

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

February 13, 2004

More of our Association's priority bills have been filed and assigned to committees as the legislative session moves into its second month of work. And while the house and senate have expended numerous hours of floor debate aimed at a university "name change," the real focus of attention is on committee work.

One of our bills which was assigned recently to a senate committee is SB1216, sponsored by Sen. Harry Kennedy of St. Louis. This bill, known as the "buy back" bill, would give MoDOT employees a better opportunity to buy retirement credit for prior public service. The bill would allow the employee to buy up to four years local government prior service (non-federal) at a reduced contribution rate.

The "buy back" bill has been assigned to the Senate Pensions and General Laws Committee. A public hearing has not been scheduled however it is expected to be heard in the next week or two. Sen. Kennedy is from St. Louis and served in the house before his election to the senate in a 2001 special election.

Another one of our priorities would allow a more efficient conversion of unused, accumulated sick leave for retirement credit. It is found in HB 1316. This bill would allow one day of creditable service for every eight hours of unused sick leave. In present law, the conversion rate is one-twelfth (a month) of a year creditable service for each 168 hours of unused sick leave. The premise behind the proposal, in addition to being fair to the employee, is that the state would benefit by reducing the temptation for employees to arbitrarily miss work or call in sick when they are nearing retirement and cannot convert unused sick leave to another purpose.

HB 1316 is sponsored by Rep. Gary Kelly of Richmond. The bill has been assigned to the House Retirement Committee. No hearing has been scheduled.

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