

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

April 4, 2005

A legislative proposal that would merge the MoDOT and MOSERS retirement systems ran into a room-full of resistance Wednesday night (Mar.30) at a committee hearing for HB333 at the State Capitol.

Our Association along with dozens of other MoDOT and highway patrol active and retired employees expressed their displeasure with the bill which could essentially force the take over of the MoDOT retirement system by MOSERS. Those who support the idea insist that putting the two systems together would provide a broader base of financial strength and result in better long-term benefits for retirees.

However most of the people attending the hearing were not convinced it was a good idea. Many at the hearing said they liked the personal attention they received from our retirement system and resented being forced to join another system. Still others said they didn't want to lose MoDOT representation on the retirement board as the bill proposes.

Association President Mark O'Dowd got to the heart of the matter when he told the committee that our people have a history with the MoDOT retirement system and are reluctant to leave it so abruptly.

“Our Association helped start the MoDOT retirement system more than 50 years ago,” Mr. O'Dowd said. “We just can't give it up this easily without knowing the consequences. We need to have some issues clarified and some questions answered. Our people deserve a long, hard look at this before making a move of this magnitude.”

It was also pointed out at the hearing that the cost of the merger proposal, even in a committee substitute bill, would be more than \$10 million from general revenue. It was noted that the price tag is a hefty sum, especially in these particularly tough budgetary times. The committee did not vote on the bill at the Wednesday night hearing.

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