

# The **Association** report

## from the **Capitol**

February 4, 2005

Although the new legislative session seems to be moving at a slower pace than in recent years, several bills have been introduced that could affect our Association members. Some observers have said that the process is two to three weeks behind schedule and is due to a number of factors including about 40 new members in the legislative bodies.

Similar bills have been introduced in the house and senate which would require that the MoDOT and Highway Patrol Retirement System be merged in the MOSERS retirement system. In the senate the bill is SB275 and in the house it is HB333. The senate sponsor is Sen. Jason Crowell who is chairman of the Senate Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws Committee. The house sponsor is Rep. Todd Smith, chairman of the House Retirement Committee.

The bills state that the respective boards of directors are supposed to have a written agreement by which the two systems would be merged no later than Jan. 31, 2005. According to the bills, if an agreement is not reached, the MoDOT and Highway Patrol Retirement Board would forfeit its power and that power and responsibility would be assumed by the MOSERS board on Jan. 1, 2006. The bill also would place the MoDOT director and the superintendent of the highway patrol on the MOSERS board from Sept 1, 2005 to Sept. 1, 2008.

Also introduced recently is HB239 which would establish a system for state employees to pay their health insurance premiums based on their salaries. State employees who make \$40,000 and less would make no contribution for their health insurance coverage for themselves or their families. However employees who make more than \$40,000 would pay nothing for themselves but would pay a percentage of their income for the coverage of a spouse and their children under the health care plan.

Two bills introduced recently are called "retirement system cleanup" proposals. The two, HB334 in the house and SB276 in the senate, are of a non-controversial nature but are expected to be vehicles for other retirement proposals that may come up. I'll have more on these bills and others we are drafting in the coming weeks.

**From Harry Hill, Lobbyist  
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