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Sent: Friday, January 10, 2014 11:35 AM
To: MO Disability Policy/Law Listserv
Subject: [Modisabilaw] 2014 Legislative Session Opens

2014 Legislative Session Opens

The 2014 Missouri legislative session opened officially on Wednesday. Scores of bills have been pre-filed and committee hearings are scheduled for next week. We'll provide an update on additional bills filed next week.

The Appropriations Committee for Health, Mental Health and Social Services is scheduled to meet again next week on Tuesday, January 14th to continue to hear testimony from the Departments. The hearing is scheduled for 10 am in HHR 3.

Budget/Tax Issues

The Governor's Budget

His budget proposal will be introduced with the State of the State address on Tuesday, January 21st at 7:00 pm.

There will again be a number of significant tax cut proposals introduced this session. Those introduced so far would reduce annual state revenues by anywhere from estimates of \$80 million to over \$1 billion a year when fully phased in.

Missouri Rx Plan

The Governor announced that he will call for the reauthorization and include \$23.7 million in his budget for the Missouri Rx Program. The program provides prescription drug assistance to low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. Without reauthorization, the program will expire in August. You can find more information about the program here: <http://www.morx.mo.gov/>

Property Tax Circuit Breaker

Last session, there were proposals to eliminate the renter's portion of the Senior Citizens' property tax credit. Over 100,000 low-income seniors and persons with disabilities were able to receive an average credit of \$534 in 2012. Two bills that have been filed so far include:

SB541- Senator Munzlinger’s bill would eliminate the credit for eligible renters with disabilities and seniors who first become eligible for the credit after January 1, 2014. You can view the bill here: [SB541 - Property Tax Circuit Breaker](#)

HB1119 - Rep. LaFaver’s bill would increase the maximum amount of the credit for both home owners and renters. This bill was filed by Rep. LaFaver last session but it did not get a hearing, and is not likely to pass this year. You can view the bill here: [HB1119 - Property Tax Circuit Breaker](#)

Medicaid

The Governor is again calling on the legislature to expand Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act, but prospects in the legislature again appear to be dim.

Of the two Medicaid interim committees, the House Committee has not issued a final report. The Senate committee did issue a report but did not include a recommendation for expansion. You can find the Senate Report here: [Report of Senate Interim Committee on Medicaid Transformation and Reform](#). Democrats on the committee issued a minority report recommending expansion which can be found here: [Minority Senate Medicaid Transformation Report](#).

SB 582 - Increase Medicaid Asset Limits – Senator Rupp introduced this bill which was one of the proposals in the Senate Interim Committee final report. It increases the amount of assets that an aged or participant with disabilities is allowed to keep and still be eligible. For a single person, the limit would increase from \$1,000 to \$5,000. For a married couple, the limit would increase from \$2,000 to \$10,000. The bill can be found here: [SB 582 - Increase Medicaid Asset Limits](#)

HB1156 – Money Follows the Person – Rep. Lair’s bill would establish a committee made up of state and other agencies to study the continuation of the Money Follows the Person (MFP) demonstration to help persons transition from institutional care such as nursing homes to quality community settings. The bill was drafted with the input of the MFP Stakeholders Group and can be found here: [HB1156 - Money Follows the Person](#)

Other Disability-Related Issues

HB 1062 – Omnibus Disabilities Bill – Rep. Grisamore’s bill contains several of the proposals he included in his disabilities bill last year (HB727) that passed the House, but not the Senate. Among the provisions in this year’s HB1062:

- Requires DESE to establish a workgroup focused on promoting successful transitions from secondary school to employment, lifelong learning and quality of life. The workgroup must report back to the general assembly by January 1, 2015.
- Adds hearing aids as a covered Medicaid service for adults. Coverage was removed in 2005, and has never been restored. Hearing loss is often a key issue with seniors being able to stay in their homes longer.
- Adds comprehensive day rehabilitation services as a covered Medicaid service for individuals with traumatic brain injury.
- Modifies several provisions to the service dog laws related to penalties for injury or death of a dog.
- Clarifies provisions for accessible parking spaces when owners of private property or political subdivisions construct or restripe parking lots with 25 or more spaces.
- Modifies current law related to the brain injury fund including expanding the type of court cases for which the \$2 surcharge must be collected for the fund; adding comprehensive day rehab to the services covered with the fund; establishing a committee to make recommendations related to brain injury services. The bill can be found here: [HB1062 - Omnibus Disabilities Bill](#)

HB1604 - Changes in DD Statute Language – Rep. Grisamore’s bill would remove many references still existing in state statute language that refer to “mentally retarded” and “mental retardation” and replaces them with “intellectually disabled” and “intellectual disability”. The bill can be found here: [HB1064 - Changes in DD Statute Language](#)

SB623 – Electronic Voting Systems – Rep. Nieves bill would phase out electronic voting machines in Missouri in favor of paper ballots or paper ballot marking devices. The bill can be found here: [SB623 - Voting Machines](#)

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