



2017 Legislative Impacting On Hunger

A Report to the Hunger Task Force, March 22, 2017
From Executive Director Jeanette Mott Oxford

Bills That Could Reduce Hunger

House Bill 109 – Rep. Mike Kelley (R-Lamar) – Creates a Missouri Earned Income Tax Credit program. Weaker version than in some past years. Hearing conducted in Special Committee on Tax Policy and Working Families on 03/16. Voted Do Pass 9-0.

House Bill 327 – Rep. Lynn Morris (R-Nixa) – Establishes the Missouri Seniors Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. Heard in Agriculture Policy on 01/24. Voted Do Pass 9-3 on 01/31. Passed by Rules 11-0 on 02/15. Perfected by House on 03/01. Passed Fiscal Review and on House Calendar for Third Reading.

House Bill 420 – Rep. Joshua Peters (D-St. Louis City) – Establishes the Food Deserts Act, making loans available to grocery stores in “food deserts.” Not assigned to committee yet, so not apt to move forward.

House Bill 486 – Rep. Randy Dunn (D-Kansas City) – Authorizes a tax credit for the establishment of a grocery store in a food desert. Heard by Economic Development on 02/14. Voted Do Pass 7-5 on 03/07. Now in Rules.

House Bill 488 – Rep. Randy Dunn (D-Kansas City) – Authorizes a tax credit for donations of meat, eggs, milk, grains, fruits and vegetables to a food pantry. Heard in Ways and Means on 02/13. Voted Do Pass 13-0 on 02/23. Now in Rules.

Senate Bill 217 – Sen. Jamilah Nasheed (D-St. Louis City) – Adds donations to soup kitchens and homeless shelters to current benevolent tax credits list. Heard in Economic Development on 01/31. Voted Do Pass Consent on 02/14. Third Read and Passed as Consent bill on 03/01. Reported to House.

Note: There are several minimum wage increase bills, but none sponsored by the majority party, so there are unlikely to move forward.

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Bills That Could Make Hunger Worse

House Bill 164 – Rep. J. Eggleston (R-Maysville) – Prohibits use of TANF EBT cards to obtain cash (which the federal government does not allow). Assigned to Children and Families, but no hearing scheduled thusfar.

House Committee Substitute for House Bills 1193 & 1194 – Rep. Dan Shaul (HB 1193 - R-Imperial) and Rep. Jason Chipman (HB 1194- R-Steelville) – Preempts minimum wage increases above state minimum wage by political subdivisions. From the briefing by Marc Powers, chief of staff of the House Minority Caucus:

“After complaining that a St. Louis ordinance that ultimately would raise the citywide minimum wage to \$11 an hour is inappropriate because the minimum wage should be set at the state level, House Republicans on March 8 rejected a proposal to increase the statewide minimum wage to \$11 an hour as of 2020. The wage proposal fell on a near party-line vote 108-45, with Democrats in support and all but one Republican opposed.”

“Democrats proposed the statewide wage increase as an amendment to another measure, House Bill 1194, that seeks to block implementation of a St. Louis minimum wage ordinance. City officials enacted the ordinance in 2015, but it had been tied up in litigation until a unanimous Missouri Supreme Court upheld it on Feb. 28.”

“Also in 2015, the Republican-controlled General Assembly overrode a gubernatorial veto to enact a legislation prohibiting cities from having local minimum wages that are higher than the state minimum. However, that legislation included a grandfather clause allowing for higher local wage ordinances in effect as of Aug. 28, 2015, which St. Louis’ was.”

“HB 1194 would eliminate the grandfather clause, thus invalidating the St. Louis ordinance. The House on March 9 voted 111-45 to send the bill to the Senate for further debate.”

House Committee Bill 3 – Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick (R-Shell Knob) – eliminates the “Circuit Breaker” for renters.

Powers’ memo: “The House of Representatives on March 16 voted 85-72 in favor of legislation that would impose a tax increase on many low-income elderly and disabled Missourians who rent their homes. The bill would eliminate the “circuit breaker” tax credit for renters, which provides poor recipients an average break of \$535 a year.”

“The Republican backers of the measure, House Committee Bill 3, say the budgetary savings from eliminating the circuit breaker for renters is necessary to avoid cutting in-home and nursing home care for some disabled Missourians, as Republican Gov. Eric Greitens has proposed.”

“Democrats opposed the bill, saying that with the state annually forgoing as much as \$700 million a year in lost revenue from tax credits, most of which benefit corporations and wealthy developers, a relatively modest tax break for the elderly and disabled isn’t the first place lawmakers should target for savings.”