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**DISTRICT 14** **ASHLEY AUNE**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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## CAPITOL REPORT

March 6, 2024



Hello All,

I hope this email finds you well. There's been so much going on the past few weeks—from being [silenced over and over](#) again on the floor when we try to talk about common sense solutions to gun violence, to watching my bill to allow divorce while pregnant ([HB 2402](#)) get [lots of media attention](#) despite my fears that it won't get too far in the legislative process this year. As per usual, being in the super minority is a tough gig.

Meanwhile, the House continues to chug along with daily business, while the Senate doesn't seem to be moving much of anything this year. And the Missouri Legislature will also be out for our a week-long break March 18-22.

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

### **SENATE APPROVES ‘RURAL VETO’ AFTER CONCESSIONS TO DEMOCRATS**

The Missouri Senate on Feb. 22 voted 22-9 to pass Republican legislation intended to allow a small minority of voters to block ratification of proposed constitutional amendments that win statewide support – but only after Democrats forced the chamber to strip out so-called **“ballot candy” intended deceive voters** about the measure’s true purpose. The legislation now goes to the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

Before being removed, [Senate Joint Resolution 74’s](#) ballot candy included prohibiting using the initiative petition process to propose constitutional changes allowing public officials to receive gifts from lobbyists, increasing taxes on food or property, or reducing law enforcement funding. Other provisions purported to prohibit non-citizens from voting on constitutional amendments, which **already isn’t allowed**, and sought to bar foreign governments from sponsoring or supporting initiative petitions, which there is **no indication has ever happened**.

Senate Democrats filibustered SJR 74 over four days, including an overnight run lasting about 20 straight hours. They ultimately agreed to stand down if the ballot candy was removed and straightforward ballot language accurately describing its purpose added. Those changes were made on an 18-12 vote. **House Republicans are expected to**

### **OMNIBUS JUDICIARY BILL FALLS TO BIPARTISAN HOUSE OPPOSITION**

The House of Representatives on Feb. 19 voted to reject an omnibus bill seeking to make a slew of changes to state judicial proceedings. However, three days later the chamber agreed to send the bill back to committee to have several provisions lawmakers found objectionable removed.

[House Bill 1886](#) was defeated on a vote of 58-85, with 12 lawmakers voting “present.” The House then voted 131-5, with five “present” votes, on Feb. 22 to reconsider the earlier vote and recommit the bill to the House Judiciary Committee for revisions.

Democrats opposed it largely due to a provision that sought to **eliminate mandatory background checks** for people seeking appointment as guardian or conservator of a grandchild. Lawmakers with experience in social work noted such checks can reveal that a grandparent is unfit for the role due to past abuse allegations, criminal history or other factors.

### **TREASURER PULLS SLOT MACHINE ADS AFTER LEGISLATIVE GRILLING**

Throughout a blistering, two-hour bipartisan interrogation on Feb. 27, State Treasurer Vivek Malek remained defiantly committed to his decision to **advertise on unlicensed gambling devices** deemed illegal slot machines by the Missouri Gaming

**attempt to restore the disputed provisions.**

### **HOUSE ADVANCES RESTRICTIONS ON INITIATIVE PETITION PROCESS**

The House of Representatives on Feb. 22 sent legislation to the Senate that would impose a host of procedural restrictions – including several of **dubious constitutionality** – on the collection of [initiative petition signatures](#). The action came on a straight party-line vote of 104-41, with Republicans in support and Democrats opposed.

[House Bill 1749's](#) provisions include specifying the font size and type that must be used on petitions, as well as the color of ink people must use when signing. The bill also says only Missouri residents and U.S. citizens can gather petition signatures and that petition gatherers can't be paid based on the number of signatures collected. In addition, the measure would require petition signatures to be invalidated if a court rewrites ballot language prepared by the Secretary of State's Office for being misleading.

