


CAPITOL REPORT

October 2, 2023



Hello All.,

I hope this email finds you well! If you're anything like me, you're wondering when the fall weather is finally going to descend upon Kansas City... Let's all cross our fingers for next week!!**I've just returned from a wonderfully educational trip to the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area of North Carolina**—known as the Research Triangle for their universities as well as for being a tech and biotech hub. I joined the **Missouri Chamber of Commerce as part of their Technology Caucus**, several legislative colleagues, and tech industry leaders from both MO and NC.

We discussed some of the ways the public sector can help incentivize growth in the tech industry—from supporting startups to creating communities where workers want to live and raise a family. It was an honor to be at the table for these discussions and I look forward to

continuing this work.

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

JUDGE REWRITES BALLOT LANGUAGE FOR ABORTION RIGHTS INITIATIVE

A Cole County judge on Sept. 25 rewrote the official ballot language for [initiative petitions seeking to enshrine abortion rights](#) in the Missouri Constitution, blocking Republican Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft's attempt to falsely portray the effort as allowing "dangerous, unregulated, and unrestricted abortions from conception to live birth," among other deceptive descriptions.

Circuit Judge Jon Beetem found 13 separate phrases representing about three-fourths of **Ashcroft's ballot language to be "problematic** in that they are either argumentative or do not fairly describe the purposes or probable effect of the initiative." The ballot language case is *Dr. Anna Fitz-James v. John R. Ashcroft*.

HIGH COURT CONSIDERS CHALLENGE TO LAW TARGETING HOMELESS

Attorneys for a Springfield homeless shelter urged the Missouri Supreme Court on Sept. 27 to strike down a [state law](#) criminalizing camping or sleeping on state property and imposing other regulations on the homeless, citing procedural flaws in its passage.

The Republican-controlled General Assembly

KC MAYOR ASKS SUPREME COURT TO NULLIFY HANCOCK EXEMPTION

The Missouri Supreme Court on Sept. 27 heard arguments in a case seeking to invalidate voters' ratification of a constitutional amendment last year that **empowers state lawmakers to impose police-related unfunded mandates on Kansas City taxpayers**.

Amendment 4, which the Republican-controlled General Assembly placed on the November 2022 ballot, carved out an exemption to a provision of the Missouri Constitution's Hancock Amendment that prohibits state lawmakers from forcing unfunded mandates on local governments. **Even though 61.4 percent of Kansas City voters opposed Amendment 4, it won ratification anyway with 63.2 statewide support.**

Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas filed a lawsuit challenging the official fiscal estimate that appeared on the ballot and claimed local governments would incur "no additional costs" from Amendment 4 – even though the **sole purpose of the measure was to force Kansas City to spend more on the police department**. In advance of the last year's vote, city officials estimated Amendment 4 would require the city to spend at least \$64

enacted HB 1606 over the objections of groups that work with the homeless, who predicted it would cause **more hardships for homeless people without alleviating the problem.** In addition to making it a Class C misdemeanor punishable by up to 15 days in jail and a \$750 fine to sleep or camp on state-owned property, the bill also requires cities to use state funding for homeless programs for temporary camps instead of permanent housing. It also calls for **denying state funding to cities with homelessness rates higher than the state average, thus stripping resources from communities with the greatest need.**

After the bill's passage, Missouri Department of Mental Health Director Valerie Huhn wrote to Gov. Mike Parson **warning him of the concerns with HB 1606, but Parson signed it into law anyway.** The case is *Jonathan Byrd, et al., v. State of Missouri.*

million more on policing than it already did and force cuts to other municipal spending as a result.

Because of the ballot's inaccurate fiscal estimate, **Lucas argues Missouri voters were misled.** He asked the court to nullify Amendment 4's ratification and order a new election with accurate ballot language reflecting the substantial unfunded costs it would impose on Kansas City taxpayers. The court will issue a ruling at a later date. The case is *Quinton Lucas v. Missouri Secretary of State John R. Ashcroft.*

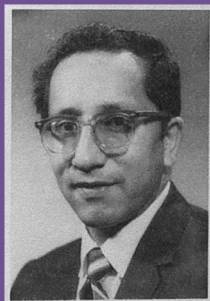
Hispanic Heritage Month

The logo features the word "Hispanic" in a large, yellow, cursive font with a blue drop shadow, set against a magenta background. Below it, the word "TRAILBLAZERS" is written in a bold, orange, sans-serif font, also with a blue drop shadow. A small orange double-checkmark symbol is positioned at the end of the word "TRAILBLAZERS".

Happy Hispanic Heritage Month! From September 15th to October 15th, we will be celebrating the contributions, resilience and enduring legacy of Hispanic and Latinx communities in Missouri. We honor the diverse mosaic of traditions, languages, histories and vibrant cultures that have enriched our state.

*State Rep.
Paul Rojas*

Rep. Paul Rojas became the first Hispanic American to be elected to the Missouri House of Representative in 1972, representing part of Jackson County. He was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and educated in Our Lady of Guadalupe Grade School.



*Judge
Justine Del Muro*

Judge Justine Del Muro became the first Hispanic American woman to be a judge in Missouri in 1993. She attended the UMKC School of Law.



In 1995, she was recognized by the Hispanic Bar Association for her contribution to the legal and Hispanic community.

Health and Wellness



PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR FREE AT-HOME COVID-19 TESTS

As of September 25, 2023, residential households in the U.S. can order one set of #4 free at-home tests from USPS.com again. Here's what you need to know about your order:

- Limit of one order per residential address
- One order includes #4 individual rapid antigen COVID-19 tests ([COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) has [more details about at-home tests](#), including extended shelf life and updated expiration dates)
- Orders will ship free starting the week of October 2, 2023.

Resources

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

- [Apply for Medicaid](#)
- [Unclaimed Property](#)
- [IRS Free File: Do your Taxes for Free](#)
- [Missouri Housing Resources](#)
- [Report a Road Concern](#)

HEALTH SERVICES

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
- [Trans Lifeline](#)
- [The Eldercare Locator](#)
- [Opioid Treatment Program Directory](#)

FOOD PANTRIES

- [Northland Assistance Center](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church](#)

WEATHER SHELTERS

- [Cooling Centers](#)
- [Crisis Cold Weather Shelters](#)

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