



## CAPITOL REPORT

June 24, 2024



**Hello All,**

I hope this email finds you well and staying cool in this dreadful summer heat! I've outlined a few updates below, but my most important update to share is that I'm hosting an [End-of-Session Town Hall with Rep. Jamie Johnson TOMORROW NIGHT in Riverside](#), and I sure hope you can make it.



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

### **JUDGE RULES ANTI-ABORTION LAW DOESN'T IMPOSE RELIGIOUS VIEWS**

A St. Louis circuit judge on June 14 ruled that Missouri's strict law banning abortion in nearly all circumstances does not impose religious views on those with contrary beliefs in violation of state constitutional provisions creating a separation between church and state.

A group of 14 clergy members, including state Rep. Barb Phifer, a Kirkwood Democrat who is a Unitarian pastor, filed a lawsuit challenging the statute on religious freedom grounds last year. The law declares that life begins at conception, which the plaintiffs contend is a religious position put forth by some Christian denominations but not shared by their own faiths. They also pointed to another section of the law stating "that Almighty God is the author of life" as proof of the statute's basis in religious dogma.

"While the determination that life begins at conception may run counter to some religious beliefs, it is not itself necessarily a religious belief," Judge Jason Sengheiser wrote in his ruling. "As such, it does not prevent all men and women from worshipping Almighty God or not worshipping according to the dictates of their consciences ... ."

The Republican-controlled Missouri General Assembly enacted the law in question in 2019 but it didn't take effect until June 2022 when the U.S. Supreme Court eliminated the federal constitutional right to abortion. The Missouri

### **DOJ FINDS MISSOURI VIOLATES ADA ON MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

The U.S. Department of Justice issued a sharply critical report on June 18 finding Missouri systematically violates the federal Americans with Disabilities Act by unnecessarily sending thousands of Medicaid-eligible adults with mental health disabilities to skilled nursing facilities without their consent to get them "out of sight and out of mind" instead of providing the community-based services they actually need.

Acting on a complaint, the department's Civil Rights Division launched an investigation into the state's practices in November 2022. The investigation found more than half of people with mental health issues who were sent to skilled nursing facilities are under age 65 and most require little to no assistance with basic physical activities – the primary services these facilities provide. The average stay lasted at least three years. Many of these people were under a guardianship, with county public administrators often serving in that role.

"These adults are subjected to unnecessary stays in nursing facilities generally because of a series of systemic failures by the State," the report says. "Specifically, the State fails to provide sufficient community-based services, fails to assertively engage people who have struggled with traditional services, and improperly relies on guardianship for people who have frequent hospitalizations or otherwise are not engaged in treatment. When

law prohibits all abortions except when necessary to save a mother's life and in vaguely defined situations when her health is at risk. Doctors found violating the law risk up to 15 years in prison.

The ruling likely will be appealed to the Missouri Supreme Court. The case is *The Reverend Traci Blackmon, et al., v. State of Missouri, et al.*

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## **KANSAS LAWMAKERS PASS INCENTIVES TO LURE CHIEFS, ROYALS**

The Kansas Legislature approved a massive incentive package on June 18 aimed luring the Kansas City Chiefs and Royals from the Missouri side of the border. Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, a Democrat, is expected to sign the bill into law, according to various media reports.

Missouri Gov. Mike Parson, a Republican, has said ensuring the two professional sports teams remain in Missouri will be a priority during his final months in office. Parson, whose term ends in January, has not indicated what form his administration's proposal would take or if a special legislative session would be necessary.

Kansas lawmakers began making a play for the teams after Jackson County voters in April decisively rejected a 40-year extension of a 3/8-cent countywide sales tax to subsidize construction of a new downtown Kansas City baseball stadium for the Royals and the expansion and renovation of Arrowhead Stadium, the football Chiefs' longtime home. The tax extension failed with 58 percent of county voters opposed. It was expected to generate \$40 billion over its four-decade lifespan.

The Kansas proposal would authorize bonds to finance up to 70 percent of each stadium's

a guardian is appointed for a person with a mental health disability, the guardian can, and frequently does, place the person in a nursing facility. One provider called guardianship in Missouri a 'sentence to be locked in a [nursing facility].'"

Investigators "found that almost none of the adults with mental health disabilities living in nursing facilities in Missouri need to be in these institutions, even for short-term stays." Instead of locking patients away in nursing facilities, the report said a variety of other mental health services would be more appropriate and allow them to remain in their homes and communities.

"Instead of diverting people with mental health disabilities from unnecessary nursing facility admission or transitioning people from nursing facilities who do not need to be there, people are sent out of sight and out of mind," the report says. "Instead of focusing resources and attention on serving this group of people in the community, the State relies on nursing facilities as a key piece of the system for serving people with mental health disabilities. Under the ADA, the State must make reasonable modifications to enable adults with mental health disabilities to live in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs."

Part of the problem, investigators found, stems from the fact that Missouri spreads responsibility for the care, treatment and oversight of people with mental health disabilities over three state agencies that often fail to communicate with each other. While the Missouri Department of Mental Health is responsible for overseeing care, the state Department of Health and Senior Services licenses providers and conducts investigations of abuse and neglect and the state's Medicaid program pays the bills.

"This allows each agency to assume that the other two agencies are taking steps to ensure that the complete service delivery system runs efficiently, effectively and in accordance with

cost. The Chiefs stadium is expected to cost more than \$2 billion, while the Royals anticipate a \$1.5 billion project. The bonds would be repaid over 30 years with tax revenue generated by the project and surrounding developments, as well revenue from sports betting and the state lottery. The legislation passed 84-38 in the Senate and 27-8 in the House of Representatives.

