



WEEKLY CAPITOL UPDATE

Monday, October 30, 2023

COURT KEEPS GUN LAW BLOCKED

The U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 20 rejected a request to reinstate a Missouri law that purports to declare many federal gun laws unenforceable in the state.

A federal district judge had ruled the law violates the U.S. Constitution's Supremacy Clause, which holds that federal laws trump contrary state laws.

Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey had asked the

high court to allow the law to remain in effect while the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals considers his appeal of the district judge's ruling. The Supreme Court rejected Bailey's request in a brief order with only arch-conservative Justice Clarence Thomas noting a dissent, which he did not explain.

The General Assembly enacted the law in 2021 over the objections of many Democratic legislators. In addition to purporting to nullify federal gun laws, the measure also authorizes those arrested or convicted of a federal gun crime to sue local police departments for civil fines of \$50,000 per occurrence for assisting federal agents in their cases and prohibits local governments from hiring – in any capacity – former federal officers who previously enforced federal gun laws.

Ruling in a legal challenge brought by the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. District Judge Brian Wimes of the Western District of Missouri said the state law clearly interferes with federal officials' ability to enforce federal firearms regulations, in violation of the Supremacy Clause, and is "invalid, null, void, and of no effect."

The Supreme Court's refusal to weigh in means Missouri's law will remain unenforceable while litigation in the case continues.

The case is *United States v. State of Missouri*.

INDEPENDENT REPORTS DOUBLE-DIPPING

House Speaker Dean Plocher sought and received taxpayer reimbursement for about \$4,509 in travel expenses that his campaign committee also paid for, the Missouri Independent reported on Oct. 23.

The double-dipping took place on at least nine different occasions over five years, according to the online news site.

The Independent discovered the double-dipping by comparing the expense reports of Plocher's official House office, which it obtained through an open records request, against the contribution and expenditure reports of his campaign committee, Plocher for Missouri. Those reports are filed with the Missouri Ethics Commission and posted online.

Citing legal experts, the Independent reported the submitting of false reports could be prosecuted as stealing from the state, a Class A misdemeanor, or as the Class B misdemeanor of making a false declaration. Plocher's actions also could be considered as converting campaign funds for personal use, which is prohibited by state law and punishable by a civil fine.

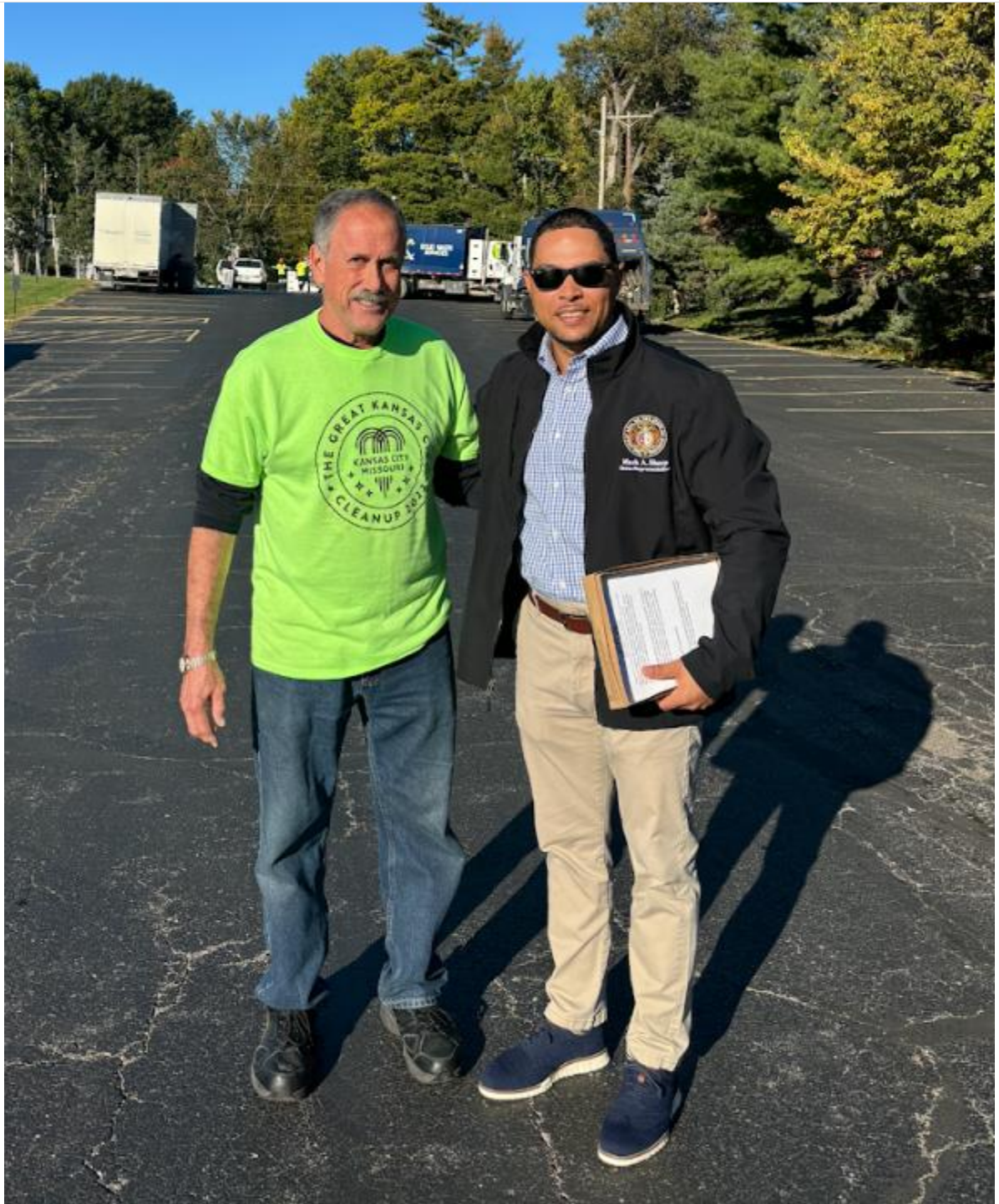
Although state law allows elected officials to use campaign funds for official expenses, they cannot also seek reimbursement of those costs from taxpayers.

