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State Senate
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This week in the Senate

March 20 - March 24, 2017

The Senate Finance Committee continued its work this week on the state budget with the goal of advancing it to the floor for full Senate debate. Areas of interest in the approximately \$8 billion budget includes K-12 education funding, higher education funding, improving the health of the state's pension system and cleanup costs for Hurricane Matthew. The Finance Committee is scheduled to resume deliberations on Tuesday. The infrastructure funding package, [H. 3516](#), also remains on the Senate's contested calendar, but some movement on it is expected next week.

Bills approved by the Senate this week include:

The following bills were read the third time -

[S. 114](#) - Senators Bennett and Senn: Allows for donations of alcoholic beverages to nonprofits for specially licensed events, as long as the beverages are sold and delivered through wholesalers.

S. 115 - Senators Rankin and Hutto: Establishes a new program to train persons who serve alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption.

S. 116 - Senators Rankin and Malloy: Requires that a person permitted or licensed to sell alcohol for on-premises consumption maintain liability insurance with coverage of at least \$1 million during the period of the permit or license.

S. 173 - Senators Sheheen and Turner: Requires certain law enforcement officers to receive training in mental health and addictive disorder crisis intervention during their recertification.

S. 359 - Senator Cromer: Gives the responsibility for keeping records related to investigations of possible unfair trade practices of motor fuel retailers solely to the Attorney General's office by no longer requiring the Department of Consumer Affairs to do so.

S. 404 - Senators Campbell, Gregory, Reese and Williams: Allows agribusiness operations or packaging operations to claim an income tax credit after meeting certain qualifications.

S. 428 - Senator Reese: Clarifies the tax apportionment formula used in the state in regards to broadcast satellite providers and separately clarifies that an existing tax credit for utilities is an annual credit calculation and not a lifetime credit.

S. 325 - Senator Sheheen: Transfers the Client Assistance Program from the Department of Administration to Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc., a statewide nonprofit organization. This is a result of restructuring from 2014.

S. 354 - Senators Alexander and Verdin: Amends the State Certification of Need and Health Facility Licensure Act by creating a new category of facility for crisis stabilization units operated or authorized by the Department of Mental Health.

S. 275 - Senator Bennett: Authorizes brewpubs to become breweries with attached restaurants, and would allow breweries with attached restaurants to sell beer, wine, and liquor by the drink for on-premises consumption.

S. 201 - Senators McElveen, Campbell, McLeod, Talley and Gregory: Changes the validity of a driver's license from ten years to eight years to comply with the requirements of the federal REAL ID Act of 2005.

H. 3358 - Authorizes the DMV to issue driver's licenses and identification cards that are in compliance with the REAL ID Act to qualifying citizens.

The following bills were read the second time -

S. 261 - Senator Alexander: Provides owners of qualified commercial properties with a financing tool for the purchase and installation of energy and water efficiency improvements to their buildings.

S. 9 - Senator Hutto: Removes an exclusion for injuries related to intoxication or narcotic use that health insurers have been permitted to include in individual health and accident insurance policies. These change would only apply to policies issued or renewed after December 31, 2017.

S. 271 - Senator Allen: Establishes a procedure to allow an inmate confined in a Department of Corrections facility and determined not to be a security risk to attend funeral services of certain individuals.

S. 444 - Senator Grooms: Changes “automotive three-wheel vehicle” to “autocycle” and provides for the definition and to update references in state law.

H. 3438 - Establishes a protocol to authorize pharmacists to substitute interchangeable biological products that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Look ahead to next week and beyond:

H. 3516, aimed at addressing infrastructure needs in the state, is expected to receive significant attention in the coming weeks. The bill increases the motor fuel user fee two cents per year over six years. When fully implemented, it’s estimated to generate about \$792 million.

Discussions of the state budget will also dominate much of the work of the Senate as the end of session approaches.

Also, the General Assembly’s crossover deadline, which is the last day for a bill to pass out of one chamber and then receive consideration from the other, occurs April 10.