



CAPITOL REPORT

Dale Wright

**District 116
Missouri House of
Representatives**



COMMITTEES

- *CONSENT & HOUSE PROCEDURES
- *CORRECTIONS AND
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
- *HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH
- *PENSIONS

April 22, 2022



Pro Life March at the Missouri State Capitol

Dear Friends,

The Missouri House Approves Tax Relief Package for Missouri Taxpayers (HB 3021)

Missourians who pay state income taxes are one step closer to receiving substantive relief from their income tax burden. The Missouri House of Representatives this past week approved legislation to create a one-time economic recovery tax credit for Missouri residents who paid personal income taxes in the state for 2021.

Despite the fact the House approved the largest budget in the state's history, after reviewing our financial situation, the state still had billions of dollars left in its coffers.

This is an attempt to offset some of the tax burden for those Missouri state taxpayers at a time when they can use the money much better than the state government can.

HB 3021 appropriates \$1 billion from the state's General Revenue Fund to fund a one-time economic recovery non-refundable tax credit. Under the plan, anyone filing an individual Missouri personal income tax return will receive a credit equal to their tax liability up to \$500. Married couples filing jointly will receive up to a \$1,000 credit.

HB 3021 gives state revenues back to those that paid state taxes. We are in a situation where we have excess revenues in the state treasury and so members of the House felt it was time to give some of those dollars back to those that paid it in, especially when they are facing challenges due to inflation and various economic factors. The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration. It must receive approval from both chambers by Friday, May 6, which is the deadline for all appropriations bills.

The Parents' Bill of Rights Heads to Senate (HB 1858)

Legislation is now on its way to the Senate that will create a Parents' Bill of Rights Act of 2022. **This legislation is about transparency in public education and the fact that parents should be the ultimate authority when it comes to the direction of the education of their children.**

This bill is an answer to those parents and guardians who have concerns about the content of the classroom and classroom materials and what is being put in front of their child in the classroom.

The bill provides a list of rights that parents may require school districts to follow. Some of the parental rights outlined in the bill include the right to review curricula, books and instructional materials; the right to visit school during school hours, with restrictions; and the right to have sufficient accountability and transparency regarding school boards.

The bill restricts schools from collecting biometric data or other sensitive personal information about a minor child without obtaining parental consent. Additionally, it requires school board meetings dealing with curricula or general safety to be in public and allow for public comments.

Additionally, the bill specifies that no school or school employee can compel a teacher or student to personally adopt or affirm ideas in violation of Title IV or Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. This includes ideas such as individuals of any race, ethnicity, color, or national origin are inherently superior or inferior; or that individuals, by virtue of their race, ethnicity, color, or national origin, bear collective guilt and are inherently responsible for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race, ethnicity, color, or national origin.

The bill also allows parents to file a civil lawsuit against a school district or school that violates this Parents' Bill of Rights. Other provisions in the bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop an online database that provides access to every school district's curriculum and professional development materials; requires salaries of public school employees be included in the state accountability portal; and requires school boards to provide a time for an open forum at the beginning of each board meeting, and allows parents to bring civil action against school districts that violate the policy.

Bills Sent to the Senate

HB 3017 re-appropriates approximately \$438 million for misc. ongoing projects around the state that have already been started. **Projects range from renovation and improvements of vocational technical schools, to new facilities on college campuses, to projects at veterans' homes and cemeteries. Mineral Area College has been allocated \$5 million to help with the building of a technical facility!**

HB 3018 appropriates approximately \$477 million for maintenance and repair of statewide facilities.

HB 3019 appropriates approximately \$469 million to fund capital improvement projects around the state. The bill includes \$65.5 million for National Guard facilities, \$22.7 million for various parks and historic sites, including \$4.1 million for St. Francois County State Park. \$15 million for improvements for various conservation sites and facilities, and \$300 million for the Missouri State Capitol Commission Capitol Preservation Fund.

HB 2493 expands on the criteria for teachers' career ladder admission and stage achievement. Additional responsibilities and volunteer efforts outside of compensated hours may include uncompensated coaching, supervising, and organizing extracurricular activities, serving as a mentor or tutor to students, additional teacher training or certification, or assisting students with college or career preparation. The bill increases the state percentage of funding for salary supplements for the career ladder from 40% to 60% and lowers the number of years before a teacher is eligible from five to two years. The bill also rewards teachers for taking extra time working with students, fostering community engagement, and professional development of students. It increases interaction time between parents and teachers, filling the gap of learning loss that is being experienced currently. The bill also provides bankruptcy protection for the Missouri Education Savings Program and the Missouri Higher Education Deposit Program, also known commonly as 529 education savings accounts.

HB 2325 establishes the "Workforce Diploma Program" to assist students in obtaining a high school diploma and develop employability and career technical skills. The bill improves job prospects to enable students to get higher and better paying jobs. Over 445,000 Missouri adults don't have a diploma. Several other states have adopted a similar program. There is a need to upskill Missourians and this program will help train our workforce. The bill also establishes the "Extended Learning Opportunities Act" and allows synchronous instruction connecting students to a live classroom in a Missouri adult high school to be treated the same as in-person learning.

HB 2090 allows the salaries of state employees to be paid in biweekly installments, as designated by the Commissioner of the Office of Administration. Receiving a salary once a month is sometimes a burden for state employees. Many state employees have to work part-time jobs to supplement their income. The bill addresses the shortfall by paying employees a biweekly salary thereby eliminating the need for them to make difficult choices.

HB 1683 requires public institutions of higher learning to adopt and implement policies that will give undergraduate course credit to entering freshman students for each advanced placement (AP) examination upon which such student achieves a score of three or higher. Several bordering states to Missouri have policies for accepting AP scores of 3 and above which attracts Missouri students to their universities. This bill provides assurance to students taking these very difficult exams that they would receive university credit here as well.

As Members of the House, we have worked long hours to finalize the budget and to secure funding for the programs as stated in the various appropriation bills. The Missouri Budget for 2023 per Constitution must be delivered to the Governor's office on Friday, May 6th.

I will continue to keep you updated on the final budget and bills that make it to the finish line which will end on Friday, May 13th.

VISITORS TO THE CAPITOL



It was my honor to present to Brooke Weiler from Ste. Genevieve, a Certificate of Recognition for her research studies at the University of Missouri!

Brooke was one of 36 Students representing the University of Missouri System Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol on April 11th. Brooke's poster display of her research focused on Measuring Gene Activity of Bone-Building Cells in a Mouse Model of Brittle Bone Disease.



I enjoyed meeting and visiting with Brooke's parents Curt and Patricia and her brother Tanner.

It is always nice to meet the parents and to congratulate them on their daughter's achievements at MU!

Congratulations Brooke for your continued research to keep our bones healthy!

Celebrate Earth Day today!