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**28<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT**

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**WEEKLY CAPITOL UPDATE**

**February 9, 2017**

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The 99th General Assembly is in its fifth week and things are starting to heat up. Next week we will start having afternoon sessions along with our morning session. Thank you for your support.



**WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CHARTER SCHOOLS?**

Legislation to authorize the statewide expansion of charter schools stalled in the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee amid opposition from supporters of traditional public schools. Under existing law, charter schools are allowed only in Kansas City and St. Louis.

Charter schools are public schools that are allowed to operate free from many of the regulations that traditional public schools are required to follow. Their funding is redirected on a per-pupil basis from the local school district in which the charter school operates.

Charters have had a spotty in the nearly two decades they have operated in Kansas City and St. Louis. While a few have done well, most have performed no better than the traditional public schools they draw their students from, and in some cases charters have performed far worse.

Given the lack of consistent success from charter schools, lawmakers should be skeptical about expanding this experiment statewide. Do you want charter schools in Raytown? I would like to hear from you.

## **OPPONENTS SEEK TO FORCE VOTE ON 'RIGHT-TO-WORK'**

Hours after Republican Gov. Eric Greitens signed a so-called “right-to-work” bill into law on Feb. 6, the Missouri AFL-CIO filed a referendum petition that would require a statewide vote on the measure before it could take effect. Labor groups are also pursuing a proposed constitutional amendment that would prohibit the General Assembly from enacting right-to-work laws in the future.

Right-to-work opponents have until Aug. 28 – the day the measure takes effect – to submit petitions signed by roughly 100,000 registered Missouri voters. If they do so, it automatically will go on the November 2018 statewide ballot and won’t take effect until and unless voters approve it.

Senate Bill 19 would make it a crime punishable by jail time for business owners to negotiate labor contracts requiring workers to pay dues for the union representation they receive.

Democratic lawmakers sought to include a provision placing the bill on the statewide ballot, but majority Republicans blocked that effort, leaving the referendum petition as the only option to give voters a say on the issue.

The referendum petition is a rarely used process similar to the more common initiative petition. But while an initiative petition bypasses lawmakers by proposing legislation and placing before voters for their approval, a referendum petition takes an act of the General Assembly and forces a statewide vote on it.

The last time a referendum petition was successfully employed to force a vote was on House Bill 695, a bill lawmakers enacted in 1981 to allow larger trucks on Missouri highways. The bill went on the April 1982 ballot as Proposition A, which was rejected by 53.3 percent of voters.

In addition to the SB 19 referendum petition, labor groups are also circulating an initiative petition for a proposed constitutional amendment to block future right-to-work legislation. The issue last went before voters in 1978 when 60 percent rejected Amendment 23, which sought to constitutionally mandate right-to-work.



## **HOUSE SENDS ANOTHER ANTI-LABOR BILL TO THE SENATE**

The House of Representatives on Feb. 9 voted 95-60 to advance legislation that seeks to make it more difficult and costly for labor unions to collect membership dues. The measure, House Bill 251, went to the Senate on a largely party-line vote with Republicans generally in support and nearly every Democrat opposed.

Then-Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, vetoed a similar bill last year, and the Republican-controlled legislature fell one Senate vote short an override. New Gov. Eric Greitens, a Republican, generally has been supportive of anti-labor proposals.

HB 251 would impose new procedural barriers to the efficient and timely collection of union dues by requiring workers to reauthorize payroll deductions for union dues more frequently.



### **STATE SUPREME COURT VACANCY DRAWS 31 APPLICANTS**

Thirty-one lawyers have applied for the Missouri Supreme Court vacancy created by the Nov. 29 death of Judge Richard Teitelman, the Appellate Judicial Commission announced on Feb. 7. The commission will interview the applicants on Feb. 28 and March 1, and then select three finalists to submit to Gov. Eric Greitens, who must choose one of them or forfeit the decision to the commission.

The applicants include two members of the Missouri Court of Appeals and 10 state trial judges, the bulk of whom are Republican. The selection commission consists of Supreme Court Chief Justice Patricia Breckenridge, a Republican appointee; three lawyers elected by members of the Missouri Bar and three non-lawyers chosen by former Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat.

Greitens, a Republican, has called for eliminating the commission and allowing the governor to appoint whomever he wants to judicial vacancies, but such a change would require a voter-approved constitutional amendment. In 2012, 76 percent of voters rejected the most recent attempt to change Missouri's judicial selection process.



## **NET STATE REVENUE UP 3 PERCENT SO FAR IN FY 2017**

Net year-to-date state general revenue collections increased 3 percent through the first seven months of the 2017 fiscal year compared to the same period in FY 2016, going from \$4.96 billion last year to \$5.11 billion this year. Net collections for January 2017 increased 7.1 percent compared to those for January 2016, going from \$791.6 million to \$848.1 million.

## **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

Join the conversation and follow me on [Twitter @RepJeromeBarn28](#). Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and will try to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at (573) 751-9851 or email at [Jerome.Barnes@house.mo.gov](mailto:Jerome.Barnes@house.mo.gov). Please go to my House web page at <http://www.house.mo.gov/member.aspx?year=2017&district=028> and do the Online Survey. I will put the results in my end of session report.

If you would like to be removed from the mailing list for this report, please reply to this email with “remove from list” in the subject line. Thank you

**Jerome Barnes**

**Representative District 28**

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