

[View this email in your browser](#)

DISTRICT
14

ASHLEY AUNE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

CAPITOL REPORT

February 10, 2023



We're ready for the Chiefs to bring home another Super Bowl win!

Hello K.D.,

I hope this email finds you well! **Thursday, the House passed an omnibus "public safety" bill that was originally intended to address violent crime in St. Louis, but does very little to do so.** (Read more below).

As much as the substance of the bill is the problem, the process by which it happened was absolutely indefensible. First, **the original HB 301 was presented in committee after months of bipartisan work on an interim committee—a cross section of lawmakers that meet outside of regular session.** What ensued was nothing short of a conservative meltdown and subsequent coup...

Last Thursday, **conservative committee members basically took over, stripped out common sense, bipartisan provisions, and turned this bill into something I simply could not support.** One of the provisions they removed would have [banned children from openly carrying firearms](#) on public property.

Wednesday morning, **they closed it off to amendments hours before we anticipated**—leaving us scrambling to redraft amendments to the amendments before floor debate.

Then, **after negotiating 3 hours for debate, they strategically used up floor time and prevented us from offering our amendments** (which the supermajority would vote down anyway...).

And finally, when the bill was third read yesterday, **Republican leadership shut down debate after a member of the Black Caucus simply questioned the legitimacy of a majority white group of lawmakers making decisions for a minority community without their input.**

I'm disappointed and disgusted. And I'm regrouping before the fight for a true, representative democracy continues next week.

As always, thanks for checking in. Please don't hesitate to reach out if there's anything I can do for you.

Take Care,



Representative Ashley Aune
District 14 | (573) 751-3618

Legislative Update

HOUSE SEEKS TO MAKE IT HARDER TO AMEND STATE CONSTITUTION

On a straight party-line vote of 108-50, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives on Feb. 2 advanced a proposed constitutional amendment that would require a three-fifths supermajority of voters to approve future constitutional amendments proposed by the initiative petition. However, if this particular measure clears the legislature and makes it on the statewide ballot, only a simple majority would be needed for ratification – **the same threshold for amendments that has been in place in Missouri since 1820.**

Because the legislature can't unilaterally alter constitutional provisions, Republicans have prioritized making it harder to amend the Missouri Constitution after voters in

PARSON APPOINTEE QUILTS AFTER COURT SUSPENDS HIS LAW LICENSE

A member of the state Administrative Hearing Commission **resigned** Jan. 31 shortly after the **Missouri Supreme Court suspended his law license for at a minimum two years** due to misconduct committed in 2018 when he was an associate circuit court judge in Macon County. Gov. Mike Parson appointed the now-former commissioner to powerful post in 2019 despite an earlier reprimand from the high court for previous misconduct.

Philip Prewitt, a Macon Republican, served as a judge from 2011 to 2018, when he was defeated for re-election. The Supreme Court reprimanded him in 2015 for four separate misconduct counts. Several months after voters removed Prewitt from the bench, Parson appointed Prewitt to the

recent years ratified a string of constitutional changes GOP lawmakers had opposed, including Medicaid expansion, recreational marijuana legalization and legislative ethics reform.

While the primary purpose of [House Joint Resolution 43](#) is to require support from at least 60 percent of voters to ratify future constitutional amendments, the deceptive ballot language Republicans wrote for the measure falsely claims it would prevent non-citizens from voting on ballot measures. **However, the Missouri Constitution already restricts voting to U.S. citizens.** The new supermajority requirement – the main purpose for the measure – isn't mentioned until the very end of the ballot question.

HJR 43 now advances to the Senate. If approved by the upper chamber, it automatically would go on the November 2024 statewide ballot unless the governor exercises his constitutional authority to set an earlier election date.

LEGAL RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA SALES BEGIN FEB. 6 IN MISSOURI

Recreational marijuana sales to adults will begin at some Missouri dispensaries by Monday, Feb. 6 – the last day state regulators have to approve the first round of license conversion requests by existing medical marijuana sellers seeking to expand into the recreational market.

Missouri voters ratified a constitutional amendment legalizing recreational marijuana use and possession for those age 21 and older in November, and it took effect Dec. 8. However, legalized sales for recreational use didn't begin instantly since the amendment gives the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, which oversees the state's marijuana industry, up to [60 days to approve licenses for recreational sales](#).

Although adult recreational marijuana use and possession is generally legal in

Administrative Hearing Commission, a quasi-judicial panel that reviews appeals of decisions made by state agencies.

The court's suspension of Prewitt's law license stems from misconduct during his unsuccessful re-election campaign in 2018. In a conversation recorded as part of an FBI investigation, **Prewitt threatened a political opponent** in an attempt to coerce her into dropping plans to run against him. Prewitt was not charged with any crimes relating to matter.

BLACK SENATORS OPPOSE BILL BANNING TEACHING ABOUT RACISM

On the first day of Black History Month, the Missouri Senate on Feb. 1 began debating Republican-sponsored legislation to **largely prohibit public schools from teaching about past or present racism in society.** The Senate set the bill aside after Black senators spent about three hours airing their opposition to it, but the chamber is expected to return to it at a later date.

[Senate Bill 4](#) would ban K-12 schools from teaching "critical race theory," a concept taught in some law schools that examines racism's continuing effect on institutions but that is not taught in Missouri elementary or secondary schools.

However, **Republican politicians commonly mischaracterize CRT** to encompass any discussion of race or racism in public schools.

