



Capitol Report

January 5, 2024

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*Dear Neighbor,*

Happy 2024!

The Missouri General Assembly's 2024 regular legislative session has gotten underway with election-year politics expected to dominate proceedings. Several lawmakers are making bids for higher office and others maneuvering to strengthen re-election bids. At least 10 sitting lawmakers are vying for statewide office, while a number of House members seek promotion to the Senate. [I announced in July that I am running for Missouri Lieutenant Governor.](#)

Republicans are again expected to focus on "culture war" issues such as prohibiting Missouri schools from teaching about racism in American history and its continuing modern day impact; banning public institutions and private businesses from promoting diversity, equity and inclusion; further restricting the rights of transgender Missourians; and allowing firearms on public transit and in churches.

The majority party also is likely to make a last-ditch effort at making it harder for Missourians to use the initiative petition process to enact laws or amend the state constitution independently of lawmakers. Republicans want new restrictions in hopes of thwarting an initiative drive seeking to enshrine protections for abortion and other reproductive rights in the state constitution. If it gathers enough signatures, the abortion measure would go on the November 2024 statewide ballot. Any restrictions on the initiative process likewise would require voter approval

Democrats will advocate for relaxing Missouri's draconian laws that outlaw abortion in nearly all instances, including rape or incest, and also seek to reduce crime by restoring the common-sense gun safety laws Republicans have repealed over the last 15 years. Democrats

also will push for tax relief for working families by eliminating sales taxes on food, period products and diapers. Republicans, by contrast, are expected to seek income tax cuts for corporations and wealthy individuals in addition to those already enacted in recent years that have led to flat net state general revenue collections.

Republicans outnumber Democrats 111-51, with one vacant seat last held by a Democrat, in the House of Representatives and hold a 23-11 advantage in the Senate. Although the GOP holds veto-proof majorities in both chambers, Gov. Mike Parson, a Republican, has yet to have one of his vetoes overridden. Even though the House has voted to override on several different measures, the override efforts have always died in the Senate.

The session ends May 17.

***Yours in Service,***

***Rich***



## **Legislative session gets underway with low expectations**

The 2024 legislative session began Jan. 3 with Republican leaders trying to strike an optimistic tone but hardline conservatives in the Senate making it clear they intend to continue the obstructionism that led to historically low numbers of bills winning final passage in each of the last three years.

Although Republicans hold supermajorities in both chambers, GOP infighting has sharply limited their ability to enact legislation. The Senate hardliners first organized in 2021 as the Conservative

Caucus but claimed heading into the 2023 session they were disbanding to instead work from within the larger Senate Republican Caucus. In practice, however, nothing changed and the group continued block legislation supported by more mainstream Republicans.

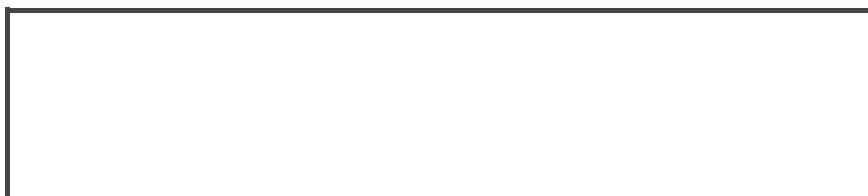
This year, they're operating under the Freedom Caucus banner and began the first day of session by holding the Senate floor for more than an hour to air grievances against GOP leaders. The hardliners started to resume their criticisms on the session's second day but were cut off when the Senate majority leader moved to adjourn the chamber until next week.

For their part, Democratic lawmakers noted that the limited number of bills to win passage last year included several the party had long advocated for and earned bipartisan support. They look to build upon those successes this year to push for targeted tax relief for working families, bolster reproductive rights, improve public school teacher salaries and reduce violent crime by strengthening Missouri's lax gun laws, among other issues.

With an initiative petition being circulated to put a proposed amendment to the state constitution protecting abortion rights on the November ballot, House Republicans said they will make a last-ditch effort to require supermajority approval to ratify amendments. However, any changes proposed by lawmakers also would need to be approved by voters to take effect, and voters in others states have proven resistant to limiting their own power.

