HB 705 will be heard this next week in Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy. It deals with MO HealthNet managed care organizations; to allow eligible recipients to combine all available healthy behavior incentives toward the purchase of certain categories of infant and childcare items such as car seats and other safety items.

Twice this week, our session schedule was changed. Monday, many legislators and I went to Fort Leonard Wood, to show support for the base as the Army had officials at a hearing post on the future of the fort. Missouri had a huge presence in elected officials, Governor Nixon, Senators Claire McCaskill, Roy Blunt, Congresswoman Vicki Hartzler, and almost 80 of my colleagues in the Missouri House and Senate were in attendance. I will add that when the community made its case to keep the fort they talked about things to do in Missouri and how the base is capable of expanding to meet whatever need the military may have. Every community in Missouri will be effected if we lose Fort Leonard Wood. We must support a strong military and keep our training facilities in place. We must send a strong message to Washington!

I'm proud of my colleagues for taking a stand in support of the men and women of our Armed Forces. Right now, Fort Leonard Wood is facing the threat of losing 5,400 jobs at the base. The proposed cuts are part of the federal government's efforts to cut the military workforce by 14 percent. While we understand the need for the budget reductions, we also know such a drastic cut to the workforce would be extremely harmful to the communities around Fort Leonard Wood, and to our state's economy. In the weeks and months to come I know we will continue to see the state's leaders work together to do all we can to save these jobs. The thousands of folks who turned out for the listening post this week are testimony to the importance of the base to the surrounding communities and our state. My hope is that we can save these jobs and prevent the devastating impact the cuts would have on Missouri families.

On Tuesday, Auditor Tom Schweich was laid to rest. From our Speaker of the House, John Diehl came these words, "It was with immense sadness that I learned of the tragic passing of our fellow public servant, Tom Schweich. This is a devastating loss for our state as we have now lost a leader and a man of the highest integrity, character and dedication." I would ask all Missourians to pray for the Schweich family as they cope with this terrible outcome.

Even though many things in life happen that we do not understand we must be moved by our willingness to overcome all obstacles. No matter what you are going through you can overcome! I will do everything I can to stand for our great District 151 and unite us with our fellow Districts and continue to push forward this Session what is good for our community. We have a very busy week ahead!

Until next week,

Tila

Capitol News:

Medical Malpractice Reform Bill Receives House Approval (HB 118) - The House moved this week to approve a plan designed to contain ever-escalating medical costs and to keep medical professionals from fleeing our state. The legislation would limit the amount an individual can receive for noneconomic damages in a medical malpractice lawsuit. In effect, it would reinstate the limits that were put in place in 2005 that were then struck down in 2012 by the Missouri Supreme Court, which ruled that a cap on noneconomic damages violates the constitutional right to a jury trial.

Supporters say putting the caps back in place is a necessary step to limit the cost of medical malpractice insurance for physicians. They say keeping costs down is vital to efforts to prevent doctors from leaving Missouri for other states with reasonable limits in place. They also point to the fact the bill would limit only noneconomic damages such as pain and suffering, and not the amount an individual can receive for medical costs or lost wages. The bill approved this week would put in place a \$350,000 limit on noneconomic damages in medical malpractice cases. This is the same limit that existed under the law that was put into place in 2005. Before that change, Missouri had a cap of \$579,000 for noneconomic damages.

House Approves Tax Amnesty Legislation (HB 384)

This week the House passed legislation that could generate as much as an additional \$75 million in revenue for the state budget. These are additional funds that can help to fund vital programs and services that otherwise could be looked at for cuts.

The additional dollars would be generated by a period of tax amnesty that will allow delinquent taxpayers to forego all penalties, additions to tax, and interest on their unpaid taxes if they pay in full. The state has previously authorized tax amnesty periods that brought in approximately \$74 million for fiscal year 2002 and \$42 million for fiscal year 2003. It's important to note that anyone who makes use of the forgiveness procedures must agree to comply with tax laws and cannot use the same amnesty procedure again in future years.

Reducing the Bureaucratic Red Tape for Missouri Businesses (HB 513)

The House also passed legislation this week to make Missouri friendlier to businesses of all sizes. The legislation would reduce the filing fees for businesses throughout Missouri, and make Missouri the state with the lowest business fees in the nation.

Right now, filing fees can vary based on the type of business entity and the type of work being performed. The bill we approved reduces all of the fees and makes them streamlined to \$5 on business filings. These dollars go to the technology trust fund that pays for our state's new online filing system.

