



Legislative Column for the Week of Feb. 22, 2019

Greetings,

It has been a busy past few weeks in the Missouri Senate. On Thursday, Feb. 21, the Senate third read and passed [Senate Bill 28](#), which places a cap on the state's low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program. The amount of this cap is tied to the federal LIHTC program. Under the legislation, Missouri cannot authorize more than 72.5 percent of the amount of LIHTCs allocated to our state under the federal program, down from the previous cap of 100 percent. The bill now heads to the House of Representatives for its consideration.

I have conflicting opinions about this bill. On the one hand, LIHTCs are vital incentives that encourage housing developers to build affordable homes for underserved Missourians. This program has made a world of difference for both Kansas City as well as the rest of the state, revitalizing neighborhoods and providing a safe haven for older residents and the working poor. Creating new affordable housing units in a certain area often spurs other economic development, making it difficult to encapsulate the full benefit LIHTCs provide in a simple cost-benefit analysis.

I strongly support the inclusion of LIHTCs in Missouri's tax code. Unlike many other states, we do not allocate a specific portion of general revenue toward funding a statewide housing program. The LIHTC program is all we have, so it must be protected. If anything, I believe we should be doing more to help our state's most vulnerable residents, not less.

However, none of this matters if the tax credits cannot be authorized in the first place. Missouri's LIHTC program is currently on hold, and SB 28 might be the quickest way to bring it back. In 2017, the Missouri Housing Development Commission voted to freeze the program due to concerns about its cost and overall efficiency. The governor has said he will not seek to reinstitute the tax credits until the General Assembly is able to enact "substantial reforms" to the program.

SB 28 represents a compromise among many different lawmakers with a range of opinions on Missouri's LIHTC program — a conversation that has been many years in the making. Though I personally do not want to lower the amount spent on these tax credits, I sincerely hope we are able to reinstitute them as quickly as possible. I am happy to see the Senate has come to an agreement on how to proceed with the LIHTC program, and I hope this bill is able to make its way through the remainder of the legislative process.

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

<u>Bill Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>
Senate Bill 1	Modifies provisions relating to the expungement of certain criminal records	Hearing conducted in Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee
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	Hearing scheduled in Senate Progress and Development Committee
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	Hearing scheduled in Senate Progress and Development Committee
Senate Bill 342	Enacts provisions relating to the designation of memorial infrastructure	Second read and referred to Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee
Senate Concurrent Resolution 4	Designates the Kansas City Chiefs as the official professional football team of the state of Missouri	Reported from committee and placed on Senate Resolutions Calendar

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/.

###