
DISTRICT
14

ASHLEY AUNE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

CAPITOL REPORT

May 6 2024



Hello All,

I hope this email finds you well. We're in the final stretch of session with our budget deadline looming. **The only thing the Missouri Legislature is constitutionally obligated to do is pass a budget by 6PM this Friday, May 10. As of this evening, I am not confident we will meet that deadline.** If we don't pass the budget, the Governor will call us back in for a special session—at great expense to taxpayers.

Here's a list of the bills we've sent to the Governor's desk so far this session:

SB 727 — Big education bill that expanded vouchers and imposed unfunded mandates on our school districts.

HB 1751 — Prohibits the development of a landfill in southern Jackson County

HB 2634 — Defunds Planned Parenthood

HB 2287 — Big education bill that makes changes to virtual schools and teacher certifications, and redefines "home school"

HB 2016 — Emergency supplemental bill

HB 1803 — Increases aggregate investment amount that the state treasurer may invest in linked deposits and changes disbursement criteria for eligible parties

The final day of the 2024 session is Friday, May 17, so we've got less than two weeks to do the work our constituents sent us here to do. Meanwhile, Senator Eigel who leads the Freedom Caucus in the senate yelled so much today the senate shut down after just 15 minutes. This does not inspire confidence...

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

Take Care,



Legislative Update

HIGH COURT ORDERS REVOTE ON KC UNFUNDED MANDATE EXCEPTION

In an unprecedented move, the Missouri Supreme Court on April 30 invalidated the 2022 ratification of a state constitutional amendment temporarily empowering lawmakers to impose unfunded mandates involving police funding on Kansas City's municipal government. On a split 4-3 decision that also ordered a [new vote to be held at the upcoming Nov. 5 general election](#), the court ruled the fiscal summary that appeared on the prior ballot materially misled voters.

Although the court's precedent allows post-election challenges to the ratification of constitutional amendments, this case marks the first time the court has found sufficient cause to overturn an election and order a new one. The court ordered the proposal to go on the fall ballot as Amendment 4, the same designation it carried when voters approved it in November 2022, and with a new fiscal summary prepared by the court.

Missouri's tax-limiting Hancock Amendment generally prohibits the legislature from imposing unfunded mandates on local governments, but Amendment 4 carves out a loophole that allows lawmakers to order cities with a state-controlled police department to allocate more funding for their department, without regard to the city's other spending

FILIBUSTER OVER RENEWAL OF VITAL MEDICAID FUNDING SOURCE ENDS

Following a 41-hour filibuster by five right-wing Republican hardliners, the Senate on May 2 granted first-round approval to must-pass legislation renewing a special tax on medical providers that provides more than \$4 billion a year in funding for Missouri's Medicaid program and is set to expire later this year. A second vote is required to the advance the bill to the House of Representatives.

Failure to renew the tax, known as the Federal Reimbursement Allowance, would have a devastating impact on both Missouri's health care system and the state budget. Hospitals, nursing homes and certain other medical providers voluntarily pay the tax, which allows the state to leverage additional federal Medicaid funding that then goes back to the providers as payment for services. The tax generates about \$1.4 billion a year in state revenue to bring in another \$3 billion in federal money. It will expire Oct. 1 unless lawmakers renew it.

[Senate Bill 748](#) would extend the tax until Oct. 1, 2029. Traditionally, its renewal was considered non-controversial, but in recent years the Senate's hardline faction has attempted to use the issue as leverage to force action on other legislation. When the tax

needs.

Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas challenged the validity of the fiscal summary for Amendment 4, saying it misled voters by falsely stating local governments “estimate no additional costs or savings” from its passage. Although the full fiscal note then-State Auditor Nicole Galloway’s office prepared for Amendment 4 included Kansas City’s estimate that the measure would cost city taxpayers \$38 million per year, that information isn’t mentioned in the one-sentence summary that appeared on the ballot.

In the court’s majority opinion, Supreme Court Judge Paul Wilson said this omission was “an ‘irregularity’ of sufficient magnitude to cast doubt on the validity of the 2022 general election regarding Amendment No. 4” and that a new election was the only available remedy.

Two judges partially dissented, agreeing with the majority that the court had jurisdiction to hear the case but disagreeing that Lucas had met the high legal burden for overturning an election. A third fully dissented, saying the court’s precedent allowing it to hear post-election challenges is wrong and should be overturned. The case is *Quinton Lucas v. John Ashcroft and Scott Fitzpatrick*.

COMMITTEE DISMISSES ETHICS COMPLAINT AGAINST SPEAKER

The House Ethics Committee on April 29 voted to dismiss a complaint filed against House Speaker Dean Plocher after blocking an attempt by the panel’s chair to tie the dismissal to a statement saying the speaker and his subordinates obstructed its investigation and engaged in witness intimidation. The dismissal came on a 7-2 vote, with one lawmaker voting “present.”

was up for renewal in 2021, the hardliners blocked its passage during the regular legislative session to force lawmakers to take up the issue in subsequent special session.

This time around, the hardliners demanded the governor immediately sign a bill already on his desk that seeks to block women’s health care provider Planned Parenthood from participating in the state’s Medicaid program. They also wanted the Senate to first take a final vote on a proposed constitutional amendment that would make it more difficult for voters to ratify future constitutional amendments in a last-ditch effort to thwart an abortion rights initiative petition that is expected to go on the Nov. 5 statewide ballot.

