

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

January 13, 2006

The new legislative session in Jefferson City has just concluded its second week and one of our priority bills has already been scheduled for a committee hearing. SB791 is to be heard at 3:00 p.m. Tuesday (Jan. 17) before the Senate Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws Committee. This is the proposal which would allow MoDOT employees to purchase as much as four years retirement credit for prior non-federal public service. The hearing is in the Senate Lounge.

Another of the Association's top legislative pursuits was filed this week in the House. HB 1268 would allow one day of retirement credit for every eight hours of unused sick leave. Present law states that unused sick leave is converted in one month increments. (One-twelfth of a year of creditable service for each 168 hours of unused sick leave.) This bill is sponsored by Rep. Mark Bruns of Jefferson City.

Worker safety-related bills have also been introduced in the House. HB1378 would establish "Travel Safe Zones" where fines would be doubled if warning signs are posted. HB 1379 would increase driver license point assessments for conviction of "Aggravated endangerment of a highway worker." This bill would also create a fine of \$10,000 for a driver who is convicted of an offense resulting in the death of a highway worker. Both of these bills are sponsored by Neal St. Onge who is chairman of the House Transportation Committee.

Other legislation introduced this week of interest to our association members is HB1305, the "Pension Reform Bill," by Rep. Todd Smith. Included in HB1305 is a provision that any retirement plan with a funded ratio of less than 80% would be prohibited from providing any additional benefit increases to its members. Another provision of this bill stipulates that any retirement plan whose funded ratio is below 50% for three consecutive years would be closed to new members. ("Funded ratio" is defined in the bill as "the ratio of the actuarial value of assets over its actuarial accrued liability.")

In a related matter, a special commission appointed by the governor to make recommendations regarding the consolidation of the MOSERS and MoDOT retirement systems was scheduled to meet Monday, Jan. 9 (as reported last week in the Association report). The meeting, however, was cancelled. A make-up date for that meeting has not been scheduled. There has been no legislation filed to require the consolidation of the two retirement systems.

**From Harry Hill, Lobbyist
Missouri Highway and Transportation Employees' Association**