Even if a higher vote threshold made it on the August ballot and won voter approval, the courts likely would decide whether the changes applied to measures on the November ballot since doing so would amount to changing the rules in the middle of the process. To qualify for the November ballot, petitions signed by the requisite number of registered voters must be submitted to the state in early May — months before any changes to the vote threshold would take effect.

Republicans outnumber Democrats 24-10 in the Senate and 111-51 in the House of Representatives, which has one vacant seat last held by a Democrat. The last day of the legislative session is May 17. The constitutional deadline for granting final passage to the state budget for the 2025 fiscal year, which begins July 1, is one week earlier on May 10.







I was recognized as the Missouri Retired Teacher's Associations Legislator of the Year for the work I have done for retired teachers and protecting public pensions.



**Governor attempts to limit foreign ownership of farmland**

Gov. Mike Parson on Jan. 2 issued an executive order purporting to prohibit people and businesses from countries designated as foreign adversaries from purchasing agricultural land located within 10 miles of a military facility. However, the governor's action appears to be an unconstitutional attempt to enact legislation via executive order.

Although the executive order doesn't specify the list of countries deemed to be foreign adversaries, an accompanying news release said those countries include China, Cuba, Iran North Korea, Russia and Venezuela.

The issue of foreign ownership of Missouri farmland has been controversial for more than a decade. Missouri law prohibited any foreign ownership "regardless of whether an adversarial country was involved" until 2013 when the Republican-controlled General Assembly overrode a veto by then-Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, to repeal the ban. Smithfield Foods, which owns several large animal production facilities in Missouri, pushed for the change and shortly thereafter was sold to a Chinese company.

Parson and Lt. Gov. Mike Kehoe, who joined the governor at a press conference announcing the executive order, both voted for the bill and veto override while serving in the state Senate. Kehoe is running in this year's Republican primary for governor and is backed by Parson, who can't seek re-election due to term limits.

Democrats opposed repealing the foreign ownership limits and in the years since have sought to restore restrictions. House Minority Leader Crystal Quade, D-Springfield, is one of several lawmakers who have filed legislation this year to do so.

Those bills would limit foreign ownership of agricultural land more tightly than Parson's limited executive order. Restoring restrictions in state law also would more definitively settle the issue in the event a court strikes down the executive order as an unconstitutional usurpation of legislative power. Parson said he supports legislative action on the matter and that his executive order is intended as a stopgap until that happens.



# RICHARD BROWN

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR 2024



Roshann Parris and I were recently inducted into the Greater Kansas City Boys and Girls Club Alumni Hall of Fame. This organization was impactful on my life and continues to shape me today. [Click here to read more.](#)



## **Veteran elected officials picked for highways commission**

Gov. Mike Parson on Jan. 2 appointed former St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and former state Sen. Dan Hegeman of St. Joseph to the Missouri State Highways and Transportation Commission, the independent governing authority for the state Department of Transportation.

Slay, a Democrat, served an unprecedented four terms as St. Louis mayor, from 2001 to 2017. He currently is executive director of the St. Louis Regional Crime Commission. Hegeman, a Republican, served in Missouri House of Representatives from 1991-2002 and the state Senate from 2015-2022. Before leaving the legislature due to term limits, he was chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee.

Because Parson, a Republican, appointed both men one day before the legislature convened for the year, they are considered interim appointments and began serving immediately. As interim appointments, however, the Senate must confirm the selections within 30 days for them to retain their new posts.

Although commission terms typically run for six years, Parson appointed both men to fill unexpired terms. If they win Senate confirmation, Slay's term will end March 1, 2027; Hegeman's on March 1, 2029.






# Part-Time Child Care Jobs Now Hiring!

North Kansas City  
Kansas City Public Schools  
Center  
Hickman Mills  
Grandview


## LINC Caring Communities Sites

Contact: Carol Green, (816) 739-9314, [cgreen@kclinc.org](mailto:cgreen@kclinc.org)  
Apply: [kclinc.org/jobs](http://kclinc.org/jobs)

