
DISTRICT 14 **ASHLEY AUNE**
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

CAPITOL REPORT

April 26, 2024



Hello All,

I hope this email finds you well. With just three weeks left in this session, we're still in the midst of the least productive session I've ever seen. In spite of the dysfunction, **the legislature managed to (barely) pass a huge education bill last week - SB 727 - which became incredibly contentious in the legislature** and passed with the minimum number of votes required in the House (82).

Proponents touted the good provisions including boosting starting teacher pay from \$25,000 to \$40,000, adding \$227 million in new funding for public schools, and \$61 million in new funding for pre-K programs.

However, **many of these Democratic priorities have been championed by several members this session and within the last year to no avail**, and the **promises included in SB 727 lack concrete financial backing**. Instead, they rely on future appropriations from uncertain revenue

sources. **Given recent tax cuts and revenue projections, it's doubtful that adequate funds will materialize to fulfill these commitments, leaving our public schools districts and educators in a precarious position.** In short, they are not guaranteed and will very likely not stand up in the appropriations process next year.

Additionally, **the primary purpose of the bill as originally filed is to expand taxpayer-funded vouchers for private school tuition and homeschools.** It also included a provision to **expand charter schools to Boone County**, which every Boone County Democrat vehemently opposed.

I voted no because this bill was opposed by parents and teachers organizations, as well as public school and home school advocates across the state. In fact, as far as I could tell, most of the proponents of this bill were lobbyists and the folks who profit from the systematic dismantling of public school systems.

The legislature also passed a bill to defund Planned Parenthood... read more on that below.

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

Take Care,



Legislative Updates

HOUSE ADVANCES PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHER BILL TO GOVERNOR

With no votes to spare, the Missouri House of Representative on April 18 granted final passage to legislation originally aimed at expanding the state's private school voucher program that was transformed into an omnibus education bill in order to secure enough votes. It passed on a vote of 82-69, with the bare minimum number of "yes" votes constitutionally required for passage. It now goes to the governor to be signed into law or vetoed.

[Senate Bill 727](#) started as a 12-page measure limited to expanding Missouri's voucher program, which the Republican-controlled legislature first created in 2021. **The bill ultimately ballooned to dozens of provisions spanning 167 pages it order to**

HOUSE APPROVES MAKING IT HARDER TO AMEND STATE CONSTITUTION

After restoring so-called "ballot candy" designed to deceive Missouri voters into supporting it, the House of Representatives voted 102-49 on April 25 for legislation that would make it possible for a minority of voters statewide to block the ratification of proposed constitutional amendments supported by the majority.

The Senate previously had stripped out the ballot candy to overcome a Democratic filibuster and allow a vote sending the measure to the House. With the ballot candy restored, the measure returns to the Senate, where its chances of winning final approval are uncertain since another filibuster is expected.

get it through the Senate, which approved it March 14 on a vote of 19-10. Key additions call for significantly increasing basic state funding for local public school districts and boosting minimum starting teacher pay from \$25,000 to \$40,000 a year.

Another provision would authorize charter schools in Boone County, a provision opposed by Democratic lawmakers who represent the county. Charter schools currently can operate only in Kansas City, St. Louis or in unaccredited districts. Although many of the new provisions enjoyed widespread support, opponents of the bill noted there is no guarantee future lawmakers will provide the necessary funding, which the state likely won't even have given expected downturns in revenue collections in the coming years. By contrast, the tax revenue to be redirected for private school vouchers is essentially secured.

DRAFT REPORT ALLEGES OBSTRUCTION OF INVESTIGATION INTO SPEAKER

A draft report made public on April 15 alleges House Speaker Dean Plocher's office engaged in obstruction of an investigation into an ethics complaint filed against him. The report said Plocher refused to issue subpoenas sought by the House Ethics Committee to compel witness testimony and also noted possible witness intimidation, with "multiple potential witnesses who refused to voluntarily appear before the committee or speak with the committee's investigator."

That investigator, attorney Beth Boggs of St. Louis, said in a letter to the committee included in the report that during the roughly 800 investigations she has conducted in her career, the lack of cooperation in this case was the worst she has ever encountered.

[Senate Joint Resolution 74](#) seeks to impose a concurrent majority requirement of both a simple majority of votes cast statewide, as well as approval in at least five of Missouri's eight congressional districts. According to an analysis by the Missouri Independent, it would be mathematically possible under this system for just 23 percent of voters to thwart ratification.

Since SJR 74's supporters know Missouri voters likely would reject such a change as stand-alone legislation, **they added ballot candy specifying that non-citizens can't vote and foreign governments can't sponsor or finance initiatives – provisions that merely echo existing law.** The ballot language written into SJR 74 lists the various pieces of ballot candy first and the concurrent majority requirement last.