One thing we know from talking to businesses all around the state is that they find all of the bureaucratic red tape to be confusing and a substantial obstacle. By cutting some of this tape we can get government even more out of the way so that businesses can freely grow and prosper.

Protecting Missouri's Health Care Workforce (HB 112) - Another piece of legislation passed this week would give Missouri the accurate data it needs to allocate resources and make decisions that will ensure we have a strong health care workforce in the future. While it is a surprise to some, the truth is that Missouri does not have reliable information that will allow us to have relevant discussions about how to grow and retain our workforce of health care professionals.

Missouri is blessed to have six medical schools in our state and we produce a large number of doctors, but from what we know it appears we have not done a good job of keeping many of them in the state. The bill we passed this week will allow our state boards that deal with our medical professions to work together to better collect the data they need. We know that better information will allow the state to make better decisions that address the actual needs of Missourians and the health care professionals who treat them.

Honoring a Great Public Servant (HR 659) - Also this week many of my colleagues made the trip from Jefferson City to Clayton to pay their respects to State Auditor Tom Schweich, who tragically passed away last week. It was a somber and emotional moment as we remembered this man who had worked so hard for our state, and who had such a bright future of service ahead of him. Upon returning to the Capitol, the House met to approve a resolution honoring and memorializing Schweich. As the resolution said, "Schweich's professionalism, passion for civil service, and relentless defense against corruption, waste, and abuse serve as a standard for us all." I know I speak for all of my colleagues in the legislature when I say Schweich was a great public servant who will be dearly missed by both Republicans and Democrats.

Sales Tax Exemption on Manufactured Homes (HB 111) - Bill excludes used manufactured homes from sales and use taxes—which protects young families, seniors, and individuals with low incomes from the burden of sales taxes. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (132-17).

Missouri Health Care Workforce Data (HB 112) - Authorizes the boards responsible for monitoring / licensing health care providers to enter into agreements with DHSS, a public institution of higher education, or a nonprofit entity to collect and analyze health care workforce data. Creating this kind of data set will allow the state to better allocate resources for training, education, and investing in growing our health care workforce. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (142-10)

Audits on Transportation Development Districts (HB777) - Requires the State Auditor to report to DOR any Transportation Development District that fails to timely submit its annual financial statement—penalty is \$500/day (which will be distributed to schools located in the county). It was third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (146-4)

Kansas City Jobs Tax Credit (HB468) - This bill extends a tax credit for development at the Burns and McDonnell headquarters in Kansas City; Burns and McDonnell has generated thousands of jobs in the Kansas City area and is a major target for financial incentives from the State of Kansas. It was third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (106-48)

Missouri's Position on EPA Regulatory Changes (HCR 32) - Expresses to the EPA that Missouri utility customers would be detrimentally affected by the EPA's proposed regulatory changes. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (120-37)

Missouri Lead Industry (SCR 5) - Establishes the Missouri Lead Industry Employment, Economic Development, and Environmental Remediation Task Force. Missouri is America's only reliable source of lead, a vital, strategic mineral. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (145-12)

Logging and Agriculture Distribution (HB 388) - Increases the allowable weight of trucks carrying agricultural products. Increases the maximum distance trucks carrying forest products may travel. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (140-16)

Boat Liquor Licenses (HB 149) - reduces the number of passengers necessary to apply for a boat liquor license from 100 to

30 passengers. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (130-22)

Organ Donor Recognition (HB 88) - Designates July 3rd as “Organ Donor Recognition Day”. Third read and passed by a unanimous, bipartisan majority (147-0)

Engineer Awareness (HB 361) - Designates the third week of February as “Engineer Awareness Week”. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (145-2)

Auto Insurance Cancellation Notices (HB391) - Requires any insurer canceling, refusing to renew, or refusing to write a policy of auto insurance to send written notice by USPS first class mail with intelligent mail barcode. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (147-3)

Epilepsy Awareness (HB400) - Designates November as “Epilepsy Awareness Month”. Third read and passed by a unanimous, bipartisan majority (146-0)

Boating Safety (HB 402) - Designates the first full week of May before Memorial Day as “Missouri Safe Boating Week”. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (148-1)

Peace Officers Memorial (HB 404) - Designates the week of Memorial Day as “Missouri Peace Officers Memorial Week”. Third read and passed by a unanimous, bipartisan majority (148-0)

Autocycles (HB562) - Opens up Missouri roads to this newer, safer, low-cost form of transportation. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (133-15)

