


DISTRICT 14

ASHLEY AUNE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

CAPITOL REPORT

March 18, 2024



Hello All,

I hope this email finds you well. **The legislature is not in session this week as it's our legislative spring break, marking the halfway point of the 2024 session.** I'd love to say I'm sending this email from a beach somewhere, but alas, I'm actually heading to St. Joseph for an [MMPEC](#) quarterly meeting at Rosecrans Air National Guard Base. I'm looking forward to spending a few days with some of Missouri's finest military leaders!

Quick reminder for those of you interested in participating in the [Democratic Presidential Primary Caucus](#): it's this Saturday, March 23. Scroll down to learn more.

Thanks for checking in. Please don't hesitate to reach out if there's anything I can do for you.

Take Care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley".

Representative Ashley Aune
District 14 | (573) 751-3618

Legislative Update

SENATE APPROVES MEASURE TO OVERRIDE COURT RULINGS ON FEES

The Missouri Senate on March 7 voted 25-7 to approve a proposed constitutional amendment that seeks to circumvent longstanding Missouri Supreme Court precedent **prohibiting revenue from fees** imposed on court cases from being used for purposes other than judicial operations. The measure now advances to the House of Representatives, where a committee has already approved similar legislation.

[Senate Joint Resolution 71](#) asks Missouri voters to amend the state constitution to authorize court fees that generate revenue for the salaries and benefits of current and retired county sheriffs and prosecuting attorneys. Supreme Court precedent has prohibited levying court fees for non-judicial purposes since at least the 1980s, but SJR 71 was specifically prompted by a 2021 decision striking down a \$3 surcharge on traffic offenses to provide funding for the Missouri Sheriff's Retirement System.

HOUSE VOTES TO CLARIFY JACKSON CO. ASSESSOR MUST BE ELECTED

The Missouri House of Representatives advanced a proposed constitutional amendment to the Senate on March 7 that would clarify Jackson County is required to have an elected county assessor. The action came on a vote of 116-10, with 18 lawmakers voting "present."

A 2010 constitutional change that Missouri voters ratified with 74.1 percent support requires all charter counties to have an elected county assessor, except those with populations between 600,000 and 700,000 residents – an exemption that at the time applied only to Jackson County.

SUPREME COURT WON'T REVIEW EX-KCPD OFFICER'S CONVICTION

Without comment, the Missouri Supreme Court on March 5 declined to consider the appeal of the **only Kansas City police officer ever convicted of killing a Black person**. The former officer, who is serving a six-year prison term, already has asked Gov. Mike Parson for a pardon.

By not taking the case, the high court let stand former KCPD detective Eric DeValkenaere's convictions for involuntary manslaughter and armed criminal action for **fatally shooting** Cameron Lamb, a 26-year-old father of three, on Dec. 3, 2019.

Publicly, Parson has been noncommittal regarding whether he will pardon DeValkenaere. After the possibility was first publicly raised in July, Black community leaders in Kansas City strongly urged the governor against doing so. The case is *State of Missouri v. Eric DeValkenaere*.

COUPLE CAN'T HAVE GUNS BACK DESPITE GUBERNATORIAL PARDON

A St. Louis couple whom Gov. Mike Parson pardoned after they pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges for **brandishing firearms at anti-police brutality protesters** won't get their gun back after the Missouri Supreme Court on March 6 declined to hear their case.

The June 2020 incident generated national controversy after the St. Louis Post-Dispatch published photographs of Mark and Patricia McCloskey menacingly pointing their weapons at protesters who walked past their house on the way to the nearby home of then-St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson.

With the 2020 U.S. Census, however, Jackson County's population now exceeds 700,000 residents, meaning it no longer enjoys the constitutional exemption. [House Joint Resolution 68](#) would **eliminate the population exemption** to leave no argument that Jackson County is constitutionally required to have an elected assessor. If also approved by the Senate, HJR 68 automatically would go on the Nov. 5 statewide ballot for voter ratification.

PARSON CRITICIZED FOR FREEING SON OF CHIEFS COACH FROM PRISON

Drawing fierce bipartisan criticism, Gov. Mike Parson's office on March 1 announced he had commuted the prison sentence of a former [Kansas City Chiefs](#) assistant coach who caused life-altering brain injuries to a 5-year-old girl and also injured several others during a drunken driving crash in 2021. Parson, a Republican and **longtime Chiefs season ticket holder, made no public statement concerning the clemency**, which he issued in February.

