

December 15



**JAMIE JOHNSON**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

### 2024 PRE-FILED BILLS

- ▶ **HB 1445 - ELECTION DAY**  
Makes Election Day in November an official state holiday
- ▶ **HB 1446 - HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR DOULA SERVICES**  
Creates a registration process for health insurance reimbursement of doula services.
- ▶ **HB 1853 - UTILITY BILLING TRANSPARENCY**  
Requires the Public Service Commission to include specific information when billing customers for back charges

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## Capitol Report

Hi All,

I'm proud to announce that I have pre-filed a consumer protection bill. The legislation requires transparency when customers receive back charges on their utility bills due to an error that resulted in unpaid charges without service being disconnected. The billing must include an explanation of costs and an itemized list of services and service dates, and the company must provide options for payment plans for the customer.

We now have three pre-filed bills for the 2024 session. Stay tuned for more updates and please stay connected with my office for updates as the new year approaches. Enjoy your holiday season!

Sincerely,



  
Jamie J. Johnson

State Representative - District 12

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## **This Week In Jefferson City**

### **MOSERS board votes to phase-out investments in China**

The Missouri State Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees voted 9-2 on Dec. 12 to divest approximately \$190 million in investments in Chinese stocks and securities over the next three years, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported. The action marked a reversal from a voice vote the board took in November rejecting divestment.

State Treasurer Vivek Malek, a Republican and member of the MOSERS board, has been pushing for the system to divest Chinese holdings and campaigning on the issue as he seeks a full term next year in a crowded Republican primary against veteran GOP officeholders. Malek has never previously run for elected office; Gov. Mike Parson appointed him as treasurer in January to fill a vacancy.

MOSERS administers the pensions of most state workers and manages the investments that help fund benefits. According to the Missouri Independent, state Sen. John Rizzo, D-Independence and one of MOSERS board members opposed to the plan, accused Malek of advocating for divestment solely for political benefit and noted the system's professional investment managers predicted financial losses should the board follow through.

Malek denied being motivated by political concerns and said withdrawing investments from China is a sound decision due to the country's economic problems and growing aggressiveness to U.S. interests. Just hours later, however, Malek's campaign emailed supporters taking credit for the board's action, the Independent reported.

### **Appellate court rules against House in discrimination case**

A three-judge panel of Missouri Court of Appeals Western District on Dec. 12 unanimously upheld a \$3.3 million judgment against the state House of Representatives brought by a former staffer who sued over disability discrimination and retaliation.

According to the court's opinion, the former staffer worked as a legislative analyst in House Research from January 2016 to March 2017 and had been diagnosed with several mental health disorders, including Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, prior his employment. The staffer alleged he was denied reasonable accommodations for his disability and instead reprimanded for poor performance. The staffer further alleged he was fired by then-House Chief Clerk Adam Crumbliss, a named defendant in the case, minutes after broaching the possibility of filing a discrimination lawsuit. Crumbliss, who is named as a defendant in the case, left the House at the end of 2018 to work in Gov. Mike Parson's administration.

Following a trial last year, a Cole County jury ruled in favor of the staffer, who was awarded \$3.3 million in damages plus attorney fees. The appellate court remanded the case to the trial court to determine the amount of additional attorney fees the plaintiff should receive for

prevailing on appeal. The House could appeal to the Missouri Supreme Court but would be subject to paying further plaintiff's attorney fees should it again lose.

### **Governor appoints St. Charles County judge to appeals court**

Gov. Mike Parson on Dec. 8 appointed St. Charles County Circuit Judge Rebeca Navarro-McKelvey to the Missouri Court of Appeals Eastern District. Navarro-McKelvey will replace Judge Kelly Broniec, whom Parson elevated to the state Supreme Court in September.

Navarro-McKelvey, a Republican, was first elected as an associate circuit judge in 2016 before winning election as a circuit judge in 2020. Prior to joining the bench, she worked as an assistant prosecuting attorney in St. Louis city and St. Charles County. She is a 2000 graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law.

Navarro-McKelvey was one of three finalists for the vacancy selected by the Missouri Appellate Judicial Commission. The others were St. Louis County Circuit Judge Virginia Lay and St. Louis attorney Susan Peterson. The St. Louis-based Eastern District appellate court hears cases from 25 counties on the eastern side of the state plus St. Louis city.

### **Parson's final State of the State address set for Jan. 24**

Gov. Mike Parson plans to deliver the 2024 State of the State address before a joint session of the Missouri General Assembly on Jan. 24 at 3 p.m. During the address, Parson, a Republican, will present his proposed state operating budget for the 2025 fiscal year, which begins July 1, as well as highlight his policy priorities for year.

This will be Parson's sixth and final State of the State speech since taking office in June 2018 following the resignation of his predecessor. Term limits prevent Parson from seeking re-election next year. Following longstanding tradition, the speech will take place in the House of Representatives' chamber.

# Henry Toll Fellowship Grad!



I had the opportunity to attend an amazing conference hosted last week by The Council of State Governments! I was excited to be reunited with my colleagues from the Henry Toll Fellowship for graduation. The policy education sessions I attended during the conference will enhance my service to District 12 and the state of Missouri!

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

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