Neither team has committed to moving to Kansas, but both supported passage to the bonding measure. The Chiefs have been based in Kansas City since moving from Dallas, Texas, in 1962. The Royals have played in the city since the team's founding in 1969.

the ADA," the report says. "But when it comes to intensive services for people with mental health disabilities, none of the agencies are doing so and none of the agencies are collaborating with the others to ensure there are no gaps."

The report commended the state for cooperating with the 19-month investigation and said the Justice Department would work cooperatively with state officials to rectify the problems it discovered. However, the report warned the department would file a lawsuit against the state to enforce compliance with the ADA if an agreed upon resolution cannot be reached. A link to the report can be found at [2024 Missouri ADA Findings Report \(justice.gov\)](https://www.justice.gov/2024-missouri-ada-findings-report).



## End of Session Town Hal

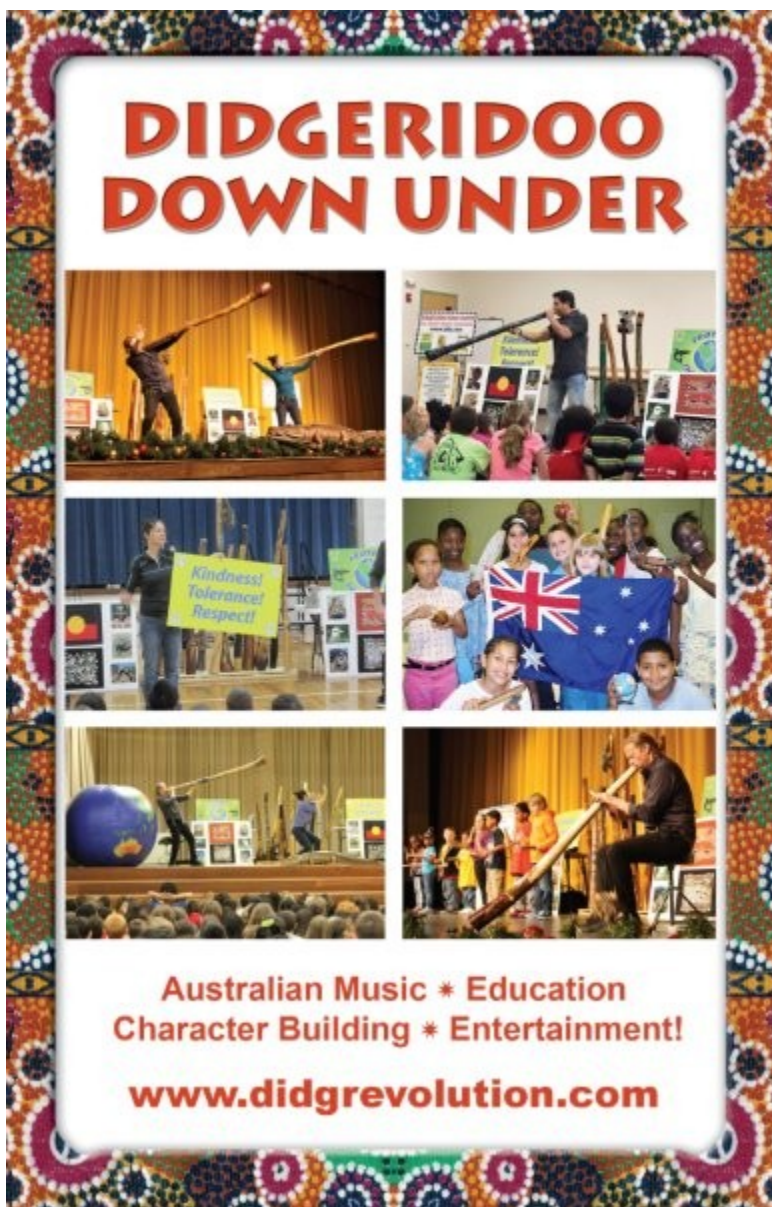
Join me and Representative Jamie Johnson at the brand new Riverside Library for an [end-of-session Town Hall discussion](#). We'll talk about what bills and budget items passed and how they will impact the Northland.

We also hope to hear from you and answer any questions you have about the Missouri Legislature or our state government.



NEW Riverside Library  
4510 Gateway Ave.  
Riverside, MO 64150  
[RSVP](#)

## Community Events



Join Darren Liebman on an epic adventure to the Land Down Under! We'll learn about Australia's culture and animals in addition to hearing the otherworldly sounds from the didgeridoo.

The show will have three showings on two separate days at various locations:

July 1st

- [The Auditorium at Woodneath Library Center](#), 10-11am
- [East Lee's Summit Community Room](#), 2:30-3:30pm
- [North Independence Children's Community Room](#), 6:30pm-7:30pm

July 3rd

- [Green Hills Community Room 1 and 2](#), 10-11am
- [Excelsior Springs Community Room](#), 3-4pm
- [Withers Community Room](#), 6:30pm-7:30pm

## Health and Wellness



June 20th marks the official start of summer which means hot and humid days are ahead. Protect yourself and others when it's hot outside by staying cool, staying hydrated and staying informed through [tips from the CDC](#).

## 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

### FOOD DISTRIBUTION

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

### WEATHER SHELTERS

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

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
- [Trans Lifeline](#)
- [The Eldercare Locator](#)
- [Opioid Treatment Program Directory](#)
- [Place Your Order for Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests](#)

## **PLATTE COUNTY LIBRARIES**

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