If SJR 74 wins final Senate approval, it automatically would go on the Nov. 5 general election ballot. However, it is expected Gov. Mike Parson, a Republican, would exercise his authority to move the measure to the Aug. 6 primary election in order for the concurrent majority requirement to have a chance of being approved before an expected November vote on an initiative petition to add an abortion rights provision to the Missouri Constitution.

HOUSE ADVANCES MEASURE ASKING VOTERS TO MODIFY TERM LIMITS

State lawmakers would be limited to serving 16 years total in any combination between the Senate and House of Representatives, instead of no more than eight years per chamber, under legislation the House approved April 22 on a vote of 134-14, with five lawmakers voting "present."

Missouri voters first enacted legislative term limits in 1992 with 75 percent support, but the restrictions didn't take full effect until the 2002

A fellow House Republican filed the ethics complaint last fall in the wake of news reports regarding a series of controversies involving Plocher, R-Des Peres. One allegation involved documentation that Plocher engaged in potentially illegal double-dipping by receiving taxpayer reimbursements on multiple occasions over several years for about \$4,509 in travel expenses already paid for by his campaign committee. Plocher later repaid the money.

The rejected report found “no direct evidence” of wrongdoing by Plocher regarding the contract and recommended a letter of reproof admonishing him over the improper reimbursements. It also recommended Plocher refrain from retaliating against any employees who cooperated with the investigation.

BILL DEFUNDING PLANNED PARENTHOOD HEADS TO GOVERNOR

Along straight party lines, the Republican-controlled Missouri House of Representatives voted 106-48 on April 24 to grant final passage to legislation seeking to block one of the state’s largest providers of women’s health care from participating in the state’s Medicaid program.

[House Bill 2634](#) marks the culmination of a years-long Republican effort to defund Planned Parenthood clinics operating in the state. **Although the organization was state’s last remaining abortion provider, none its clinics currently perform the procedure in Missouri, where it is now illegal in nearly all circumstances.**

Because the Missouri Supreme Court twice in

elections. In the two decades since, **legislative term limits have been widely criticized for forcing lawmakers from office before they can accrue substantial experience, ceding power over the legislative process from the elected representatives of the people to longtime lobbyists and legislative staff.**

Although it’s currently possible to serve 16 years in the legislature by serving the maximum tenure in both chambers, few lawmakers are able to do so as practical matter. [House Joint Resolution 69](#) would grant more flexibility by allowing someone to serve the full 16 years in a single chamber or another combination, such as 12 years in one and four in the other.

HJR 69 now advances to the Senate. If it wins final legislative approval, it automatically would go on the Nov. 5 ballot for voter ratification. The 2024 legislative session ends May 17.

HOUSE ENDORSES MANDATORY LIFE FOR CHILD SEX TRAFFICKERS

The House of Representatives on an April 16 voice-vote approved legislation that would lock into the Missouri Constitution a mandatory life sentence without eligibility for probation and parole for those found guilty of child sex trafficking. A second, recorded vote is necessary to advance the measure, [House Joint Resolution 132](#), to the Senate.

Setting mandatory sentencing requirements in the constitution is highly unusual, as the only way to subsequently make changes is with another voter-approved constitutional amendment. If endorsed by both legislative chambers, HJR 132 automatically would go

recent years has struck down attempts to strip the organization of funding through the state budget process, the bill attempts to get around that impediment by creating a general statute purporting to prohibit Medicaid reimbursements to health care facilities affiliated with out-of-state abortion providers.

Republicans attempted to add an emergency clause to HB 2634 that would have allowed it to take effect immediately upon being signed by the governor. However, that motion failed on a vote of 106-50, as a result, the prohibition on Planned Parenthood receiving Medicaid funding, once signed, won't take effect until Aug. 28

on the Nov. 5 statewide ballot for voter approval.

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

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



Experience an immersive journey to Poland and Eastern Europe without leaving the country at the [Renditions Polish Pottery Festival!](#)

Saturday, May 11, 2024

10:00am - 5:00pm

Downtown Historic Weston, Missouri

Indulge in traditional Polish delicacies such as pierogi, golabki, bigos, kielbasa, breads, cakes, and desserts. Immerse yourself in authentic Polish music, dance, and live performances. Explore exquisite pottery crafted by skilled artisans. Delight in cultural exhibits showcasing the heritage of Poland and Eastern Europe.

Live music all day!

Health and Wellness



Sometimes adulting is hard. It's okay to ask for help! Did you know that your WIC local agency can provide a list of helpful resources in your area? They can give you information for local food banks, clothing closets and more! Reach out to the WIC team at 816-858-2412.

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](#)