Prosecutors said Britt Reid, the son of current Chiefs head coach Andy Reid, was driving drunk at 83 miles per hour when he crashed his pickup into two vehicles that were stopped along a highway entrance ramp, according to The Kansas City Star. Ariel Young, a passenger in one of the vehicles, suffered a traumatic brain injury and was in a coma for 11 days.

The Chiefs subsequently fired Britt Reid and reached a financial settlement with Ariel's family to provide for her ongoing care. Last year, Reid pleaded guilty to driving while intoxicated and causing serious injury and

The McCloskeys originally were charged with felonies but in June 2021 pleaded guilty to misdemeanors and, as part of their plea agreement, forfeited ownership of the weapons involved. Parson, a Republican, pardoned the couple about six weeks later.

Mark McCloskey subsequently sought a court order to have the firearms returned. A St. Louis judge rejected McCloskey's request, finding the **pardon didn't entitle them to have the weapons back**. The Missouri Court of Appeals Eastern District upheld that ruling in December. The case is *Mark T. McCloskey v. State of Missouri, et al.*

SENATE APPROVES WIDE-RANGING OMNIBUS EDUCATION BILL

The Missouri Senate on March 12 ended a two-day Democratic filibuster of legislation seeking to expand the state's private school voucher program by transforming it into an omnibus bill containing numerous provisions intended to bolster public education – and convince Democrats to stand down, even though they still voted against it.

[Senate Bill 727](#) started as a 12-page bill limited to expanding Missouri's voucher program, which the Republican-controlled legislature first created in 2021. The Senate ultimately expanded the bill to dozens of provisions spanning to 167 pages. **Some key additions call for significantly increasing basic state funding for local public school districts and boosting minimum starting teacher pay**. Another additional provision, though one Democrat opposed, would authorize charter schools in Boone County. Charter schools currently can operate only in Kansas City, St. Louis or in unaccredited districts.

was sentenced a three-year prison term. Several state elected officials of both political parties condemned Parson's decision after it became public.

HOUSE MOVES TO STOP STATE FROM TAKING FOSTER KIDS' MONEY

The Missouri Children's Division could no longer take the federal survivor benefits of foster children to help pay for their care under legislation the House of Representatives granted first-round approval on March 14. A second vote is required to advance the bill to the Senate.

At issue is money from survivor benefits a child in foster care receives from Social Security, the Veterans Administration or the Railroad Retirement Board following the death of a parent. [House Bill 2227](#) would prohibit the Children's Division from using that money to pay for foster care costs the division otherwise would provide at no cost to the child. **Under the bill, the money instead would be set aside for the child's later use.**

The division currently collects about \$6.57 million a year in such benefits on behalf of kids in foster care. **Supporters of ending this practice say it's unfair to force children to pay for their own care and note that when they age out of the system they typically have no assets and are left to fend for themselves.** Instead, they say the kids should have that money available to pay for college tuition or otherwise begin their lives outside of the system.

The Senate on March 14 voted 19-10 to advance the measure to the House of Representatives, where its fate is uncertain. If the House were to make substantial changes to the legislation, it could jeopardize its chances of reaching a final vote in the Senate.

HOUSE VOTES TO ELIMINATE MISSOURI'S CORPORATE INCOME TAX

Corporations would pay no state income taxes under legislation the Missouri House of Representatives granted first-round approval on March 12. **The bill would cost the state an estimated \$884.39 million a year in lost revenue once fully implemented in 2028.**

The substantially reduced revenue collections that would result from eliminating the corporate income tax would be in addition to the billions the state has already forgone due to multiple large tax cuts that have been enacted over the last decade, including a \$2 billion income tax cut lawmakers approved just 18 months ago.

Down from a high of 6.5 percent, Missouri's corporate income tax rate currently stands at 4 percent. Under [House Bill 2274](#), the tax would be completely phased out over three years. Starting on Jan. 1, 2025, the rate would drop by one percentage point per year until being zeroed out as of Jan. 1, 2028. A second vote is required to advance the bill to the Senate.

PANEL SPIKES PLAN TO GIVE LAWMAKERS POWER OVER ROAD MONEY

The House Transportation Accountability

HOUSE APPROVES EMERGENCY FUNDING TO SEND TROOPS TO TEXAS

The Missouri House of Representatives on March 7 voted 122-12, with seven members voting “present,” to approve a \$2.2 million emergency supplementary appropriations bill to provide [funding](#) to send 200 Missouri National Guard soldiers and 22 State Highway Patrol troopers to the Mexican border. The bill now advances to the Senate.

