



January 26, 2024

Capitol Report

Hey there!

It was a pretty busy week for me, even with a snow day on Monday. I quite a busy schedule this week, attending the first meeting of the Special Committee on Property Tax Reform, listening to the Governor's final State of the State address, and introducing my first amendment of the year in the Emerging Issues Committee. My amendment aimed to make improvements to a bill that would limit healthcare accessibility to some of our neighbors. Very simply put, I believe people with a two to three degrees of separation from your healthcare decisions shouldn't have the authority to impose obstacles on your access to healthcare. Unfortunately, the amendment was voted down. Despite the challenges, I'm not backing down. I remain steadfast in my dedication to ensuring that every Missourian has access to quality healthcare, free from personal prejudice or hindrance.

In the State of the State Address Governor Parson proposed a budget of \$51.82 billion for the year 2025. He plans to give \$120.6 million more to these schools. \$14 million of the budget will go towards the transportation of students to school. The budget includes funding to help parents who work by giving them \$51.7 million in the form of childcare subsidies. He also recommends Missouri's public colleges and universities, such as UMKC, receive 3% more in funding, which will total \$32.5 million. This will help make sure that Missouri's public colleges and universities have the best infrastructure possible for academic programs, research initiatives, and student services.

Next week, the full House will be debating legislation for the first time this year. I will keep you updated on the new developments!

Sincerely,




Jamie J. Johnson

State Representative - District 12

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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

Governor proposes \$51.82 billion state operating budget

In his sixth and final State of the State address, Gov. Mike Parson proposed a \$51.82 billion state operating budget for the upcoming 2025 fiscal year, plus another \$898 million for capital improvement projects. As is tradition, Parson, a Republican, delivered the speech before a joint legislative session in the Missouri House of Representatives.

The FY 2025 spending plan includes an additional \$120.6 million in basic state funding for local K-12 public school districts, plus an additional \$14 million for districts' student transportation costs. Both increases would fund those budget lines at the minimum amounts called for by state law. Parson also asked for \$51.7 million in state child care subsidies.

The governor is recommending a 3 percent increase in core funding for Missouri's public colleges and universities, which would collectively provide the schools an additional \$32.5 million. Parson also is asking for \$314.7 million for capital improvement projects at college campuses.

Now that the governor has submitted his proposed budget, the process shifts to the legislature. House Budget Committee hearings on the governor's plan are slated to start Jan. 29. Lawmakers face a May 10 constitutional deadline for granting final passage to the various appropriations bills that will make up the FY 2025 state budget. The new fiscal year begins July 1.

While offering details on his proposed budget, Parson spent little time discussing bills he wants the legislature to enact this year, usually a key feature of the State of the State. Policy proposals he did mention were for lawmakers to expand child care tax credits and increase criminal penalties for fentanyl trafficking.

Parson devoted most of the speech to claiming victory for what he sees as his administration's accomplishments since he took office in June 2018 after his predecessor resigned in disgrace. Those included eliminating abortion rights, cutting income taxes for the wealthy, consistently funding K-12 schools at the minimum levels set by state law and working through a large backlog of clemency requests – after taking no action on them during his early years in office.

Senators punished for obstruction

Senate President Pro Tem Caleb Rowden on Jan. 23 retaliated against four members of the chamber's right-wing faction for their obstruction of proceedings by stripping them of their committee leadership posts. The hardliners responded by spending most of the rest of the week engaging in more obstruction.

At a news conference, Rowden announced he had stripped committee chairmanships or vice-chairmanships from state Sens. Bill Eigel of St. Charles, Denny Hoskins of Warrensburg, Andrew Koenig of Manchester and Rick Brattin of Harrisonville. Hoskins also lost his position on the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. Rowden was flanked by the more mainstream Senate Republicans during the announcement.

Because the Senate allows for unlimited debate, a small group of senators can force the chamber to a standstill by holding the floor for extended periods. However, the filibuster traditionally is invoked on a relatively limited basis and usually with the intent of encouraging compromise on a contentious issue. The hardliners, by contrast, have resorted to filibustering daily on procedural matters in an ongoing, but unsuccessful, effort to force the Senate to capitulate to their demands to pass a variety of controversial proposals that enjoy little legislative support.

State Auditor accuses Ashcroft of violating state law

State Auditor Scott Fitzpatrick issued a report on Jan. 22 accusing Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft of violating the law by refusing to provide information to auditors on implementation of a new statute relating to cyber security reviews of local election authorities.

Under the law in question, which the legislature enacted last year, the Secretary of State's Office is required to perform cyber security reviews of Missouri's 116 local election authorities.

A separate state law grants the State Auditor's Office access to all records of agencies subject to an audit.

"With a major election cycle right around the corner, verifying the implementation of the new cyber security reviews was a vital part of our audit," Fitzpatrick said in a news release accompanying the audit. "The law clearly provides our audit staff with the authority to receive and review this information, and it's disappointing the Secretary of State's Office stood in the way of our efforts to perform a thorough analysis of how the new cyber security reviews have been implemented."

In his official response accompanying the audit findings, Ashcroft said the disclosure of the details of his reviews could jeopardize election security. However, he cited no legal authority for withholding that information from auditors.

The audit also criticized Ashcroft for withdrawing Missouri from its membership in the Electronic Registration Information Center, saying the move cuts off local election officials from information necessary to identify and correct inaccurate voter registration records without providing an alternative to obtaining that information. In his response, Ashcroft said the benefits of ERIC, which Missouri joined in 2018, were less than expected.

"I can respect why Secretary Ashcroft felt it was necessary to end the relationship with ERIC, but that doesn't negate the responsibility to have a plan in place to replace that data so the office has a reliable way to ensure we don't have dead voters registered in Missouri as we enter a major election year," Fitzpatrick said.

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
JAMIE JOHNSON
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.

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