LOCAL SCENE

SPENCER

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During his time in the House, Spencer said he voted on legislation based on what constituents told him they wanted and needed. That would sometimes put him on the opposite side of fellow Republicans, but he said what's right for local residents came before party.

Spencer voted in favor of a state Right-to-Work amendment, which would reduce the power of labor unions, that voters strongly rejected in 2018. Spencer told The Record he had opposed Right-to-Work twice before then, but changed his vote based on voter surveys in take his role as a representative for granted.

Until then, Spencer said he'll be teaching full time and working as a volunteer in the area to continue making a difference.

PORTER

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10% of school days, the family in custody or receiving benefits for that child would have their benefits reduced by 65% for six months.

Porter said the bill is aimed at forcing parents to be accountable for their children's schooling.

"There needs to be some parent accountability ... and the only control we have at the state level is income for (student-supported families)," Porter explained. "If we're going to tax taxpayers' money for kids to be educated, I want to make sure the benefit is going to be there."

Porter said 90% attendance is very attainable, and that kids need to be in school to have the best chance at future success.

Another of Porter's bills would slightly increase funding for students who attend class virtually. The state currently only pays schools 94% of their per-student funding for virtual learners. Porter's bill would increase that amount slightly, and provide quicker reimbursements. That change was requested by Warren County R-III Superintendent Dr. Gregg Klingensmith, Porter said.

"That was a new one for me, and I'm glad to be a part of it," Porter commented.

A returning bill from last year, also requested by local schools, would allow districts with a four-day week to schedule earlier start dates each year.

Public safety

Porter is renewing his push to pass a complete ban on texting while driving. Currently, drivers over age 21 can legally text while operating a vehicle.

"It's increasingly becoming an issue, the way things are going with the number of wrecks by people driving while texting," Porter commented. "I'm for hands-free if you're going to talk to somebody, or hands-free texting. To look down and take your eyes off the road, the chance of mishap increases dramatically.

Porter has also proposed a "Caller ID Anti-Spoofing Act," which would make it illegal to provide fraudulent identification through caller ID systems, otherwise known as spoofing. The practice is used by scammers to impersonate legitimate businesses or agencies.

Porter has filed a number of other bills related to insurance industry requirements, charitable organizations, commerce and state employment law.

Committee appointments

Porter has been named the vice-chairman of the House transportation and insurance committees. An insurance agent by trade, Porter said both topics have been of interest to him. Improving Interstate 70 and preventing tolling are ongoing priorities for transportation, he said.

Porter has also been appointed to a special committee on homeland security, which he said is being convened with an eye on recent political unrest. Missouri Capitol security is likely to be one of the discussions, he said.

"Trying to keep the People's House secure for all and do the business of the people," as Porter described it.

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