**PROUD MEMBER**



**OF**



**CHIEFS**

**KINGDOM**

247SPORTS

### Hyundai

- 2011-2022 Accent
- 2011-2022 Elantra
- 2013-2017 Elantra GT
- 2013-2014 Elantra Coupe
- 2011-2012 Elantra Touring
- 2011-2014 Genesis Coupe
- 2018-2022 Kona
- 2020-2021 Palisade
- 2011-2012, 2019-2022 Santa Fe
- 2013-2018, 2019 Santa Fe; Santa Fe XL
- 2013-2018 Santa Fe Sport
- 2011-2019 Sonata
- 2011-2022 Tucson
- 2012-2017, 2019-2021 Veloster
- 2020-2021 Venue
- 2011-2012 Veracruz

### Kia

- 2011-2021 Forte
- 2021-2022 K5
- 2011-2020 Optima
- 2011-2021 Rio
- 2011-2021 Sedona
- 2021-2022 Seltos
- 2010-2022 Soul
- 2011-2022 Sorento
- 2011-2022 Sportage



# Free Steering Wheel Locks for Hyundai and Kia Owners

In response to the increasing incidents of vehicle theft, Kia and Hyundai are providing steering wheel locks for the listed years and models of vehicles.

If your vehicle qualifies, you can be obtain a lock from any KCPD Division Station or the Community Engagement Division located at Police Headquarters - 1125 Locust St. You must be a resident of KCMO, present a valid Identification, and Proof of Ownership. These locks will be available Monday-Friday between the hours of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m

**D.A.V.E.'S**  
place

**1st and 3rd Thursdays**  
**11:00 a.m - 1:00 p.m**

**2116 E 74th St**  
**Kansas City, MO 64132**

**Call 816-444-2116 for more information.**

**Food Pantry**

 [davesplacevolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:davesplacevolunteer@gmail.com)  
Join our email list.

 **Dave's Place**  
Find all updates on pantry changes.

 **CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH**  
A Biblical Alternative For Living

**WALNUT GROVE**  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION





## PROJECT UPDATE: SB I-35 closure at WB I-70 for work on Buck O'Neil Bridge project, NOW OPEN

JACKSON AND CLAY COUNTIES - Crews with the Buck O'Neil Bridge project have opened southbound I-35 at westbound I-70 on Jan. 5.

The current Buck O'Neil Memorial Bridge is a triple arch bridge carrying U.S. Route 169 over the Missouri River, and serves as a key regional connection between downtown Kansas City and communities north of the river. While safe, the bridge is nearing the end of its projected service life.

Motorists are reminded to slow down and pay attention while driving in work zones. Not all work zones look alike. Work zones can be moving operations, such as striping, patching or mowing. They can also be short term, temporary lane closures to make quick repairs or remove debris from the roadway.

For more information about MoDOT news, projects or events, please visit our website at <http://www.modot.org/kansascity>. For instant updates, follow MoDOT\_KC on Twitter, or share posts and comments on our Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/MoDOT.KansasCity/>. MoDOT Kansas City maintains more than 7,000 miles of state roadway in nine counties. Sign up online for work zone updates or call 888-ASK-MODOT (275-6636).



Terese Spears Chambers and I married this  
Fall.



## Groovy Grant

1945 - 2024

Born Grant Sheffield Hopkins, Groovy Grant was a legend and fixture in Kansas City's Blues scene. He was an original broadcaster on KKFI-FM and retired this past May after 33 years at the station. Groovy Grant left a legacy and many friends, fans and followers. [You can read his obituary here.](#)





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# Starlight

For more information about  
Vincent Legacy Scholarships, visit  
[kcstarlight.com/vincent-legacy-scholarship](https://kcstarlight.com/vincent-legacy-scholarship)



## Vincent Legacy Scholarships Applications

Since 2006, Starlight has proudly awarded Vincent Legacy Scholarships to middle school students throughout metropolitan Kansas City. Established with a generous contribution from longtime Starlight supporters Greg and Rebecca Reid, the scholarships provide BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) youth with funds to pursue professional training and experience the life-expanding possibilities of the performing arts.

To qualify, students in grades six, seven and eight must display talent and passion for the performing arts, have a strong interest in community service, and audition for the selection committee at Starlight.

Each \$2,500 Vincent Legacy Scholarship is administered by the Starlight Community Engagement Department, and funds are applied to performing arts training opportunities selected by the scholarship recipients during their middle and high school years.

