MASW 2012 legislative advocate!

January 30, 2012

Which Is #1 Target of Legislative Venom?

Immigrants, Labor Unions, or Health Care?

Xenophobia Advances on Party-Line Committee Votes

SB 590, which would align Missouri's laws with those of Alabama and Arizona, requiring people to prove to schools and law enforcement that they are lawfully present, was passed on a party-line vote from the Senate General Laws Committee last week.

HCS HBs 1186 & 1147, which would end the state's current practice of providing the driver license exam in languages other than English, passed, on a party-line vote, the House Committee on International Trade & Job Creation.

It was not immediately clear how English-only tests would promote international trade or create jobs. MASW provided testimony against SB 590 and HB's 1186 & 1147.

Health Care? We Don't Need No Stinkin' Health Care!

The Senate gave first-round approval to SB 464, which would prohibit state employees from doing anything to implement the federal Affordable Care Act.

Much like cutting off one's nose to spite one's face, this action would cause the state to lose out on hundreds of millions of dollars of federal funds and result in the federal government running our state program, rather than doing so ourselves. Brilliant.

First Five Bills on Senate Calendar Are Anti-Union, Anti-Worker

As we are now seeing the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that made it ***easier*** for corporations to spend money in political campaigns, the Missouri Senate is poised to consider a bill to make it ***more difficult*** for labor unions to participate in politics.

That bill, SCS SB's 553 & 435, sits at the top of the Senate Perfection Calendar, and the next four bills seek to roll back protection for worker pay and worker rights.

And SB 529, similar to the bill Gov. Nixon vetoed last year because it would weaken protections against workplace discrimination, is all alone on the Informal Calendar (meaning it can be taken up at any time).

The House version, HB 1219, awaits a vote in the Rules Committee today to advance to the House floor.

Rolling Back Your Fundamental Right to Vote

HB 1104, already advanced from the House Elections Committee, awaits a vote in the Rules Committee today to advance to the House floor. This bill would disenfranchise tens of thousands of Missouri registered voters who do not have a driver license or other government-issued photo ID.

Positive News: Criminal Justice Issues MASW Supports

MASW has been working for several years, especially through our Criminal Justice Task Force, to reform state policy by ending the practice of routinely sending non-violent offenders to prison. Instead, the state would spend less money on more effective programs of restorative justice, increase the chances of success for ex-offenders, and increase prospects for public safety.

HB 1525 takes an important step in realizing this vision. It has bipartisan support, with Rep. Gary Fuhr, a Republican, as sponsor, and members of both parties as co-sponsors, including Rep. Rory Ellinger (former President of MASW).

The bill will be heard in the House Committee on Crime Prevention & Public Safety this Wednesday at noon. If your representative serves on this committee, please contact him or her to urge support of the bill.

Another positive bill is being heard this evening in the House Urban Issues Committee. HB 1220 would launch a two-year pilot project in the Department of Corrections to increase access of children to their incarcerated mothers.

Two Initiatives to Help, Rather Than Hurt, Those Most in Need

Regulations on the Payday Loan Industry, and an increase in the Minimum Wage, are the subjects, respectively, of two initiative petition campaigns kicked off this past weekend.

We are too well aware of a seemingly endless series of ballot measures that would roll back the progress of the past century.

What an uplifting notion, to have two proposed ballot measures that would actually mover Missouri forward.

The proponents are working collaboratively on these measures. Learn more, including how to help, from Missourians for Responsible Lending, and Give Missourians a Raise.

As with all items in our newsletter, just use the hyperlinks.