School Funding Formula (HB 41) - Removes provisions of the law regarding the school funding formula that are obsolete. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (149-2)

Candidate Placeholders(HB 179) - changes filing procedures so that in the event a candidate withdraws within two days of the filing deadline, that filing will close — allowing the public time to note the change — and then filing will reopen for the following week to allow more candidates to enter the race if they so choose. Third read and passed by a bipartisan majority (150-4)

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Congressman Smith to Tour Bootheel Youth Museum on Monday

MARCH 08TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Smith to Tour Bootheel Youth Museum on Monday

8th Congressional District - On Monday, March 9th, Congressman Jason Smith will tour the Bootheel Youth Museum in Malden.

WHO: Congressman Jason Smith

WHAT: Tour of the Bootheel Youth Museum

WHERE: 700 N. Douglas St, Malden, MO 63863

WHEN: Monday, March 9th, 2015 from 10 – 11 a.m.

“With Missouri nature and Lewis and Clark Trail exhibits, the Bootheel Youth Museum is a great place to learn more about the wildlife and history of our area,” said Congressman Jason Smith. “We are fortunate to have this interactive museum in our own backyard.”

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Sen. Blunt's Staff Hosts Mobile Office in Poplar Bluff

MARCH 02ND 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Sen. Blunt's Staff Hosts Mobile Office in Poplar Bluff

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - U.S. Senator Roy Blunt's staff will host a Mobile Office on Thursday, March 12, 2015 from 1:30pm to 2:30pm at the Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce.

Mobile Offices are opportunities for Missourians to discuss their questions or concerns with the federal government one-on-one with members of Senator Blunt's staff.

Senator Blunt's Columbia office also extends one-on-one service to all Missourians who have an issue with a federal agency or need additional assistance.

To reach the Senator's Office of Constituent Services, please call at (573) 442-8151 or send a letter to 1001 Cherry Street, Suite 104, Columbia, Missouri 65201.

What: Senator Blunt's Staff Hosts Mobile Office

When: Thursday, March 12, 2015 from 1:30pm to 2:30pm CT

Where: Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce
1111 West Pine Street, Poplar Bluff, MO

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Jason Smith's Capitol Report

MARCH 01ST 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report

Spring Cleaning Comes Early with SCRUB Act
Friday, February 27, 2015

When I talk to my colleagues in Washington, D.C., they do not always understand the burdens rural America faces from unnecessary regulations. During my first week in Congress, an “expert witness” told me it was pure fiction that government regulations affect private industry. It felt like the Twilight Zone and is exactly what’s wrong with Washington. Unelected bureaucrats that have never left five square miles around D.C. are trying to regulate every aspect of our lives. From the Environmental Protection Agency’s overreach on wood stoves to the Department of Labor regulating family farms, our rural way of life is under attack. That is why I reintroduced the Searching for and Cutting

Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome Act (SCRUB Act) this week. Ineffective and intrusive federal regulations are still holding back economic opportunity across the country.

My mission with the SCRUB Act is to require a full evaluation of all 175,000-plus pages of the Federal Register and identify outdated and ineffective regulations for removal. We certainly do not need all 175,000 pages of government meddling – that is more than five times longer than the entire set of Encyclopedia Britannica! Streamlining existing rules will lessen regulatory burdens on small businesses and give them the freedom to innovate and grow.

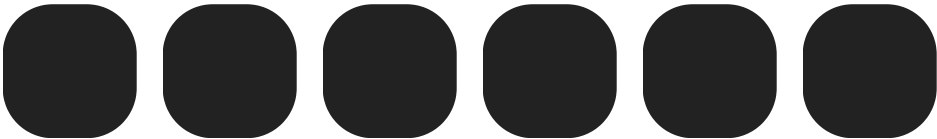
Excessive regulations impose a very real weight on job creators and families. According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses spend an average of \$10,585 per employee each year to comply with federal regulations. This costs Americans \$2.028 trillion in lost economic growth each year, according to the National Association of Manufacturers. Moreover, the Competitive Enterprise Institute found that for each household in America, the price tag of regulation exceeds \$15,000. It’s time for action to reduce these costs on job creators and American families.

While I work to get this bill passed in the House, Senator Orrin Hatch from Utah is introducing the SCRUB Act in the Senate. Together we are fighting to cut Washington’s red tape with common sense reforms that will help hardworking Americans keep more money in their pockets.

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