



August 25, 2023

## Capitol Report

Hi All

Happy Friday! I hope you are keeping cool and staying hydrated! I'm excited for our scholars who started back at school this week. Whether you're a student in the Park Hill District or starting a semester at UMKC or one of our fine community colleges, the work you're doing is meaningful. Take on the challenge to grow as a student with an open mind, set goals, and remember to use the academic and mental health resources on campus to help you succeed. You'll have a great year.

I've been keeping busy, too! Last week, I went to Kentucky for the 2023 Henry Tolls Fellow program for an intensive five-day "leadership boot camp." It was rewarding to work with another diverse group of professionals to push me to grow as a leader. I'm thankful for the opportunities to develop my skills as a public servant this year.

Don't forget that this is an interactive process, and I'd love to hear from you about issues that matter to you. Stay tuned; I have more exciting updates as we approach veto session in a few weeks!

Sincerely,



  
Jamie J. Johnson

State Representative - District 12

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# **This Week in Jefferson City**

## **New laws enacted in 2023 session set to take effect Aug. 28**

Most of the new laws the Missouri General Assembly passed during its spring legislative session will take effect Aug. 28, including a prohibition on texting or cell phone use while driving, an expansion of post-partum medical coverage for mothers of newborns, tax breaks for the entertainment industry.

Missouri is one of the last states to impose a comprehensive ban on texting or using a cell phone while driving, but penalties for violations are still 18 months away as police can only issue warnings until Jan. 1, 2025. Even after the grace period ends and police can start writing tickets, the law will prohibit officers from stopping drivers solely because of alleged device use.

Medicaid coverage for post-partum care, previously capped at 60 days, will now last for a full year under an expansion of the program aimed at providing more support to new mothers. Another important change to the state's social safety net programs lawmakers approved this year ends the "cliff effect" that resulted in participants losing all benefits due to a small increase in income. The state will now offer transitional benefits to make it easier for recipients to financially establish themselves through a gradual reduction of subsidies.

Making Missouri a hub for television and film production is the purpose of the new tax incentives lawmakers approved in the state's latest attempt to create entertainment industry jobs. Previous incentives the state offered expired years ago due to concerns the revenue lost through tax breaks exceeded the economic return to the state.

Another new law of interest increases the minimum state training requirements for law enforcement officers and expands the grounds for which the Missouri Department of Public Safety director may discipline officers. Lawmakers also have authorized local counties to shield qualifying senior citizens from future property tax increases on their homes, although implementation by counties is optional and a challenge to the law's constitutionality is expected.

## **Judicial commission announces Supreme Court finalists**

The Missouri Appellate Judicial Commission on Aug. 22 chose three members of the state Court of Appeals as finalists for an open seat on the Missouri Supreme Court. Gov. Mike Parson appointed all three to their current judicial posts by and will decide which of them replaces Judge George Draper III, who recently retired after nearly 13 years on the high court.

Two of the finalists – Judges Michael Gardner and Kelly Broniec – are part of the appellate court's St. Louis-based Eastern District, while Judge Ginger Gooch sits on its Southern District, located in Springfield. All three are University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law graduates.

Broniec, currently the Eastern District's chief judge, served more than 14 years as an associate circuit judge in Montgomery County before Parson appointed her to the Court of Appeals in October 2020. Prior to becoming a judge, she was Montgomery County prosecuting attorney from 1999-2006.

Gardner was in private practice for nine years before being elected as a Cape Girardeau County circuit judge in 2014. Parson appointed him to the Court of Appeals in February 2020.

Gooch has less than a year of judicial experience, with Parson putting her on the Court of Appeals just last November. She was previously in private practice and had been a partner with the Husch-Blackwell law firm.

Parson, a Republican, must appoint one of the three finalists by no later than Oct. 21 or he will forfeit the selection to the commission. The two judges not picked this time likely will soon have a second chance as another vacancy will open in October when Judge Patricia Breckenridge retires. When presented with multiple vacancies on the same court in a short time span, the commission typically resubmits the names of the previous finalists while adding a third to replace the person appointed the last time around.

## Upcoming Events

**August 25, 2023**

### **Park Hill High vs. Columbia Battle Football**

Park Hill District Football Stadium,

Weatherby Lake, MO 64152

8:00pm

**August 25, 2023**

### **Hot Summer Nights: Parkville**

Historic Downtown Parkville

12 Main St, Parkville, MO 64152

5-8pm

**August 26, 2023**

### **Parkville Farmer's Market**

Parkville Farmer's Market

S East St, Parkville, MO 64152

7am-12pm

Feel free to contact my office with your questions or requests.

573-751-9760



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