



STATE  
REPRESENTATIVE  
DAN HOUX  
54<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

Committees

Financial Institutions  
Conservation and Natural  
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Special Committee on  
Employment Security



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Capitol Report  
*May 3, 2018*

I was excited to hear the announcement that Whiteman will be one of three U.S. bases to operate a squadron for the next generation B-21 Raider. In the mid-2020s, the B-21 will eventually replace the B-1 Lancer and our own B-2 Spirit aircraft currently located at Whiteman Air Force Base.

We are so fortunate to have these exceptional servicemen and women in our community. The economic impact is substantial and more importantly, their contributions to our schools, social and civic activities are truly appreciated.

A number of bills specific to military veterans are moving through the General Assembly at this time...



**HB 1462** would allow preference to be given to disabled veterans in contracts with state or political subdivisions. HB 1462 seeks to increase from 3% to 5% the target for state contracts being awarded to disabled veterans.

**SCS HCS#2 HB 1503** would provide a mechanism for providing state-guaranteed small business loans to veterans encouraging job growth.

**HB 1742 & SB 864** would allow but not require businesses to give a hiring preference to veterans.

**HB 1963** would establish the Veterans Home Resident Monitoring Act. While we are fortunate in Warrensburg to have the model facility with both an excellent record and talented staff, other homes need increased monitoring to insure that we are giving our veterans the best possible care that we committed to provide them.

**HB 2456** would establish an alert system similar to a silver alert or amber alert for missing and possibly endangered veterans.

**HJR 61** would propose a constitutional amendment which would authorize up to \$63 million dollars in bonds to be issued by the state for veterans homes. Currently all of our veterans home have waiting lists for admission, in most cases many months or years.

**HB 1492** which was sent to the Governor this week, would extend eligibility in the Department of Economic Development's Show-Me Heroes Program from one year to five years from discharge or deployment. Supporters say that for various reasons many returning military personnel are not ready to look for employment in the first year. This bill would allow them extra time to participate in the program.

## **Other House News**

### **House and Senate in Conference Committees on State Budget**

The state operating budget must be approved by both chambers. After revisions by the House and Senate we have each sent several of the appropriations bills to conference committees where lead negotiators from both sides will work together to reach a compromise on the final spending plan. Roughly one third of our 27+ billion dollar budget comes from the federal government for specific spending, another third from state revenues which are dedicated to particular programs and operating departments and divisions, and the final third is state "general revenue" which is where most of the discretionary spending conversations and discussions take place.

Missouri's general revenue is primarily derived from personal income tax, almost 68%. Sales and use taxes account for another 22% or so and then corporate taxes and "other" comprise the remaining 10% of general revenue we are able to appropriate.

### **House Investigative Committee Releases Second Report**

The second report as well as the first report can be found on the Missouri House website at [www.house.mo.gov](http://www.house.mo.gov).

## **House Sends Bill to Senate to Increase Sentencing Flexibility (HB 1739)**

This week the House sent legislation to the Senate that would give judges more flexibility in sentencing except in crimes that involved the use, attempted use, or threat of physical force, or certain non-consensual sex crimes against a minor. .

As the sponsor said, “We don’t have the money to build those prisons and there’s no end in sight to this trend. If we don’t change the way we treat folks – better distinguish those that we’re mad at as opposed to those we’re afraid of, as they say, we’re just going to continue on this trajectory and our incarceration rate is going to continue to climb.”

The sponsor also noted that other states where mandatory minimum sentencing laws have been eased have seen crime rates decline rather than increase.

## **Missouri Capitol Goes Blue to Support Law Enforcement**

During the month of May the dome of the Missouri State Capitol will be illuminated in blue in support of Missouri law enforcement officers who have given their lives in the line of duty. The dome was illuminated with blue lighting starting on May 1 and the tribute to law enforcement will continue all month.

It is during the month of May that the state and nation participate in tributes and recognitions of fallen officers and their survivors. The month includes National Police Week and Peace Officers Memorial Day. In Missouri, the state’s fallen heroes are honored with a candlelight vigil and the Law Enforcement Memorial Service.

## **Bills Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed by the General Assembly**

**HB 1880** declares that the General Assembly believes expanding and accelerating access to high-speed broadband communications services is in the best interests of citizens. In recognition of this capital intensive deployment, the General Assembly encourages rural electric cooperatives to enter into agreements or contracts with certain entities set forth in this act. This act further specifies that power conferred upon rural electric cooperatives would be subject to a certain antitrust provision of law. Further, the bill would require a distribution cooperative that provides broadband service to provide such service to a landowner if such cooperative's broadband infrastructure traverses such landowner's property.

**HB 2015** would appropriate money for supplemental purposes for the expenses, grants and distributions of the Department of Economic Development. The bill would appropriate \$10 million for the department’s Community Development Block Grant Program.

**HB 1744** would modify the A+ Schools Program by removing the requirement that the student's attendance at a public high school in the state be the three years immediately prior to graduation. The act would also add that a student must have graduated from such public high school. The bill would also modify the Missouri Higher Education Savings Program to allow Missouri 529 account holders to transfer money from such account to a Missouri ABLE account while retaining tax exempt status on any money transferred. Additionally, it would allow students enrolled in approved virtual institutions to participate in the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program.

The bill also states that after July 1, 2019, no public institution of higher education shall require any student to purchase meal plans or dine at on-campus facilities when a student has presented medical documentation of a food allergy, food sensitivity, or medical dietary issue to the institution.

Until our next update, I remain in your service

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Houx". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the "D" being particularly large and the "x" having a long, sweeping tail.

*Dan Houx*

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