



State Highway and Transportation Employees Association of Missouri

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The Association Report from the Capitol

January 16, 2004

Another Missouri legislative session cranked up last week with budgetary matters high on the agenda of issues to solve this year during the five and ½ months the general assembly is scheduled to meet. Our Association has a number of legislative proposals designed to benefit our members during their active years of employment as well as our retirees.

We're looking at a comprehensive job study bill for MoDOT that includes recommendations for a pay raise. Also being drafted is the "Transportation Service Accountability Act." This would require MoDOT to use specific guidelines when deciding whether it would be more efficient to privatize a particular service or continue performing it with department employees. Rep. Tom Green of St. Charles is working on this bill.

A more efficient utilization of accumulated unused sick leave and unused vacation time also are to be addressed in our legislative agenda. One of those being prepared would allow the conversion of unused sick leave to retirement credit in 1-day (8-hour) segments rather than a minimum of 1-month conversion increments. Another bill being considered would allow unused sick leave and vacation time to be used as retirement time and subsequently used to reach "80 and out" retirement status.

Other bills of interest to us include SB 976 and SB 977, both sponsored by Sen. Steve Stoll of Festus. SB 976 would help strengthen the annuities of persons who retired before July 1, 1990. The bill would provide an additional \$5 per month multiplied by the number of years of service for those retirees who qualify. SB 977 would allow retirement annuity cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) be based on 100% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) not to exceed 5% of the annuity amount before the COLA. If passed, SB 977 would become effective Aug. 28, 2004.

This year's legislative session began at noon, Jan. 7 and ends at 6 p.m., May 14.

From Harry Hill, Lobbyist