



January 23, 2025

The third week of session has officially come to a close. This was a shortened week due to the MLK holiday, however there was no shortage of legislative activity. Both chambers dedicated their week continuing to file and refer bills. The House chamber wrapped up appointing committee members to the various committees, and committees officially kicked off this week. One thing is certain, there is no shortage of hot topics and prospective legislative priorities already this session!

Committee Hearing Overview

Legislators will spend the next couple of weeks working not only to get their priorities referred to committees, but also to have a committee hearing in order to present their bill. The first couple of weeks of session are always geared heavily towards committee activity and typically after the Legislative Spring Break, which marks the halfway point for session, committee activity starts to slow down and more time is dedicated to floor debate.

Right out of the gate, the priorities this week seemed to be public safety, with multiple hearings regarding moving control of the St. Louis Police Force under the state. Specifically, SB 44, sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit), SB 52, sponsored by Senator Nick Schroer (R-O'Fallon), and HB 495, sponsored by Representative Brad Christ (St. Louis) not only include several other public safety provisions, besides moving control of the St. Police force, they are also top priorities of Governor Kehoe's administration and backed by Republican leadership.

Another hot public safety topic this week was, SB 54 sponsored by Senator Nick Schroer (R-O'Fallon) and creates provisions relating to cannabis. Specifically, the bill creates the "Intoxicating Cannabinoid Control Act", which establishes a regulatory framework to regulate "intoxicating cannabinoids". Since the passage of the federal Farm Bill, hemp-derived products, including Delta-8, have flooded the market with little to no oversight and these products lack age verification, lab testing for chemicals, which include heavy metals, contaminants. Additionally, they lack dosage limits and proper packaging and labeling standards. The intent of the of the legislation is to establish regulation and oversight for all products containing intoxicating cannabinoids. HB 593, sponsored by Representative Chad Perkins has already been referred to committee and expected to be heard next week.

In addition to public safety, tort reform and eliminating various taxes like income and corporate taxes seem to be top priorities and also dictated the week. Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield) started the first hearing of the week with presenting SB 46, which authorizes an income tax deduction for capital gains and also presented SB 47, which seeks to amend Supreme Court Rule 52.08 relating to class actions. Meanwhile, in the House, the Committee on Commerce, which is a newly formed House committee to review topics relating to commercial interests of the state, kicked off their first hearing discussing HB 594 and HB 508, sponsored by Representative's Chad Perkins (R-Bowling Green) and George Hruza (R-St. Louis). The bills are identical and the House companions to SB 46, and also seek to authorize an income tax deduction for capital gains.

Looking forward, the only thing that is certain is this session seems to be filled with a lot of priorities that will come with some heavy lifts! Stay tuned.....

Budget Update:

The Governor is scheduled to give his State of the State Address Tuesday afternoon. This is the time the Governor not only highlights his priorities but also provides his proposed budget. Immediately after he drops his budget, both the House Budget Committee, House Subcommittee Committees, and Senate Appropriations start going through and crafting their own versions of the FY '26 budget. Various House Budget Committees have already started calendaring and plan to start meeting next week.

Upcoming Committee Hearings

Senate: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/hearingsschedule/hrings.htm>

House: <https://house.mo.gov/AllHearings.aspx>

Tidbits

- This week, the Senate Committee on Gubernatorial Appointments unanimously approved former Senator Kurt Schaefer and Mark James to be sent before the Senate body for a final confirmation vote and on Thursday, the Senate chamber approved the appointments. Schaefer was Governor Kehoe's pick to become director of the Department of Natural Resources and James would become director for the Department of Public Safety.
- State Auditor Scott Fitzpatrick released an audit of Benton County this week, detailing apparent misdeeds. According to the report, the Public Administrator paid her family's accounting and tax business a total of \$4,075 from accounts of 38 wards. Additionally, the County Commission authorized mid-term salary increases totaling \$15,945 and did not sufficiently reduce the property tax levy in its sales tax rollback, amongst other things. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

Upcoming Dates of Interest

- January 28, 2025 – State of the State Address
- February 26, 2025 – State of the Judiciary Address
- February 28, 2025 – Last Day to File Legislation
- April 21, 2025 – Easter Holiday – NO SESSION
- May 9, 2025 – Last Day to Pass the FY26 Budget
- May 16, 2025 – Last Day of the 2025 Legislative Session
- September 10, 2025 – Veto Session

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