



January 19, 2024

## Capitol Report

Hi All,

This week, the Committee on Emerging Issues heard seven bills targeting transgender Missourians. During the nearly nine-hour hearing, several of my colleagues and I challenged the bill sponsors and uplifted the members of the transgender community and their supporters who came out to speak their truth. We should be focused on legislation that focuses on solving child hunger and poverty, not laws that try to erase the existence of children because they are different. No matter how tough it gets, I'm glad to be on the side of all children and families in Missouri.

Next week I will meet with the new Special Committee on Property Tax Reform and attend the State of the State Address from Governor Mike Parson, I look forward to sharing what I learned. Have a great weekend!

Sincerely,



Jamie J. Johnson  
State Representative - District 12

201 West Capitol Avenue  
Room 103-BA  
Jefferson City MO 65101  
573-751-9760  
[Jamie.Johnson@house.mo.gov](mailto:Jamie.Johnson@house.mo.gov)

# REP. JAMIE JOHNSON

Kansas City

## 2023-24 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- Administration and Accounts
- Consent and House Procedure, Ranking Minority Member
- Emerging Issues
- Special Committee on Government Accountability
- Special Committee on Property Tax Reform



# **This Week in Jefferson City**

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## **House panel hears seven bills targeting transgender people**

Transgender people would legally cease to exist under legislation a House committee considered Jan. 17 that would statutorily define someone as “male” or “female” based on their reproductive system at birth. The measure, House Bill 2309, also would define additional terms in law such as “man,” “woman,” “girl,” “boy,” “mother” and “father” in ways that would exclude legal recognition of the gender identity of transgender people.

The bill was one of seven measures variously targeting transgender people that the House Emerging Issues Committee considered a part of a marathon hearing lasting nearly nine hours. The committee took no immediate action on any of the bills.

This year’s effort by majority Republicans follows up on a pair of bills enacted into law last year that separately ban minors from receiving most gender-affirming care and prohibit transgender athletes from competing on school sports teams that correspond with their gender identity. As part of a compromise brokered to overcome a filibuster by Senate Democrats, both measures are set to expire in 2027. However, one of the new bills heard by Emerging Issues would eliminate the sunset on the gender-affirming care ban, thus making the restrictions permanent.

Three of the other bills would restrict which public restrooms transgender people would be allowed to use, leaving the choice legally unclear for some. The final measure would prohibit medical providers from being required to perform gender reassignment surgeries or other gender-affirming care, although no evidence was offered that this has ever happened in Missouri.

## **Senate committee advances Medicaid provider tax renewal**

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Jan. 18 a voted 12-1 to advance legislation renewing a key funding mechanism for Missouri’s Medicaid program that must pass this year to avoid substantial cuts. However, the chamber’s hardline conservative faction has indicated its intent to block the bill when it comes up for Senate debate unless unrelated language is added attempting to defund Planned Parenthood, which provides women’s health care services in Missouri and abortions in other states.

Missouri health care providers voluntarily pay the tax, known as the Federal Reimbursement Allowance, because it allows the state to leverage substantially more federal Medicaid dollars.

The tax provides about \$4.3 billion a year, roughly a third of the funding for Missouri's program.

Until recent years, lawmakers typically renewed the FRA without controversy. That changed in 2021 when the hardline faction successfully prevented the last renewal bill from passing during the regular session, forcing last-minute action in a subsequent special legislative to prevent an interruption in the tax. The current measure, Senate Bill 748, would permanently renew the tax, avoiding the need for future renewal fights.

Although Medicaid doesn't cover abortion services, the hardliners have long sought to prohibit Planned Parenthood from receiving Medicaid reimbursements for providing other health care services for women since the organization performs abortions at some of its locations. Because abortion is now illegal in Missouri in nearly all circumstances, however, no Planned Parenthood locations in the state currently offer the procedure. Federal law requires states to reimburse all willing providers of legally eligible services.

## **House committee considers another big hike in license fees**

The House Transportation Infrastructure Committee on Jan. 17 heard legislation that would impose a 50 percent increase in the fee the private contractors that run the state's license offices charge Missourians for obtaining or renewing driver's licenses or vehicle plates. The proposed hike comes just five years after lawmakers doubled the fee.

The contractors use the fee to cover their operating expenses and earn a profit. House Bill 1768 would increase the fee for two-year license plates or a six-year driver's license from \$12 to \$18. This fee is in addition to the actual cost of the plates or license, the revenue from which goes to the state and would not increase under the bill.

Lawmakers doubled the fee from \$6 to \$12 in 2019, providing what had been the first increase in more than two decades. Supporters say another bump is necessary due inflationary increases in contractors' operational expenses. Opponents say imposing another large fee hike on Missouri motorists isn't justified.

The House of Representatives narrowly approved a similar bill last year by just three more votes than the minimum necessary to advance it to the Senate, but it failed to win final passage. The committee took no immediate action on this year's version of the bill.

## **My Legislation**

# HOUSE BILL 1445

- Makes General Election Day an official state holiday
- Would close colleges and universities unless used as a polling place
- Missouri would become the 15th state to adopt such a measure



State Representative  
**JAMIE JOHNSON**  
District 12



# HOUSE BILL 1446

- Creates a registration process for insurance reimbursement of doula services
- Will encourage use of doulas, who are associated with better birth experiences, shorter labor, and less pain medication use
- Most doula services are paid for out-of-pocket, with costs often reaching over \$1,500 per birth



State Representative  
**JAMIE JOHNSON**  
District 12

# HOUSE BILL 1853

- Requires transparency when customers receive back charges on their utility as a result of a billing error
- The bill must include an explanation of charges and an itemized list of services and service dates
- The company must provide options for payment plans



State Representative  
**JAMIE JOHNSON**  
District 12



State Representative

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District 12 - Kansas City

## **HOUSE BILL 2383**

This bill protects consumers from excessive surcharges on credit and debit transactions and payment application services. A surcharge amount can't be greater than the amount the business pays to process the transaction and it requires transparency on convenience fees.





State Representative  
**JAMIE JOHNSON**  
District 12 - Kansas City

## **HOUSE RESOLUTION 33**

Establishes Missouri's ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution, affirming equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of gender.

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

573-751-9760