In Plocher’s case, his campaign paid for his travel – including a trip to Hawaii this summer to attend a conference – while the House personally reimbursed him for those same costs.

In every instance he sought taxpayer reimbursement, Plocher signed a document swearing the payments he sought to recover were made with “personal funds, for which I have not been reimbursed,” the Independent reported.

After the Independent filed its request for Plocher’s office expense reports – but days before the Independent published its story – Plocher began repaying the House for the questioned reimbursements.

In a statement to the Independent, Plocher said he is “in the process of completing a full review of all expenditures and will correct any additional administrative errors in the spirit of full transparency.”



Recently I had a chance to attend the 6th District Fall Cleanup at First Baptist Church in south Kansas City. While there I had a chance to visit with John Carmichael who was volunteering with the cleanup.



MCK8 Ribbon Cutting and Open House



November 1



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South KC Food Pantries

South Kansas City is fortunate to have several food pantries to help less-fortunate residents have enough healthy food to eat. These include:

Community Assistance Council, 10901 Blue Ridge Blvd. on the north end of the Ruskin High School campus, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Persons should call 816-763-3277, ext. 100, or email info@cackc.org for appointments or questions.

Red Bridge Area Food Pantry, 100 W. Red Bridge Rd. in the First Baptist Church of Kansas

City, from 10 a.m. to noon on the third Saturday each month. Persons must call 816-908-7800 for appointments by the prior Wednesday.

Harvesters (the community food network) brings the semi-truck that serves as its mobile food pantry to seven sites in south Kansas City monthly to distribute fresh produce and other healthy food to families in need. The sites are:

Center School District, 8701 Holmes Rd., from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. as long as food is left on the first Saturday of the month. Persons should drive through the bus parking lot to the district warehouse. The event is sponsored by Three Trails Community church in partnership with the Center School District.

Center District Warehouse, 8701 Holmes Rd., from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. the second Friday of each month. Persons should go to the entrance to the Center Administrative Office and drive through the bus parking lot to the warehouse where volunteers will load the food. Persons should take the Troost Ave exit. The event is sponsored by the Center Education Foundation in partnership with the Center School District.

Evangel Church, 1414 E. 103rd St., from 7 to 8:30 a.m. the second Saturday of the month. Persons may remain in their vehicles, and food will be brought to them.

United Believers Community Church, 5600 E. 112th Terr., with vehicles lining up at 8:30 a.m. and contactless food distribution running from 9 to 11 a.m. the third Wednesday of the month.

Ruskin High School, 7000 E. 111th St., from 4 to 5:30 p.m. the third Thursday of the month. Vehicles should line up on Ruskin Way on the east side of the school, and staff and students will load the food when vehicles reach the school.

Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall Rd., with registration beginning at 8 a.m. and food distribution running from about 8:30 to 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month. Families are asked to bring two cardboard boxes for volunteers to put the food in.

Red Bridge United Methodist Church, 636 E. 117th St., from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on the fourth Friday of the month in the church parking lot.

Serve and Lift Center – South KC, 8001 Longview Rd., from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and

Thursday. Walk-in, call for an appointment or order online at <https://catholiccharities-kcsj.org/pantry/>



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**Please don't hesitate to contact me
with any feedback, questions or ideas!**