



Legislative Column for the Week of April 29, 2019

Greetings,

This past week was a pivotal moment for the Missouri Senate. On April 24, the body gave its approval to a preliminary state operating budget for the 2020 fiscal year. Passing the state budget is one of the most important responsibilities of the Legislature — in fact, it is the only legislative duty specifically mentioned in the state constitution. Because of this, I always take great care to carefully evaluate the 13 bills that compose the state budget. As the ranking Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, I always do my best to stand up for what I believe are the most important public services provided by the state government. Many of these programs are vital aides to Missourians across the state, who often depend on these services to help them in their daily lives.

Now that the Senate and House of Representatives have each passed their respective versions of the budget, a conference committee will meet to discuss any discrepancies between the two proposals. Both bodies must approve identical versions of the state budget by May 10. The governor will then consider which parts of the budget to sign into law, and which parts, if any, to veto and send back to the Legislature. The 2020 fiscal year begins on July 1.

As approved by the Senate, the 2020 state budget details approximately \$29.753 billion in public funding. About one-third of the budget comes from the federal government, with stipulations on where and how the money can be spent. Another third goes toward General Revenue, the state's discretionary spending account. The final third is targeted spending, or money that is designated for a specific state department or a particular project or purpose.

In its version of the budget, the Senate has chosen to prioritize funding for education, infrastructure and workforce development. All of these are worthy goals. The Senate's plan fully funds the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's foundation formula, the baseline that determines how state resources will be balanced with local revenue to fund public schools throughout the state. The Senate is also offering an additional \$10 million for school transportation, an area that has been severely underfunded in recent years. I believe the state can do even more to support our schools, but I am glad the Senate is making education funding a priority.

The Senate's proposed budget also allocates \$26.3 million toward workforce training programs and \$28 million toward public four-year colleges. A bonding plan will finance

\$301 million worth of bridge replacements and repairs, with an additional \$50 million one-time transfer from General Revenue to the State Road Fund and \$35 million of matching funding for local transportation projects. As your elected representatives, it's our job to ensure the Department of Transportation has the resources it needs to properly maintain our state's extensive system of highways and bridges. I support the Senate's decision to issue a bonding plan for this purpose.

Aside from the budget, I am also happy to report that one of my bills has made additional headway through the legislative process. On April 25, the Senate "perfected" [Senate Bill 1](#), which means the body took the bill up for debate in the full chamber. During perfection, senators can discuss the merits and drawbacks of a specific bill and offer amendments that can be voted on by other senators. Once a bill makes it through the perfection process, it is normally a fairly quick turnaround for the Senate to take a final up-or-down vote on the legislation.

SB 1 allows some nonviolent offenses to be expunged from an individual's criminal record. This is a bill about second chances, about giving those who may have made a mistake in the past, but have been on the straight and narrow ever since, the opportunity to reform and improve their lives. This bill has the power to increase opportunity and enhance the quality of life of many Missourians. Even though the 2019 legislative session is quickly coming to a close, I believe SB 1 still has plenty of time to make it across the finish line.

Below, you will find a chart tracking the progress of each bill I have sponsored during the 2019 legislative session. I believe these proposals are important to Missourians of all backgrounds, and I look forward to discussing each and every one of them before the Missouri Senate.

Sen. Curls' Sponsored Legislation for 2019

Bill Number	Description	Status
Senate Bill 1	Modifies provisions relating to the expungement of certain criminal records	Perfected in the Senate
Senate Bill 2	Requires the Department of Health and Senior Services to make certain considerations when granting medical marijuana licenses and certifications	Second read and referred to Senate Small Business and Industry Committee
Senate Bill 3	Allows certain people to enter property to secure it, remove trash and graffiti, and maintain the grounds, and provides immunity from civil and criminal liability	Placed on informal calendar of Senate bills for perfection
Senate Bill 75	Modifies provisions relating to concealed carry weapons	Second read and referred to Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee
Senate Bill 225	Modifies nuisance actions in certain cities	Placed on informal calendar of Senate bills for perfection

Senate Bill 342	Enacts provisions relating to the designation of memorial infrastructure	Placed on formal calendar of Senate bills for perfection
Senate Bill 452	Modifies provisions relating to county assessments funds	Hearing conducted in Senate Local Government and Elections Committee
Senate Bill 457	Establishes the Medical Marijuana Opportunities Program	Second read and referred to Senate Health and Pensions Committee
Senate Bill 518	Modifies the compensation for a juror serving in Jackson County	Second read and referred to Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee
Senate Concurrent Resolution 4	Designates the Kansas City Chiefs as the official NFL team of the state of Missouri	Referred to House Rules — Legislative Oversight Committee

Please know I value your input, and I invite you to visit my Capitol office, located in Room 225, if you are ever in Jefferson City. You may access my Senate website at senate.mo.gov/curls.

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