



Capitol Update - Special Session Underway

Rep Murphy files and moves four important bills during the Special Session

Normally, after a 140-day Legislative Session, lawmakers return to their districts where they revert to everyday life (we are true citizen legislators) in their districts. However, this cycle is different. The Governor has called the legislature back for a Special Session. Only the Governor may reconvene the Legislature, and only the Governor may designate the "Call", or the topics of the bills that may be passed during a special session. For the 1st Called Special Session of the 85th Legislature (sometimes the Governor may call more than one!) the Governor has selected 20 items for consideration by the legislative body.

I have filed four bills that respond to the Governor's call. We outline HB 108, HB 110, HB 111, and HB 215 in this edition of the newsletter. HB 108 helps elderly folks stay in their homes, HB 110 and HB 111 provide greater government transparency, and HB 215 is an important pro-life measure. We will work hard to get these passed in the next two weeks.

A large number of you have taken the time to reach out to us and let us know where you stand on the issues before us in the special session. We are fortunate to have an active and attentive citizenry and encourage you to continue to engage with us. Please forward this newsletter to your friends and neighbors.

Two of the top issues we have heard from you on are bills related to public restrooms and tree ordinances. Currently, the Senate has passed a version of the "bathroom bill", but it has yet to be referred to a House committee.

The House passed a tree ordinance bill which would allow property owners to buy-down tree mitigation fees with tree-planting credits. HB 70 and SB 14 which would restrict a municipality's ability to enact a tree ordinance are still in the committee process.

We hope that you will follow along over the remaining two weeks of the special session. If you have questions or concerns, my staff is here each and every day to help you. Feel free to call, email, fax, or drop by.

It is an honor to serve you,



Representative Murphy has been very involved in the Special Session. He is on the Ways and Means Committee, which has heard over 40 bills so far, with the majority focused on property taxes. Here, he prepares to layout HB 108, which will help the elderly and disabled stay in their homes.

PROPERTY TAX REFORM

HB 108 - Interest Rate Reduction

HB 108 will reform laws on property taxation. Currently, property owners can defer or abate property tax collection if they are 65 or older or disabled. However, the cost is prohibitive, since these taxes have an 8% compounded market rate.

This static interest rate fails to reflect the market and can cause a homeowner to be taxed out of their home.

HB 108 changes the rate from a static 8 percent to the current 5-year Constant Maturity Treasury (CMT) Rate (currently 1.94%). By using a rate that is tied to market averages, deferral and abatement interest rates will self-adjust according to the market. Making this change will allow more elderly and disabled citizens to stay in their homes. This bill has tentatively been approved by the House with final passage set for tomorrow. It will then be sent to the Senate for their approval.

INCREASED GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

Greater transparency is needed when bonds are issued by political subdivisions. As local debt continues to grow, reforms should be made to ensure that voters are informed, elections are fair, and governments are responsible with taxpayer's money. We have two bills to address these issues.

HB 110 - Truth in Debt

HB 110 provides additional transparency to the bond issuance process by requiring that more information be made available to the voters, such as the total funds being authorized, the intended use of the funds, and the combined new and existing debt payoff information. HB 110 requires all of this info to be available on a website at least 21 days before election day. HB 110 has passed out of committee and is expected to come to the House floor next week.

HB 111 - Bond Issuance Reform

HB 111 makes a few reforms to bond issuance procedures as well as the use of bonds approved by taxpayers.

- Stops the practice of "rolling polling," which occurs when polling locations are located or moved to target specific groups of voters in order to influence election results.
- Requires the posting sample ballots on their website 21 days before the election.
- Ties the term of a bond to the useful life of the project financed.
- Requires an election to redirect bond funds to any purpose other than they were authorized for by their initial election.

These changes will establish fair elections, more informed voters, and ensure that local subdivisions are good stewards of the taxpayer's money. HB 111 has also passed out of committee and expected to reach the House floor next week.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

HB 215

HB 215 requires physicians to document and report the method by which a minor obtained authorization for an abortion. It also requires physicians performing a third trimester abortions due to severe fetal abnormalities to certify the abnormality. These reporting requirements will provide valuable data for lawmakers and health providers to use when evaluating outcomes of State programs. HB 215 has received tentative House approval and with final passage set for tomorrow. It will then be sent to the Senate for their consideration.



THANK YOU!

A very special thank you to House District 133's own Robert Shively. Robert chose to skip out on a week of summer vacation to serve his district and the State. He worked on communications and office administration, preparing talking points for bill hearings, bill analysis and summary, and support for Representative Murphy while on the House floor. Robert, who will be a senior at The Kinkaid School this fall, was professional and mature, and our office greatly benefited from his help. It is wonderful to meet young people ready and willing to get involved in government. After all, Robert will be voting next year!
