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STATE REPRESENTATIVE DEAN A. DOHRMAN 51ST DISTRICT

Committees

Higher Education, Vice Chair
Subcommittee on Student Debt Relief
Joint Committee on Education
Veterans
Special Committee on Employment Security
NCSL Military and Veterans Affairs Task Force



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Capitol Report January 25th, 2018

Another legislative week comes to a close! Members of the House and Senate gathered in the House Chamber this week to listen to the annual State of the Judiciary Address. Delivered by Missouri Chief Justice Zel Fischer, the address provided lawmakers with an overview of the state's court system and the challenges it faces. Fischer used his speech to highlight the need for expanded drug treatment courts to help fight against the abuse of opioids in Missouri. Fischer also called on legislators to work with the court to develop solutions for the challenges faced by the state's criminal justice system.

In other news, this week House members passed HB 1465 that would give institutions greater flexibility to offer degrees that meet the needs of their local communities and businesses. The bill would in effect allow community colleges to offer four-year baccalaureate degrees in certain programs of need within their communities. House members also gave initial approval to a piece of legislation meant to better prepare young people for success in the workforce. The bill approved by the House is meant to expand course options and access for K-12 students. The legislation would change the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MOVIP) to "The Missouri Course Access Program" (MCAP) and allow any K-12 student to enroll in MCAP courses.

Other bills passed this week include: HB 1287, which would specify that commercial insurers are exempt from filing rates and policy forms with respect to certain lines of commercial insurance; HB 1381, which would establish procedures relating to financial accreditation standards for insurance companies and an insurance group's corporate governance; and HB 1531, which would modify the circumstances in which a party may be joined in a civil action. The bill would allow an insurance company to use an interpleader to defend the insured and pay its policy limits. More on these bills below.

Also, this week, I had a hearing on one of my bills, HB 1503, which establishes a fund for providing state-guaranteed small business loans to veterans. The bill was well received by the committee and some great discussion took place. Thank you to Charles "Lynn" Lowder, CEO of ONE VET AT A TIME, and Keith Crumley, a member of our community and Whiteman AFB advocate, who traveled to the Capitol to testify on the bill.

I also filed HB 2284, which builds upon the Campus Free Expression Act passed in 2015 by Senator Emery. Specifically, the bill will help ensure that educational institutions are committed to maintaining a campus as a marketplace of ideas not suppressed because such ideas are thought by some to be offensive, unwise, or disagreeable. The full bill text of HB 2284 can be found here: <http://house.mo.gov/Bill.aspx?bill=HB2284&year=2018&code=R>

The Governor's Budget Proposal

Each year the governor submits a budget proposal to the General Assembly. The proposal for FY2019 includes a spending increase of \$200 million for an overall budget of \$28.8 billion. As you might guess, we agree on some areas and have some differences on others. One area of difference is higher education funding, which the governor proposes to cut nearly 8%. Several legislators do not agree with this policy, and so I expect this number to change before finalization. Here are some more highlights of the governor's proposal.

Economic Outlook

- Revenues grew an estimated 3.6 percent in Fiscal Year 2018
 - Downward adjustments were made because the new laws were implemented that returned more money to taxpayers' pocketbooks.
 - The federal tax bill
 - The first tax cut from SB 509
 - Resulting in a Net revenues growth estimated of 1.9 percent in Fiscal Year 2018

- The Consensus Revenue Estimate projects an estimated net growth of 2.5 percent in Fiscal Year 2019

Some Budget Recommendations

- \$28.8 Billion overall Operating Budget
 - Spending will increased \$200 million from FY 2018 to FY 2019
- Recommends an additional \$87.5 million in funding to DESE, bringing the total funding to \$6.1 billion
 - \$50,458,871 increase to the foundation formula funding
- Between the Governor’s withholds from FY 2018 and recommended spending in FY 2019, the Governor recommends a \$99 million cut to Higher Education
- Medicaid spending will make up 38 percent of Missouri’s budget
 - FY 2019 spending will increase to a total \$11.011 billion dollars
 - That is a \$342 million dollar increase over FY 2018
- Recommends the Level of Care (LOC) point system stays the same at 24 points and no provider rate increases except for foster care and adoption guardianship of \$2.6 million (HB10 & HB11)
- The Governor has requested \$179 million for this year’s Supplemental Budget

\$100 million has been recommended be set aside for next year’s Supplemental Budget

New Committee Will Work to Improve the Care and Well-being of Young People

A newly-formed committee will focus its work on policy proposals impacting the health and welfare of the thousands of children and youth in Missouri’s care. The Special Committee to Improve the Care and Well-being of Young People will consider ideas to improve the child welfare system that is charged with the important task of protecting the most vulnerable Missourians.

House Speaker Todd Richardson said of the committee, “We need to find ways to best serve our children and youth who, at no fault of their own, are put in challenging circumstances . . . ”

The number of children in the Missouri foster care system is growing each year with the Department of Social Services responsible for nearly 13,000 children this year. The pressures of a growing system, as well as the demanding and emotionally grueling nature of the work have made it difficult to be responsive to the needs of those requiring help. In Missouri, the average time a child spends in foster care is estimated to be 2 years and about half of the children experience three or more foster care placements.

The Children’s Division, under the Department of Social Services umbrella, is responsible for the administration of Missouri’s child welfare services. The Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline, School Violence Hotline, Intensive In-Home Services, Family Centered Services, Adoption Services, Independent Living, Foster Care, Residential Licensing and preventive services are a number of the programs the division administers.

The Speaker referred the first bills for consideration to the committee this week.



Earlier this week, Charles “Lynn” Lowder, CEO of ONE VET AT A TIME, and Keith Crumley (not pictured), traveled to the Capitol to testify on my HB 1503, which establishes a fund for providing guaranteed small business loans to veterans. The bill was well received by the committee and some great discussion took place.

It is an honor to serve the 51st District in the Missouri House of Representatives. Each week I will issue a capitol report to keep you informed of activities in Jefferson City. Any concerns or issues you might have are of great interest to me. I look forward to your input and thoughts, so please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions, concerns, or ideas to improve our state government and the quality of life for all Missourians. My telephone number is 573-751-2204 or you may contact me by email at dean.dohrman@house.mo.gov. Thank you for working with me to make Missouri a great place to live.

Serving the Constituents of the 51st District,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dean Dohrman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

State Representative

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