

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - MAR. 28, 2024

SESSION: The House of Representatives and Senate met on Monday to vote on various judicial, executive, and legislative nominations.

HOUSE DEMS/GOP DISCUSS BUDGET, PAID SICK DAYS, EVs: In a pre-session press conference on Monday, Democrat House Speaker Matt Ritter and Majority Leader Jason Rojas outlined the budget and paid sick leave as "big ticket items" they are hopeful to pass before the legislative session adjourns in under six weeks. Expecting to see very minor adjustments made to the budget, Speaker Ritter acknowledged "the budget is \$300/\$400M short of being great" and was optimistic the Office of Policy and Management can direct any remaining state agency ARPA funds toward budget shortages. The Speaker believes the House version of the paid sick leave bill accommodates concerns heard last year and that the vote will be tight but believes it can be passed this year. When asked about the likelihood of electric vehicle regulations being introduced next year, the Speaker indicated "whether the state adopts federal standards or California standards, we are woefully unprepared" and would like to see a commission to work through all the valid questions/concerns raised over the past six months. He said he doesn't anticipate regulations to be rolled out next year.

Republican House Minority Leader Vincent Candelora also held a press conference on Monday expressing concern over the proposed paid sick leave legislation, pointing out the state already has a family medical leave program in place being funded by workers via a half percent payroll deduction. He noted the program has a \$700M surplus and over a third of applicants are being denied benefits. "Rather than move onto a new program, we should look at how to make that program work for employees who are already paying into it" he said. The Minority Leader is concerned with the budget indicating revenues are eroding and the spending cap will be exhausted. "There are too many pressures, wage increases by Democrats are not helpful without approving a budget" he said, referring to the recently passed \$43M personal care assistants' contract. He also believes an attempt to balance the budget with state agency ARPA surpluses will fall short as the agencies have yet to report out their accountings to the Office of Policy and Management.

FREE SCHOOL BREAKFAST BILL RECEIVES PUBLIC HEARING: Testimony was presented on Tuesday on a bill that would provide an unspecified amount of funding from the General Fund to the Department of Education for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, to provide breakfasts to students at no cost in schools participating in the school breakfast program. The funds would also provide reimbursement to schools/school districts that have adopted the United States Department of Agriculture Community Eligibility Provision for the cost of student breakfasts as well.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE ADVANCES VARIOUS BILLS: The Judiciary Committee met on Tuesday advancing a number of youth-related bills that would: (1) mandate that persons convicted of hate/bias crimes participate in antibias; diversity awareness or community service-based programs specific to their violation; (2) permit eligibility for participation in a pretrial family violence education program for persons charged with certain violations against a child; (3) expand/fund a statewide truancy clinic program; and (4) adopt the recommendations

of the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Council. Also approved on the agenda was a bill by the House Chair to amend how the siting council reviews transmission projects and the possible effect on economic development.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE CONCLUDES ITS WORK: The Environment Committee met its JF deadline this week. The committee held a meeting on Wednesday advancing [HB 5440 - An Act Concerning Lifecycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Biofuels](#) which would require the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to use the greenhouse gases, regulated emissions, and energy use in technologies model in measuring lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of biofuels.

GOVERNOR LAMONT ANNOUNCES MICROTRANSIT SERVICES: In a press release on Monday (found [here](#)), Governor Lamont and Department of Transportation Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto announced an on-demand microtransit service. The two-year pilot program will provide seniors/disabled residents the ability to schedule transportation services within historically underserved areas of the state. Residents can call a phone number or use a smartphone app when requesting a ride. The program will roll out on a staggered basis from March 26 - July 30 to nine transit districts.

JF DEADLINES: The Commerce Committee, Education Committee, Energy and Technology Committee, Environment Committee, Government Administration & Elections Committee, Human Services Committee, Labor and Public Employees Committee, and Planning and Development Committee all met their JF deadlines this week. Any bill not voted out of committee is considered "dead" and will be moved to the end of your weekly bill tracking report.

STATE OFFICES ARE CLOSED TOMORROW: In observance of Good Friday, the Capitol and Legislative Office Building will be closed Friday, March 29, 2024.

Please let Lisa Roman know if you would like to "hide" the bills that were not voted out of Committee on your tracker. In Connecticut, the language in the bills can be resurrected at any time but the bill numbers on the tracker will be "dead."