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# Representative Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report

JANUARY 23RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Representative Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report

Hello to everyone in the 151st District!! Things started off this session at an incredible speed compared to my two prior sessions here.

Committee assignments have already been made and meetings have begun! I am very excited about this as it will give us more time to meet in committee and to hear more testimony on the bills coming before us. I feel our work in committee meetings may be the most important work we do in the Capitol because that is where we can truly research and discuss the pros and cons of the issues coming before the General Assembly.

A little about my committee assignments this session...I will continue to serve on the Joint Committee of Child Abuse and Neglect. We have been able to provide assistance to the Juvenile Department and the Foster Care Program during the past. I will also continue to serve in the Energy area but this committee has been restructured to now include all utilities and is appropriately titled Utilities. I will also be serving on the Budget committee. With the challenges facing our state with the unexpected revenue short fall this will be a committee which will need a lot of time and attention. I will also be serving on the Appropriations committee for General Administration. My final committee is the Special Committee on Employment Securities. I will be serving as the Vice Chair of this committee. I am excited to working with Chair Wanda Brown and to learn from her as we lead this committee.

With all the many issues facing our state and the incredible opportunities before us, please

do not hesitate to call my office to share your thoughts and opinions on how we can best serve this wonderful state! I look forward to hearing from you!

### **Right-to-Work Legislation Gains House Approval**

The House also acted this week to advance legislation meant to spur job creation and economic development in the state. Commonly referred to as Right-to-Work, the bill would simply ensure employees are able to decide whether to join a labor union instead of being forced to join as a condition of employment.

Supporters of Right-to-Work cite Bureau of Labor statistics that show states that have adopted similar legislation have seen employment increase by 13.4 percent between 2002 and 2012. In comparison, employment in states without Right-to-Work grew by only 0.6 percent. Additionally, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Real Personal Income grew by 9.6 percent between 2008 and 2014 in the six Right-to-Work states that border Missouri. In Missouri and its two neighboring non-Right-to-Work states, Real Personal Income grew by just 3.5 percent. Supporters also note that one of the neighboring non-Right-to-Work states, Kentucky, just enacted a Right-to-Work law.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration where it is expected to receive approval. Governor Greitens has already made Right-to-Work one of his top priorities and again emphasized the need to pass the bill during his State of the State Address Tuesday evening.

### **House Set to Reject Proposed Pay Increase**

House members are on track to reject a pay increase proposed by the Citizens' Commission on Compensation for Elected Officials. A resolution that would prevent the pay raises from going into effect cleared the committee process this week and is set for a vote on the House floor next week.

The proposed pay increases are a result of a recommendation by the commission, which meets every two years according to the state constitution to set the compensation for state officials. Once the commission makes its recommendation, it automatically goes into effect unless the legislature rejects the proposal by February 1. It takes a two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate to keep the increases from going into effect.

With its latest recommendation, the commission called for 8 percent raises in both fiscal years 2018 and 2019 for the governor and other statewide elected officials. The panel also recommended raises of roughly 5 percent for lawmakers over the next two fiscal years. The proposed increases would have taken representatives up to an annual salary of \$37,733. Legislators currently make \$35,915 per year. The raises would cost the state about \$470,000 over both fiscal years.

The rejection of the proposed increases received strong bipartisan support during the committee process, and is expected to receive similar support on the House floor.

Members have traditionally rejected pay increases when they have been recommended, and a difficult budget situation makes it even more likely that the legislature will act quickly to prevent taxpayer dollars from being utilized for higher pay for elected officials. As the sponsor of the legislation said, “It’s a proposal our state cannot afford and that does not align with the priorities we have as public servants. Let’s take a stand in defense of all taxpayers by approving HCR 4 so that we can ensure their tax dollars are used to fund the priorities we all share as Missourians.”

### **Missouri House to Consider Resolution Calling for the Confirmation of Scott Pruitt as the Head of the EPA**

Members of the Missouri House of Representatives are advancing a resolution calling on United States Senators to confirm Scott Pruitt as the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

According to his supporters, Pruitt, who currently serves as the Attorney General of Oklahoma, has been a leading opponent of the EPA’s activist agenda and President Obama’s environmental and climate regulations. Members who support his confirmation have said Pruitt will bring the kind of leadership that will put an end to the EPA’s misguided policies of the last eight years that have threatened the livelihood and the very way of life of Missourians and the American people.

The resolution has already drawn the support of many House members, including House Speaker Todd Richardson.