Under decades-old Missouri Supreme Court precedent relating to initiative petitions, most recently expressed in the 2022 case *No Bans on Choice, et al., v. John R. Ashcroft*, the legislature cannot “use procedural formalities to interfere with or impede this constitutional right that is so integral to Missouri's democratic system of government.” As a result, **the validity of several HB 1749 provisions is questionable.**

### **DEMOCRATS DECRY LACK OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON GUN VIOLENCE**

The House of Representatives advanced

Commission and State Highway Patrol. Later that day, however, he suddenly backed down and said he has asked for the ads' removal.

At issue are decals featuring Malek's name under a variant of the official state seal that promote the treasurer's unclaimed property program. The decals have been placed on hundreds of video lottery terminals, which operate like slot machines and have proliferated throughout the state in recent years in gas stations, bars and other locations. The **highway patrol has seized and destroyed VLTs** in jurisdictions where prosecutors have been willing to file charges, but some prosecutors claim the machines fall into a legal gray area and refuse to pursue cases.

### **HOUSE GOP AGAIN ATTEMPTS TO DEFUND PLANNED PARENTHOOD**

The House of Representatives on Feb. 28 granted first-round approval of [legislation](#) seeking to **block women's health care** provider Planned Parenthood from receiving reimbursements from the state's Medicaid program. A second vote is required to send the bill to the Senate.

Because abortion is illegal in Missouri in nearly all circumstances, **none of Planned Parenthood's Missouri clinics perform them** and instead focus on other women's health care services, including general care, cancer screenings and contraception.

The Missouri Supreme Court twice in recent years has ruled the legislature's efforts to **defund Planned Parenthood through the budget process are unconstitutional**. [House Bill 2634](#) attempts to get around that constitutional impediment

omnibus public safety legislation to the Senate on Feb. 19 but only after **Democrats highlighted the need to address gun violence** following the mass shooting days earlier at the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl victory parade. [House Bill 1659](#) passed on a bipartisan vote of 120-26, with eight members voting present.

Although the wide-ranging bill enjoyed broad support, Democrats focused on provisions to strengthen Missouri's lax gun laws that weren't included – and that Republican House leadership refuses to advance. Since taking control of both legislative chambers in 2003, **Republicans have steadily weakened the state's gun restrictions**, including by allowing people to carry concealed weapons without a permit or training and allowing guns in more public spaces.

Dozens of state lawmakers from both parties attended the parade and many were present in the immediate area where the shooting took place. Two men so far have been criminally charged in the incident, which resulted in one dead and more than 20 wounded, including nine children. While several Democrats who were there talked about their experiences, **Republicans who attended largely remained silent**.

## **HOUSE PANEL VOTES TO LEGALLY ERASE TRANSGENDER PEOPLE**

**Transgender people would legally cease to exist** under legislation the House Emerging Issues Committee approved Feb. 28 on 9-4 party-line vote, with Republicans in support and Democrats opposed. The bill can now advance to the full House of Representatives for debate.

by creating a general statute purporting to prohibit Medicaid reimbursements to health care facilities affiliated with out-of-state abortion providers. However, the **bill appears to violate** federal requirements that states must allow willing providers of Medicaid-eligible services to participate in the program.

## **BUDGET PANEL ADVANCES FUNDING TO SEND MO TROOPS TO TEXAS**

The House Budget Committee on Feb. 28 approved a \$2.2 million emergency supplementary appropriations [bill](#) to provide funding for Gov. Mike Parson's plan to send 200 Missouri National Guard soldiers and 22 State Highway Patrol troopers to the Mexican border to assist with Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott's effort to block migrants from entering the country.

Since **congressional Republicans have blocked passage** of bipartisan federal legislation to address the border crisis in an effort to keep the immigration issue alive during a presidential election year, some Democrats questioned the wisdom **spending Missouri taxpayer dollars** on what is seen as more of a **political show** than an effort to address the problem. Democrats noted that about 250 Missouri Guard troops are already at the border under the command of the federal government and expressed concern about the possibility of the missions of the two Missouri forces coming into conflict.

