



Legislative Update

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SESSION CONTINUES

The legislature re-convened on January 17 after observing the federal Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday on Monday, January 16. Both chambers were in session primarily for the introduction of new bills.

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Governor Mike Parson delivered the State of the State Address to a joint session of the House and Senate in the House Chamber on January 18. The State of the State address gives the Governor a chance to present his vision for the state and his budget priorities.

During his speech, Governor Parson focused on infrastructure along with education and workforce development. State revenues and fund balances remain unusually high due to federal pandemic funding. The Governor has used these high revenues and balances to continue higher K-12 and higher education funding in his budget proposal for next year.

The proposed budget adds \$117 million to fully fund the foundation formula, \$233 million for pupil transportation, \$50 million in school safety improvement grants, \$32 million for the Career Ladder Program, and continued funding to encourage districts to raise minimum teacher pay from \$25,000 to \$38,000 per year. Governor Parson also requested \$56 million to expand pre-kindergarten options to all four-year-old children eligible for free and reduced priced lunch and \$78 million to increase child care subsidy rates.

Parson's budget also calls for additional higher education funding including: \$275 million for public higher education capital improvement projects; \$71 million to increase in core funding to Missouri's public higher education institutions; and \$38 million for MoExcels workforce development projects.

The Association encourages the Governor and legislature to work together to use the record high state revenues and fund balances to support investment in public education while refraining from any further cuts to state or local tax revenues.

HONESTY IN EDUCATION/PARENT INFORMATION ACCESS

The Senate Committee on Education and Workforce Development met for the first time this session on January 18. The committee two heard bills, SB 4 (Koenig) and SB 89 (Ben Brown), on the topics of

curriculum restrictions and parent access to school information. The committee is expected to vote on a revised committee substitute version for both bills at its next meeting on January 24.

The Association has concerns that those bills would adversely affect the freedom of teachers to provide the honest education our students deserve and interfere with existing policies respecting student and school privacy and opposes both bills.

REPEAL OF PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee heard SB 8 (Eigel) on January 17. The bill would permanently eliminate 99.997% of the taxes on personal property with a phase out that will vary by county based on offsetting increases in taxes on real property. This change will stagnate local school revenues and local property taxes for other essential community services until such time as the phase out is complete. The Association opposes the bill.

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