The ongoing Senate dysfunction threatens to derail passage of the state operating budget for the upcoming 2025 fiscal year, which begins July 1. Lawmakers face a hard constitutional deadline of 6 p.m. on May 10 for granting final passage to various appropriations bill that make up the budget. If they blow the deadline, they will have to finish the budget process in a special session.

Although the House passed its version of the budget in late March, the Senate has yet to follow suit. Because senators adjourned until May 6 following the filibuster on SB 748, just four days will remain for the Senate to pass its version of the budget and for the two chambers to agree on a compromise plan and take final votes on the various bills. Because the Senate plan is expected to include about \$2 billion more in spending authority than the \$50 billion House proposal, there will be substantial differences for the two chambers to resolve.

BACKERS OF HIGHER MINIMUM WAGE SUBMIT INITIATIVE SIGNATURES

Supporters of increasing the state minimum wage to \$15 an hour and guaranteeing paid sick leave for workers submitted an initiative

The original dismissal motion made by Chair Hannah Kelly, R-Mountain Grove, sought to say the case was being dropped due to “the inability of the committee to finish the investigation as a direct result of obstruction of the process and the intimidation of witnesses.” Over Kelly’s objections, the committee amended the motion to merely state it was dismissing the case.

In a news conference following the vote, Plocher, R-Des Peres, falsely claimed the committee had exonerated him. [However, the committee issued no report and made no findings clearing him of the allegations and instead simply closed the case without comment.](#)

The vote to end the case came two weeks after the committee voted 6-2 against adopting a draft report accusing Plocher of obstruction and witness intimidation but recommending he receive only a minor sanction relating to the underlying allegations in the complaint.

Prior to the dismissal vote, Kelly attempted to read from a March 5 email written by the House human resources director documenting alleged actions by Plocher’s chief of staff that the director said put House employees in “fear of being retaliated against or even wrongfully terminated.” Although the committee voted to block the letter from being read, the letter nonetheless became public following the meeting.

“In my over 21 years of state government service, I have never witnessed or even been involved in such a hostile work environment that is so horrible that I am living in fear every

petition the Missouri Secretary of State’s Office on May 1 seeking to put the issue before voters. Election officials must now verify the petition has enough valid signatures to qualify for the on the Nov. 5 statewide ballot, a process that typically takes about three months.

Missourians for Healthy Families and Fair Wages, the group sponsoring the petition, said it collected more than 200,000 signatures from registered voters, about double the minimum of roughly 107,000 signatures required to put a statutory initiative on the ballot.

Missouri’s standard minimum wage currently is \$12.30 an hour, while the federal minimum wage stands at just \$7.25 an hour. The initiative proposal would bump the state minimum to \$13.75 an hour on Jan. 1, 2025, and hike it again to \$15 an hour on Jan. 1, 2026. As with existing state law, the minimum wage would then be adjusted annually based on changes in the Consumer Price Index. The proposal also would guarantee workers receive one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

The initiative process allows voters to bypass the General Assembly to independently propose and enact legislation. Missouri voters have twice approved initiative measures raising the state minimum wage – a 2006 proposal that passed with 76 percent support and a 2018 measure that received 62.3 percent of the vote.

day of losing my job,” the human resources director wrote. “I cannot idly sit by and hope that the Speaker’s Office will stop harassing myself and other staff members.”

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

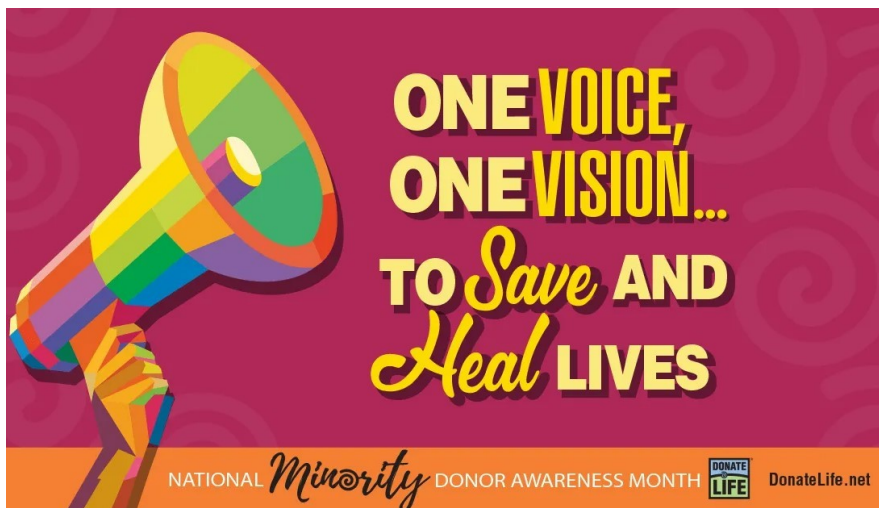
E-Mail: Ashley.Aune@house.mo.gov

Community Events



Join Pirtle Winery for a great day of fun at the 8th Annual [Weston WineFest](#)! There is no better way to celebrate spring than with live music, amazing food, and a huge selection of Missouri wines. New this year, a very limited number of VIP tickets will be available for purchase.

Health and Wellness



There are more than 1,500 Missourians waiting for a transplant right now. Living organ donors can donate kidneys, which more than 86% of patients on the National Transplant Waiting List need.

Register to become a donor today at DonateLifeMissouri.org!

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](#)