



Capitol Report

## Capitol Report

Hi All,

This week, I was back in Jefferson City for Veto Session, where the general assembly considered overriding legislation vetoed by the Governor. I got to reconnect with my colleagues and meet with three of my committees on important issues. In Accounts and Administrations, we considered a new program for constituent management services, which we ultimately decided to table for two years. In Children and Families, we discussed programs in the Department of Social Services that affect the youth in our state. In Consent and House Procedure, we granted the use of the House chamber for students to participate in the annual [Missouri Constitution Project](#). On Wednesday, the full House convened and overrode 14 vetoes, but the Senate declined to consider any of the motions.

It was great to be back in the Capitol. As I head home to continue local work and prepare for next session, please remember to share this newsletter and follow me on social media, and I'll keep you updated.

Sincerely,



Jamie J. Johnson

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## Topline News



This week, I met with advocates like parent leader Crystal Gutierrez and provider fellows Belina Raines and Jessica Trang & Dr. Julie Holland of Parent Leadership Training Institute-Kansas City. They are working with Kids Win Missouri to elevate parents' voices in Kansas City and strengthen their capacity to advocate for better early childhood care and education policies at the state level. As a parent of a child (now an adult) with learning challenges all through elementary and secondary school, navigating the system of IEPs and finding my voice to advocate for her was so important in her success throughout her education and on into college. I'm grateful for these organizations' work to support parents as advocates.



The Children and Families Committee heard from the Department of Social Services. They provided us with insight on their operations and information on their programs, like the Children's Division instituted Temporary Alternative Placement Agreements (TAPA). I look forward to continuing the dialogue and working with them to improve the lives of children in our state.

## This Week in Jefferson City

### New Supreme Court pick creates female majority.

For at least a couple weeks, women will constitute a majority on the Missouri Supreme Court for the first time in state history. However, because one of those women judges is retiring Oct. 1, the court's female majority could be short-lived. Gov. Mike Parson, a Republican, appointed Judge Kelly Broniec to the high court on Sept. 12 to replace Judge George Draper, who retired in August after 13 years on the Supreme Court and nearly 30 years of total judicial

service. Broniec, 52, had been serving on the Missouri Court of Appeals Eastern District, a post to which Parson appointed her in October 2020. She previously served more than 14 years as Montgomery County associate circuit judge and was the county's prosecuting attorney from 1999-2006. Although Broniec's appointment gives the seven-member Supreme Court four women judges, that will soon drop to three with the pending retirement of Judge Patricia Breckenridge, who is leaving after 16 years on the high court and more than 41 years on the bench. Like Draper, Breckenridge is about to reach the state's mandatory judicial retirement age of 70. Broniec was one of three finalists selected by the Missouri Appellate Judicial Commission to fill the Draper vacancy. The others, both members of the Court of Appeals, were Judge Michael Gardner of the court's St. Louis-based Eastern District and Judge Ginger Gooch of the Southern District in Springfield. Like Broniec, Parson had appointed both to the appellate bench. If the commission follows its usual practice, Gardner and Gooch will be among the finalists for the Breckenridge vacancy, with the panel picking a third candidate to submit to the governor. The seven-member commission consists of Chief Justice Mary Rhodes Russell, three attorneys elected by the Missouri Bar and three non-attorneys chosen by the governor. It is expected to announce the latest slate of finalists on Oct. 24. With Broniec replacing Draper, a 2011 appointee of Democratic former Gov. Jay Nixon, the Supreme Court will consist of five judges picked by Republican governors and two chosen by Democrats. That 5-2 split won't be disturbed when Breckenridge, a Republican appointee, is replaced.

## **New Senate blocks House's 14 budget veto override attempts**

The Senate on Sept. 13 blocked efforts by the House of Representatives to restore some of the \$555.3 million in spending authority Gov. Mike Parson vetoed from the \$51 billion state budget for the 2024 fiscal year. Both chambers are controlled by Parson's fellow Republicans. Parson issued a total of 179 line-item budget vetoes to strike spending authority from the current budget. Although the House of Representatives mustered the two-thirds supermajority needed to override the governor on 14 of those line items, the override efforts died for lack of action in the Senate, which adjourned the legislature's annual veto session without taking any votes on the House's override motions. Of the House's 14 overrides, nine collectively sought to restore a combined \$11.5 million for a special pay hike for the Missouri State Highway Patrol, while a 10th would have reinstated nearly \$27,000 for a similar pay raise for the state Capitol Police. Parson vetoed the salary bumps because they exceeded the 8.7 percent raises granted to all state employees this year. The House also voted to reverse the governor's rejection of \$28 million for improvements to Interstate 44, \$13 million for a police center in St. Louis City, \$2 million for re-enlistment incentives for Missouri National Guard personnel and \$1.41 million for the Missouri Force 1 search and rescue team. Parson vetoed just one full bill the legislature passed this year, a 142-page omnibus crime measure. However, most of the bill's provisions were in other legislation Parson signed into law, and the Senate made no attempt to override. With the conclusion of veto session, lawmakers aren't scheduled to return to the Capitol until the 2024 legislative session gets underway Jan. 3.

## **Judge rejects constitutional challenge to Senate district map**

A Cole County judge on Sept. 12 upheld the constitutionality of Missouri's state Senate districts, rejecting claims that the district map violates the state constitution by unnecessarily splitting Buchanan County and the city of Hazelwood in St. Louis County among multiple districts. The current Senate districts were created by a panel of six state appellate judges in 2022 to reflect population shifts under the 2020 U.S. Census. In rejecting the challenge to the map, Circuit Judge Jon Beetem, a Republican, said the plaintiffs failed to offer any evidence the commission deviated from constitutional standards, which call for avoiding splitting counties and municipalities when possible but allow it if necessary. Beetem also said the alternative plans the plaintiffs proposed were less compliant with other constitutional factors than what the commission produced. "(T)he Constitution does not require numerical precision or any other kind of perfection from the redistricting commissions, who are chosen to fulfill this legislative task," Beetem wrote. "The evidence clearly shows that to the extent there is any perceived imperfection in the Senate Map, the choices made by the Judicial Redistricting Commission are reasonable." Because only half of the seats in the 34-member Senate are up for election every cycle, the current map was used to elect senators from even-numbered districts in 2022. Senators representing odd-numbered districts will be elected under the plan for the first time in 2024. The plaintiffs, who included Buchanan County and Hazelwood residents, are expected to appeal Beetem's ruling to the Missouri Supreme Court. The case is Clara Faatz, et al., v. John Ashcroft.

## **Republicans pick their 2025 nominee for House speaker**

House Republicans on Sept. 12 selected House Majority Leader Jon Patterson, R-Lee's Summit, to be their party's nominee for House speaker when the position becomes vacant in January 2025. Current House Speaker Dean Plocher, R-Des Peres, cannot seek re-election to his House seat in 2024 due to term limits. Republicans, who have controlled the chamber since 2003, began the practice of selecting a speaker-designee more than a year in advance in 2007. However, the choice isn't final as Patterson must win re-election to the House next year from a fairly competitive suburban district, and Republicans must retain their chamber majority. The actual election for the next House speaker will take place on the first day on the 2025 legislative session. All members of the chamber, including minority Democrats who could field their own candidate, will vote in that election.

## **Upcoming Events**

**September 16-17, 2023**

**[Parkville Fall Fest — The Strawberry Swing](#)**

English Landing Park

8701 McAfee St, Parkville, MO

**September 16, 2023**

**House Band at Family Funday**

School of Rock

1315 East St, Parkville, MO

10:00am-12:00pm

**September 16, 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.  
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