

Legislative Bulletin



September 2013 ~ Missouri Trucking Association

Issue #5

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Missouri General Assembly Finalizes Historic Veto Session

When events occur, often time people tend to exaggerate the significance of said event. Everything is awesome, amazing or historic. Well this year the veto session truly deserved to be called historic. Since the Missouri Constitution was changed in 1875 requiring a 2/3's majority to override a veto, there have been a grand total of eight vetoes overridden. After the 2013 legislative session, the Governor vetoed 33 bills and the General Assembly, in which the Republicans have the 2/3's majority, set its sights on restoring some of the legislation they worked so hard to pass. History was made this veto session when the General Assembly overrode 10 of the Governor's vetoes, more than double the amount of overrides that have occurred in the last 138 years.

Two main issues came to the forefront over the summer and the Governor and Attorney General led the campaign to make sure the vetoes on those issues stood. Tax reform and the cutting of taxes on Missourians has long been a priority for Republicans in the General Assembly and this year, for the first time in around 100 years, they were successful in passing HB 253 which lowered corporate taxes and the personal income tax. After passage, several issues surfaced about the implications of some of the provisions in the bill and the Governor did a very effective job of pitting taxes breaks for large corporations against the reduction of funding for public education. In the end, the Governor was successful in making his case and the override came up woefully short (15 votes) sending the Republicans back to the drawing board in their efforts to lower the tax burden on Missourians.

The second issue was a bill (HB 436) to not allow the federal government to infringe on Missourian's second amendment rights. After several gun related tragedies, there was much discussion on the federal level of trying to make certain types of weapons illegal and limiting the amount of rounds a particular gun could have in its magazine. Concerns about HB 436 also arose after session with many people saying that it was unconstitutional to try and invalidate a federal law. Just before veto session, the Attorney General issued an opinion that he also thought the bill was unconstitutional. The veto was overridden in the House but failed by one vote in the Senate, so on the two major issues of the day, the Governor and Attorney General won out.

Of the bills that were overridden there was one that was of interest to the Missouri Trucking Association (MoTA) - HB 1035. It has been common practice in the state of Missouri that trucking companies are allowed to apportion the property tax for their equipment based on the amount of miles they run in Missouri. Over the last couple of years a particular county was not adhering to the opinion of the Missouri State Tax Commission and decided they were going to assess companies' trailers at 100%. After meeting with the county assessor several times it became evident he was not going to budge, so MoTA put forth language to codify what had been common practice in the state for many years. The language was passed in three bills, but only two were signed, the third HB 1035 was vetoed, but that was overridden so the association was three for three in getting this language passed.

Historic is a word thrown around a lot, but this year's veto session certainly qualified. These events reiterate the importance of being involved in the political process and knowing your local legislators. Take an active role in your local political scene; let your legislators know that as major job creators in your area which issues are important to you. As MoTA continues to advocate for issues to help trucking companies, it is always helpful if someone from back home is advocating for that same issue. The political wrangling should die down significantly now as legislators head home and prepare for the next regular session starting in January.

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