MEDICAID OFFICIAL EXPECTS ENROLLMENT DROP AS CHECKS RESUME

Around 200,000 Missourians are expected to lose Medicaid coverage over the next year as the state resumes eligibility checks that had been on hold since 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, MO HealthNet Division Director Mark Richardson told a House appropriations committee on Feb. 1, according to a Feb. 2 story by the [Missouri Independent](#).

Missouri, **many restrictions remain, including a ban on public consumption and a prohibition on use by minors, with violations punishable by a maximum \$100 civil fine.** Civil fines for possessing more than 3 ounces of marijuana range from \$250 for a first offense to \$1,000 for a third or subsequent offense.

HOUSE APPROVES BILL ALLOWING SOME FELONS TO CARRY GUNS

The Republican-controlled House of Representatives on Feb. 9 voted 109-35 to advance legislation to make it legal for many convicted felons to carry firearms and empower the governor to essentially takeover the prosecution of violent crime in St. Louis city, among other provisions. The bill now advances to the Senate.

Under longstanding Missouri law, it is a crime for any convicted felon to purchase or possess firearms. [House Bill 301](#) would restore guns rights to non-violent felons, but possession of firearms would remain a criminal offense for those convicted of violent felonies.

Another provision of the bill would give the governor the authority to appoint a special prosecutor who would have exclusive jurisdiction over most violent crime in St. Louis city, thus supplanting the elected local prosecutor. **The special prosecutor would not have to be a city resident.** This provision marks the latest effort by Gov. Mike Parson and legislative Republicans to strip authority from St. Louis Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner, the only elected Black woman prosecutor in Missouri.

Not coincidentally, the same day lawmakers approved HB 301, the House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee considered six separate, but similar, bills to strip St. Louis' municipal government of control over its police department and place the agency back under the authority of a state board controlled by the governor. The department had been under state control for more than 150 years until 2012, when 63.9 percent of

Medicaid eligibility status changes frequently, with recipients commonly going on and off the rolls due to income fluctuations. But for the last three years, annual eligibility verification has been on hold to ensure Missourians didn't lose coverage during a public health emergency.

TWO STATE SUPREME COURT JUDGES TO RETIRE LATER THIS YEAR

Missouri Supreme Court Judges Patricia Breckenridge and George Draper III will step down later this year when they reach the state's mandatory judicial retirement age of 70. Chief Justice Paul Wilson announced the pending departures during the annual State of the Judiciary address before a joint session of the General Assembly.

Under the state's Nonpartisan Court Plan, the Missouri Appellate Judicial Commission will submit three finalists for each vacancy to Gov. Mike Parson, who must choose from those finalists or forfeit the decision to the commission. Once he fills the pending vacancies, Parson will have appointed three members of the seven-member Supreme Court.

ATTEMPTED FRAUD SCHEME SKEWS JANUARY REVENUE FIGURES

An attempted fraud scheme made it appear net state general revenue collections for January 2023 had jumped a whopping 55.1 percent compared to January 2022, according to a [Feb. 8 news release](#) Missouri Office of Budget and Planning announcing the state revenue collections for the month. The release made just a passing reference to the fraud in a footnote noting that the reported January collections are inaccurate because of it.

However, the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) later reported the Missouri Department of Revenue discovered scheme when it received a flood of fraudulent tax payments in late January. A department spokeswoman told the paper the false payments were

Missouri voters approved a ballot measure restoring local control.

HB 301 originally contained a provision that would prohibit children from publicly carrying firearms without adult supervision. During committee, however, **Republicans stripped it from the bill, claiming it would violate the Second Amendment rights of gun-toting kids.** The move was opposed by Democrats, who argued it was one of the bill's few provisions aimed at actually preventing crime rather than addressing prosecutions after crimes have been committed.

intended to trigger refunds from the department's payment system but that no taxpayer money was lost.

Before the fraud skewed the numbers, revenue collections had been expected to plummet in January with the implementation of a massive income tax cut the legislature enacted last fall. State budget officials said the reversal of the fraudulent payments will be reflected in the February revenue numbers.

HOUSE APPROVES \$627.15 MILLION SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET BILL

The House of Representatives voted 148-2 on Feb. 9 to grant first-round approval to a nearly \$627.15 million emergency supplemental appropriations bill for the FY 2023 state budget. The bill includes spending authority to provide state workers with an immediate 8.7 percent pay raise.

Gov. Mike Parson has asked lawmakers to quickly grant final passage to the bill so the raises can take effect March 1. Parson said the increase is necessary to offset high inflation and help stem a recent exodus of state workers to higher-paying private sector jobs that has left the state with about 7,000 open positions.

Although Parson's original plan also would have provided raises to lawmakers and statewide elected officials, the House Budget Committee stripped those pay bumps from the measure, [House Bill 14](#). A second vote is required to advance the bill to the Senate.

Tax Tips

Most taxpayers enjoy saving money.
Lucky, most taxpayers qualify for
IRS Free File.



Most people can use #IRSFreeFile online options to prepare their tax returns and file them electronically. If you are ready to file your 2022 #IRS taxes, see if you qualify for free software: www.irs.gov/freefile

Health and Wellness



**No woman
should die of
cervical cancer.**

You can help prevent cervical cancer by getting screened regularly.

Call 866-726-9926 today to see if you qualify for a free screening.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

No woman should die of cervical cancer. You can help prevent cervical cancer by getting screened regularly.

Call 866-726-9926 today to see if you qualify for a free screening through our Show

Me Healthy Women program! You can also visit [Health.Mo.Gov/smhw](https://www.health.mo.gov/smhw).



Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

This email was sent to dems@plattedems.org
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Missouri House of Representatives · 201 W Capitol Ave Rm 109E · Jefferson City, MO 65101-1556 · USA

Grow your business with  **mailchimp**