“For years, we have witnessed federal agencies overstepping their lawful authority and making life more and more difficult for employers and employees alike,” said Speaker Richardson. “A decade of this overreach is a big part of the reason that Missourians overwhelmingly supported Donald Trump for president and it’s also why Missourians should be heartened by the president-elect’s choice to run the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – current Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt.”

The resolution is expected to quickly move through the process and receive House approval.

### **Missouri House Hosts Governor Greitens for Annual State of the State Address**

Members of the General Assembly gathered in the House Chamber Tuesday evening to listen to new Governor Eric Greitens share his vision for the direction Missouri should take under his leadership. Greitens delivered the annual State of the State Address with an emphasis on priorities that are largely shared by the members of the Missouri House.

Similar to the Opening Day Address given by the House Speaker, Greitens’ speech focused on the need to make Missouri a Right-to-Work state in order to promote job creation and economic growth. Greitens also echoed the Speaker’s words as he called for a ban on lobbyist gifts to legislators; tort reform to make Missouri’s court system fair for

all litigants; a reduction in the regulatory burden that too often stifles job creation and economic growth; and education reform that includes education savings accounts for children with special needs.

Some of the other areas Greitens highlighted in his speech include a review of the state's tax credit system. The governor promised a comprehensive audit of the tax credit system with a goal of creating a tax code that is fair to all. Greitens also called for the state to do more to support and protect law enforcement officers. The governor said it's time to update standards and training for peace officers, and to ensure officers have the training, resources, and support they need both to protect themselves and to build strong relationships in their communities. Additionally, the governor talked about reforming Missouri's welfare system so that it lifts people out poverty and into the middle class, and so that it is based on hard work and personal responsibility.

The governor did not include any budget recommendations in his address. He is expected to unveil his budget plan during the first week of February.

### **Governor Greitens Announces Budget Restrictions**

Governor Eric Greitens recently announced his decision to restrict spending from the current state operating budget. The new governor was forced to withhold \$146.4 million in spending in order to balance Missouri's budget. The move was necessary because revenues have fallen short of the projections that were used to craft the \$27 billion budget. Among his withholds, Greitens restricted nearly \$68 million in core funding for public universities and community colleges. The funding restrictions also include nearly \$9 million in transportation funding for K-12 education. However, as the governor noted, the restrictions included no cuts to the Foundation Formula that funds K-12 classroom education. As Greitens added, "There were no cuts to programs essential to public safety, and all of the state's pension and health care obligations will also be honored. The restrictions were targeted, to the extent possible, at rolling back earmarks, new spending items, programs with no established track record of success, and services that are duplicated elsewhere in government."

Greitens' restrictions are in addition to the approximately \$200 million in withholdings made by Governor Nixon before leaving office. The House Budget Chairman said he is hopeful that with the restrictions made by Greitens the state will now be positioned to keep the budget balanced and end the fiscal year with enough money to begin the next fiscal year.

### **Capitol Implements New Security Measures**

As a note to Missourians who wish to visit the State Capitol, there are new security measures in place meant to enhance the level of safety and protection for visitors, school children, and those who work in the building. The outgoing and incoming governors

worked with legislative leaders to put these new security measures in place that include additional officers and security personnel and x-ray machines and walk-through magnetometers at some entrances.

The executive branch has said the enhanced security is an effort to ensure firearms and other items that could be used as a dangerous weapon are not entering the building. Searches will be required of all visitors, including lobbyists, contract employees, guests, and members of the media. The only people who will not be searched under the new security measures will be children without backpacks or bags. State employees and people with regular business with credentials will be allowed to enter using their key cards, which are issued by the state department after the person has passed a background check.

It's also important to note that under the current security measures conceal and carry is not allowed in the State Capitol, and anyone with a firearm will be asked to return it to a secure location before entering the building. Knives with a 4-inch blade or longer will not be permitted, along with explosives, signs fixed on poles or standards, and balloons. Anything found that violates the standards can be seized and used as evidence for prosecution under the state's laws.

It's important to understand the security measures have been put in place to protect those who work in and visit the Capitol. Each day hundreds of school children enter the building on class field trips, and visitors from all over the state and the country travel to Jefferson City to experience the beauty of the State Capitol. For years the Capitol has had minimal security that has allowed unfettered access through numerous points of entry. The move to enhance security is not in any way meant to limit public access to the building, but instead meant to ensure all those in the building have a safe environment. By putting the new measures in place the Missouri State Capitol joins more than 40 other state capitol buildings that already have similar security protocols.

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