**The deadline to apply for the 2024 Vincent Legacy Scholarships is Tuesday, January 30. Qualifying students must complete the application to be considered.**

**PEACE FOR  UKRAINE**

**COMMUNITY NEWS AND HAPPENINGS**



# Want lower electric bills?

Share the Sun can help. Share the Sun is a free solar energy program to reduce energy burdens. Eligible homeowners can receive a 10-panel, 4-kW solar energy system with a 25-year warranty at no cost. Go to [www.info.solarcrowdsource.com/skc-share-the-sun](http://www.info.solarcrowdsource.com/skc-share-the-sun) for more information and to apply.

DO YOU QUALIFY?



YOU MUST MAKE LESS THAN 60% AMI\*

Household Size	2021 Household Income
1	\$40,680
2	\$46,500
3	\$52,320
4	\$58,080
5	\$62,760
6	\$67,380
7	\$72,060
8	\$76,680

\*AREA MEDIAN INCOME



Share the Sun is brought to Kansas City, MO by the following organizations with generous support from the KCMO Government and Metropolitan Energy Center



## WE'RE HIRING!

AmeriCorps VISTA  
for the  
Marlborough Conservancy

Apply online



Or email [sarah@wearemarlborough.org](mailto:sarah@wearemarlborough.org)  
for more information!



**The reward has been raised to  
\$30,000 for Dominic**



**GREATER KANSAS CITY CRIME STOPPERS  
816-474-TIPS HOTLINE**

**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FROM: Det. Kevin Boehm, Crime Stoppers Coordinator**

**SUBJECT: Reward Increase - 9 Year Old Dominic Young Homicide**

**KANSAS CITY, MO ---** The Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Greater KC Crime Stoppers TIPS Hotline continue to seek information in the January 20, 2018 homicide of 9 year old Dominic Young Jr. at 71 Highway and Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd.

Dominic Young Jr. was apparently hit by a stray gunshot while occupying a vehicle driven by his father and died as a result of his injuries. Dominic, his father and brother were en route to Grandview at the time. The vehicle driven by Dominic's father was hit by gunshots from other vehicles apparently engaged in a gunfight according to statements.

KCPD found a possible crime scene near the intersection where the father said the shooting happened. When the father arrived home in Grandview, Dominic was not responsive. Grandview police initially responded to the father's home and found the boy in critical condition. He was later pronounced dead at a hospital.

A number of community leaders and organizations including State Representative Richard Brown, Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McManus, former City Councilmen Scott Taylor, Scott Wagner, John Sharp; the City of KCMO and Concord Fortress of Hope Church (Pastor Ron Lindsay) have come forward to increase the existing reward in the case up to \$30,000.00. Those leaders are available for comment in regard to the case.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers Greater Kansas City TIPS Hotline at 816-474-TIPS (8477), TIPS may also be submitted electronically at [www.KCcrimestoppers.com](http://www.KCcrimestoppers.com), or by downloading our NEW mobile app, P3TIPS, on Google Play or the Apple iOS stores for FREE. Information leading to an arrest and/or filing of charges could be eligible for up to \$30,000.00 in reward money. **ALL INFORMATION IS ANONYMOUS.**





**Remain Anonymous • Receive Cash Rewards**

**Tips Hotline**

**816-474-8477**

**Web Tips**

**[www.KCcrimestoppers.com](http://www.KCcrimestoppers.com)**

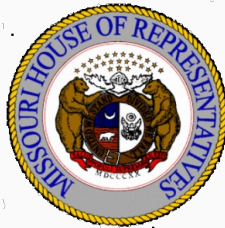
**Free Mobile App**

**[www.P3Tips.com](http://www.P3Tips.com)**

\* A program of the KC Metropolitan Crime Commission

My office in Jefferson City is available to assist you with questions you may have about state government or legislative issues. Please call, email or write anytime. If you are unable to reach me, my assistant, Donna Gentsch is ready to help you. If you are in Jefferson City, come by my Capitol office in room 134, and introduce yourself. The door is always open and I encourage you to visit.

[Please forward this email to your friends and family who want to know how what is happening in Jefferson City will impact them here at home.](#)



**Rep. Richard Brown**

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Please don't hesitate to contact me with any feedback, questions or ideas!â€œ<

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