



To no one's surprise, Sen. Jeanie Riddle has decided to push forward with her absurd bill to attack NPs. On **Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 2PM, the Senate Professional Registration Committee will hear testimony on Riddle's own SB 8**, which has been the subject of several emails and requests for NPs to contact committee members. As you may recall, SB 8 is detrimental to NPs in the following ways:

**Definition of Surgery** – Despite any suggestions to the contrary, proposed revisions to 334.010.6 will significantly and detrimentally limit procedures that are currently routinely performed in countless health care facilities all across Missouri. In addition to prohibiting routine procedures that are commonly performed, this revision would place an even greater burden on physicians to perform these tasks that are now completed by other competent health care providers, thereby increasing the demand on the physician workforce.

**Use of Title** – Many of the proposed revisions in SB 8 seek to impose punitive penalties on health care providers for utilizing titles that they have rightfully earned through their academic and clinical education. Tens of thousands of Missourians have earned doctorate degrees across a diverse spectrum of professions including, but not limited to, nurses, veterinarians, chiropractors, physical therapists, and numerous others. While we agree that no profession should infer that they are physicians when they are not, we also strongly oppose efforts to inhibit those who have achieved the highest level of education from using an academic title. Furthermore, existing statutes provide for penalties for misrepresentations on qualifications, making this proposed language duplicative and unnecessary.

**Advertising** – Several proposed revisions contained within SB 8 provide a mechanism for penalties against providers for circumstances that are often beyond their control or for which they have no knowledge of. Language that penalizes practitioners for using academic titles in signs, literature, and other material when those decisions are often made by advertising or marketing professionals is inherently unfair, particularly when the health care provider has no knowledge or role in the action that this bill's language defines.

On Friday, AMNP sent out a request to once again call and email members of the Senate Professional Registration Committee. **We are asking for all NPs to submit written testimony to the committee to OPPOSE SB 8 because of the draconian impact it will have on patient access to routine health care procedures.** If you'd rather provide testimony in person, you are welcome to do so as well, but understand that seating will be limited in the Senate Lounge due to COVID restrictions.

This year, the Senate has revised the way that they plan to handle written testimony. Now, anyone wishing to submit written testimony will need to briefly create an account on the Senate website, log in, provide information on what bill you are opposing, and attach the written document as a file. Although the process looks complicated, you

can have everything completed in under five minutes. To begin the process, please click here: [Senate Witness System | Missouri Senate \(mo.gov\)](#). Once on that link, click on Not A Lobbyist, fill in the required information, select the Professional Registration Committee, and select that you are testifying in OPPOSITION to SB 8. You'll have a chance to attach your testimony on that screen.

Additionally, if you'd like to listen to the hearing live, you can stream the audio on the Senate website by clicking here: [chamber.senate.mo.gov:8080/Lounge](#). Please note that the audio feed has had some challenges since the beginning of session. Nevertheless, our team will have the full audio file to send out to members if you aren't able to catch the hearing.

If you haven't already done so, I URGE YOU TO SUBMIT WRITTEN TESTIMONY to advise committee members of how this legislation would adversely impact your patients and your profession. At a time when America's most trusted health care providers are needed the most, the last thing we need to worry about are needless pieces of legislation. Please don't assume your NP colleagues are going to act on your behalf. Add your voice to the growing push back against these senseless proposals.

In other APRN news this week, several bills relating directly to NPs were referred to their respective committees in the Senate. SB 177, filed by Sen. Justin Brown, grants NPs the ability to order home health services for patients (that only previously permitted physicians to do so). It was referred to the Senate Committee on Seniors, Families, and Children. SB 193, filed by Sen. Bob Onder, eliminates the geographic mileage restrictions on NPs in collaborative practice agreements. It was referred to the Senate Health & Pensions Committee. Finally, SB 223 also filed by Sen. Onder, prohibits non-compete agreements between NPs and non-profit health systems and hospitals. It was also referred to the Senate Health & Pensions Committee. These bills along with SB 41 which creates a license for APRNs have been referred to committee and we expect hearings on one or more of the bills within the next couple of weeks. Additionally, we expect that SB 293 which removes all barriers for NPs, will be referred to committee on Thursday or Friday.

In other Capitol happenings, lawmakers and lobbyists alike were stunned by what happened with Gov. Parson's annual State of the State Address. The speech is traditionally held in the House chamber and attended by House members, Senate members, Cabinet officials, and special guests. Approximately four hours before the governor was slated to begin his speech, the Speaker of the House informed the governor's office that they could NOT use the House chamber, setting off a cascade of events that left the governor's staff scrambling to come up with an alternate plan. Rather than hold the speech in the lower chamber, the governor delivered his annual budget and policy proposals in the Senate chamber, which is noticeably smaller and far less equipped to handle larger crowds. The events set off an immediate back and forth between House leadership and the governor's office, which isn't helpful to legislative action moving forward. It remains to be seen if the offices can resolve their differences enough to be productive.

Despite the tensions between the second and third floors and the resulting fiasco, business resumed as normal this week for the beginning stages of session, with committee hearings in full swing on both sides of the building. Although the House still has a couple of committees that have not yet had their organizational meetings, most have hearings teed up for the coming week and are ready to start moving bills to the floor for debate. In the Senate, committees are firing on all cylinders and pushing big agenda items to the calendar for immediate action.

Both the House and the Senate perfected their first bills of the 2021 session this week, with the House debating Speaker Vescovo's priority legislation dealing with adoption and foster parenting. The bills – HB 429 and HB 430 were handled by former foster mom and NP supporter Rep. Hannah Kelly. They grant tax credits for foster expenses and a \$10,000 adoption credit. In the Senate, SB 2 filed by Sen. Dan Hegeman was debated and sent to the House after short debate. It is expected that both chambers will spend more time on floor debate in the coming week as the wheels begin to turn in Jefferson City.

Another item of note this week was the expulsion of Rep. Wiley Price from the House Democrat Caucus. Rep. Price was censured two weeks ago by his House colleagues for inappropriate text messages with an intern and subsequently threatening his legislative assistant. A proposal to completely expel him from the Missouri House of Representatives was defeated and Price remains as a representative without a party home.

Suffice it to say that the Missouri State Capitol is never without drama and the next few weeks will be very telling as to what happens with the 2021 legislative session. We remain hopeful that we will be able to move legislation that benefits NPs while simultaneously defeating ill-conceived bills that are harmful to patients and the overall health care delivery system.

Also, in case you haven't seen it, Gov. Parson's office has unveiled a new COVID Vaccination Dashboard for Missouri. The dashboard includes the total doses administered, the number of people who have received one or both shots, as well as demographic info for people that have received it. To access the dashboard and additional COVID resources, please visit [Vaccine – Show Me Strong \(mo.gov\)](https://vaccine-show-me-strong.mo.gov).

As always, if you have any questions or we can help you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [nursepractitioners@missourinp.org](mailto:nursepractitioners@missourinp.org). We value your membership in AMNP and are doing everything we can to fight for you and your patients. Thank you for investing in your profession, your association, and your future of practice.