Gov. Mike Parson asked for the funding after dispatching Missouri’s forces to help maintain order at the border at the request of Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott, a fellow Republican. About 250 Missouri Guard troops are already at the border under federal command at the request of President Joe Biden, a Democrat.

Committee on March 11 voted 2-11 to reject a proposed constitutional amendment seeking to give state lawmakers power over state revenue for roads and bridges, which currently is independently controlled by the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission.

Since its creation in the 1920s, the commission has been constitutionally empowered to make transportation funding decisions without being subject to legislative meddling. However, lawmakers periodically have sought to give themselves additional authority regarding how transportation revenue is allocated. [House Joint Resolution 127](#) sought to repeal an existing constitutional provision that says money in the State Road Fund, which consists of revenue from fuel taxes and other highway user fees, shall “stand appropriated without legislative action,” giving the legislature the power to decide how money from the fund is allocated.

If HJR 127 were to clear the legislature, Missouri voters would have to ratify it for it to take effect.

Participate in Presidential Primary

Democratic Party-Run Presidential Primary March 23, 2024

Request A Mail Ballot:

Online:

<https://request.mrgvote.com/Missouri>

Call:

(855)433-8683



DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

Missouri's Democratic presidential primary will be held on **Saturday, March 23, 2024** and will be a hybrid election, offering Missouri Democrats an opportunity to **cast their vote by mail or at an in-person voting** site from 8 AM until noon on the day of the primary.

REGISTER TO VOTE

If you are not already registered to vote in Missouri and are using a computer, you can request a registration card from the Secretary of State website to mail back [here](#).

Missourians For Constitutional Freedom



MISSOURI COALITION LAUNCHES PETITION TO RESTORE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Missourians for Constitutional Freedom is a statewide coalition working to restore the right to reproductive health care in the state. In order to do so, the coalition needs to collect 172,000 valid signatures by May 5, 2024. To help donate, volunteer and sign the petition, [click here](#).

Since the 2022 trigger ban, **Missouri does not allow for abortions, including in cases of rape and incest.** As a consequence, women with pregnancy complications are being turned away or having their care delayed because physicians fear legal prosecution. Republicans have vowed to make it harder for Missourians to amend the constitution through the initiative petition process. In recent elections, Missouri voters have used the process to pass minimum wage increase, Medicaid expansion, and marijuana legalization, which all have been opposed by the Republican Party.

Legislative Survey Results

2023

LEGISLATIVE SURVEY REPRESENTATIVE ASHLEY AUNE

Thank you so much to everyone who took the time to fill out a legislative survey. Your responses help me represent your interests in Jefferson City.

[Click here to view survey results](#)

If you have any questions or would like to speak in-depth about the survey results, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office.

Phone: (573) 751-3618

E-Mail: Ashley.Aune@house.mo.gov

Community Events

A promotional poster for the Northland Mother's Day 5K. The top half features a blue sky background with a pink circle containing an illustration of a pair of blue sneakers with pencils and pens sticking out of them. To the right of this, the text "NORTHLAND MOTHER'S DAY 5K" is written in large, bold, black letters. Below this, the date and location "Saturday, May 11th, 2024 at English Landing Park" are listed. A circular inset photo shows a group of five people (three adults and two children) wearing pink race shirts and bibs. A pink circle at the bottom right contains the text: "Proceeds will go towards buying backpacks & school supplies for Equal Start's Platte County Back to School Fair in August".

Register Today!

NORTHLAND MOTHER'S DAY 5K

**Saturday, May 11th, 2024
at English Landing Park**

Proceeds will go towards buying backpacks & school supplies for Equal Start's Platte County Back to School Fair in August

Equal Start's annual signature fundraising event, the Northland Mother's Day 5K benefits their annual Platte County Back to School Fair. Proceeds will go towards purchasing backpacks full of school supplies for eligible children.

Participants who register by April 20th will also receive a Finisher Medal and Race T-Shirt.

[Click here to register](#)

Health And Wellness



Eating well doesn't have to be expensive! Get tips for learning how to cook at home to save, including how to reduce food waste and use a slow cooker:

<https://sm.eatright.org/CookatHome>

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](#)
- [Place Your Order for Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests](#)

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

- [Northland Assistance Center](#)
- [St. James Lutheran Church](#)
- [Platte County Health Department](#)

WEATHER SHELTERS

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

PLATTE COUNTY LIBRARIES

- [Green Hills Library Center](#)
- [Parkville](#)
- [Riverside](#)