The funding provided by [House Bill 2016](#) would be for the remainder of the 2024 fiscal year, which runs through June 30.

[House Bill 2309](#) would statutorily define people as “male” or “female” based on their reproductive system at birth. It also would define terms such as “man,” “woman,” “girl,” “boy,” “mother” and “father” in ways that would **exclude legal recognition of transgender people**.

## 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**

### REQUEST A MAIL BALLOT

Ballots will be available for request beginning February 1 via the Missouri Democrat Party's [website](#) with distribution beginning on February 17. This request period will close on **March 12**.

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

*The* MISSOURI HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

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## 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](mailto:Ashley.Aune@house.mo.gov)

## Community Events



### **AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE**

The Library is sponsoring a blood drive for the American Red Cross to help ensure reliable blood inventories in our area and beyond. To review donor eligibility requirements or make an appointment to donate, visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). Please allow an hour for your donation and bring a photo ID.

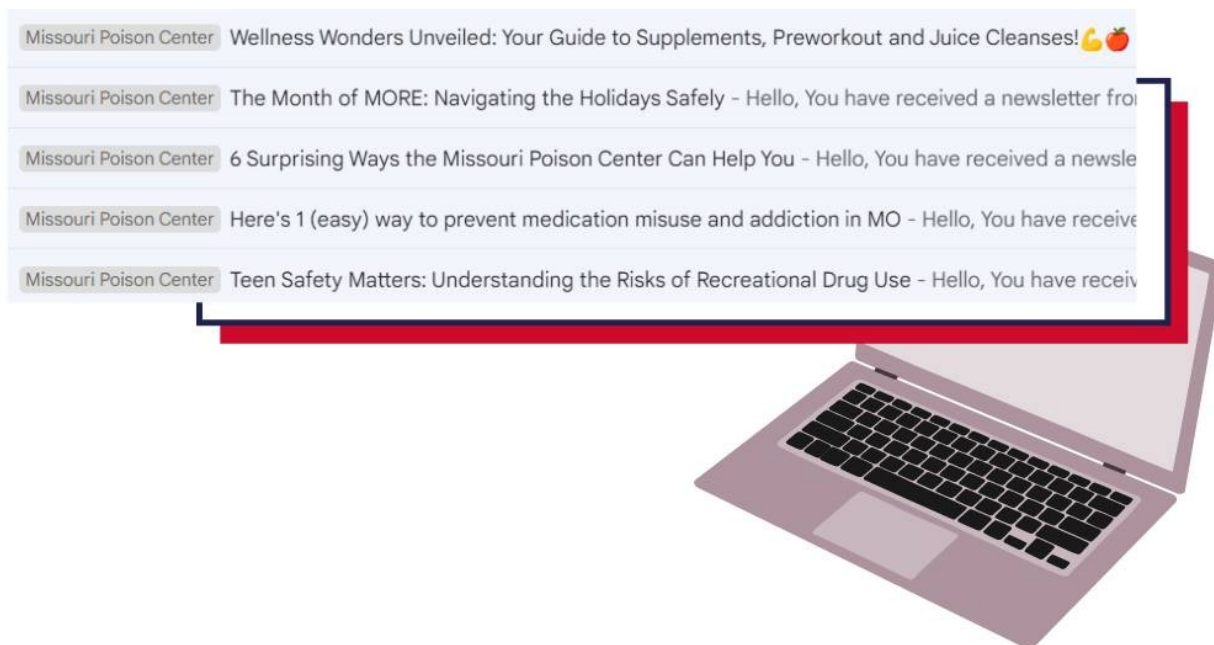
- Friday, March 15, 2024
- 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
- Green Hills Community Room 1 and 2

[Click here to register](#)

## Health and Wellness

### DID YOU KNOW?

**You can get poison prevention information and safety tips from the Missouri Poison Center delivered to your inbox each month.**



**1-800-222-1222**



**Poison Help 24/7**



# 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](#)