



Dear Neighbor,

This week I had the privilege to present two bills that I filed this year to House committees.

In the House Crime Prevention Committee I presented House Bill 1680, which makes a major change to current Missouri law to reduce drunk driving.

Currently in Missouri law, a person is not required to have an ignition interlock device installed in their vehicle until they have had **more than one** DWI conviction.

My bill would require any person to have an ignition interlock device in their vehicle for at least six months after their license is reinstated **following any drunk driving conviction**. These devices prevent a vehicle from being started if the driver has had too much alcohol to drink.

In states that have similar laws in place we have seen significant decreases in the amount of drunk driving related crashes and deaths.

I'm thankful that Committee Chair Lane Roberts shares my enthusiasm about this legislation. In committee Roberts said, " I

don't know why this country hasn't been tougher on this issue."

I also had the chance to present House Bill 2627 to the Special Committee on Urban Issues. This bill simply makes **February Black History Month in Missouri**.

House Bill 2474 which includes language from a bill I introduced that expands restitution payments to cover any persons wrongfully convicted and incarcerated in Missouri state prisons was voted out the Rules - Administrative Oversight Committee this week. This bill is being handled by Representative Ron Hicks and could be brought up for discussion on the House floor as early as next week.

Locally in honor of Black History Month, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum has free admission all month long, courtesy of the Kansas City Royals.

Anyone in KCMO needing a smoke detector in their residence should call 816-513-4648 to make the request. The Kansas City Fire Department will deliver and install up to two smoke detectors with ten-year batteries in KCMO residences that need them for no charge.

Lastly, many of our schools have a terrible shortage of substitute teachers. If you or anyone you know is interested in becoming a substitute teacher or finding work as a substitute teacher please visit the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website or contact your local school districts.

If anyone would like to contact me about legislation they would like me to support or oppose, please email me at Mark.Sharp@house.mo.gov.

Email is probably the best way to reach my office. If you are unable to quickly reach me, my legislative aide [Kaylee Bauer](#) is ready to help you.

Please scroll down to read about other state government matters and important upcoming local events.

Feel free to forward this newsletter to your friends and family who might want to know the latest news about what is happening in state government and about important local events. Be safe and God bless.

Yours in Service,
Mark A. Sharp



I presented House Bill 1680 which will require all convicted drunk drivers to have working ignition interlock devices in their vehicles for at least six months following their license reinstatement to prevent their vehicles from being started if they have had too much alcohol to drink. I greatly appreciate the testimony in favor of the bill by Allyson Summers, the regional director of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

WEEKLY CAPITOL UPDATE

Friday, February 18th, 2022

FILING TO START WITHOUT DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Candidate filing for the August primary elections is set to open Feb. 22, even though new congressional and state senate districts that reflect population shifts shown in the 2020 U.S. Census haven't been finalized yet.

At present, it remains unclear how Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft plans to handle filing for these offices. The filing period will run through March 29.

Lawmakers had hoped to have passed a bill redrawing Missouri's eight congressional districts by now. However, a small group of hardline conservative senators have stalled the process for weeks over their insistence on approving a congressional district map that would likely result in a congressional delegation of seven Republicans and only one Democrat if current voting patterns are maintained.

Many mainstream Republicans have said the proposal pushed by the hardliners instead could allow Democrats to win more congressional seats by diluting GOP voting strength in some currently safe Republican districts.

The redistricting bill pending in the Senate which already has been approved by the House would maintain the decade-long status quo of six relatively safe Republican districts and two relatively safe Democratic districts in the Kansas City and St. Louis areas.

Without changes, the bill (House Bill 2117) is just one Senate vote

away from being sent to the governor for his signature, but so far the hardliners haven't allowed that to happen.

If the stalemate persists, federal law authorizes any Missouri resident to file a petition in federal court requesting a three-judge panel be appointed to draw Missouri's new congressional districts instead of the legislature.

Such a petition could be filed at any time. Federal panels drew Missouri's congressional districts in both 1971 and 1981 after the legislature failed to do so.

The process of drawing Missouri's 34 state senate districts is already in the hands of an Appellate Redistricting Commission, which consists of six state Court of Appeals judges.

The Missouri Supreme Court appointed the appellate panel on Jan. 10 after a different commission consisting of 10 Democrats and 10 Republicans couldn't agree on new districts by a constitutional deadline. The appellate commission hasn't publicly indicated when it expects to complete its work.

New districts for the 163-member Missouri House of Representatives were finalized in January by a bipartisan commission and are ready for the start of candidate filing.

Filing also opens on Feb. 22 for state auditor, U.S. Senate, state judicial elections and various county offices.

MEASURE ADVANCES TO CRIPPLE PETITION PROCESS

Virtually all proposed constitutional amendments placed on the ballot by initiative petition would fail – even some that somehow achieve 100 percent voter support – under a proposed constitutional

amendment that has strong Republican support that won preliminary House approval on a voice vote on Feb. 16.

A second vote which must be a roll call vote is required to send the measure which I oppose to the Senate.

A proposed constitutional amendment currently must win a simple majority of the votes cast to pass.

House Joint Resolution 70 would drastically increase the approval threshold for proposed constitutional amendments put on the ballot by the initiative petition process to a simple majority of all registered voters, including those who didn't vote in the election.

Based on the nearly 4.34 million registered Missouri voters in 2020, a proposed constitutional amendment put on the ballot by initiative petition would need about 2.17 million “yes” votes for passage under HJR 70. **With the exception of elections with extremely high turnouts, that figure is higher than the total number of votes cast in many statewide elections.**

For example, 83.7 percent of Missouri voters in 2010 supported ratifying constitutional Amendment 3 to prohibit the General Assembly from imposing sales taxes on real estate transactions. That measure received the highest percentage of “yes” votes of any measure placed on the ballot by the initiative petition process since the current Missouri Constitution was ratified in 1945.

Under the standard set by HJR 70, however, even though Amendment 3 received about 1.59 million “yes” votes out of a total of 1.9 million votes cast, it would have failed.

That's because with nearly 4.14 million registered Missouri voters at the time, approval would have required almost 2.07 million yes votes

– which is more than the total number of votes cast in the election.

Although HJR 70 would establish a nearly impossible threshold for proposed constitutional amendments put on the ballot by initiative petition to pass, those placed on the ballot by the General Assembly would still need just a simple majority of the votes cast to pass. Such a double standard seems unfair to me.

If HJR 70 is approved by both legislative chambers, it would go on the Nov. 8 statewide ballot and would only require a majority of the votes cast to pass.

BAN UPHELD ON USING TAX MONEY IN CAMPAIGNS

The Missouri Supreme Court on Feb. 15 unanimously upheld the constitutionality of a 34-year-old state law that prohibits spending taxpayer money to campaign for ballot measures or candidates.

In doing so, the high court reversed a circuit judge's finding that the law enacted in 1988 violates the free speech rights of government officials.

While prohibiting public funds from being used in election campaigns, the law specifically allows public officials to make public comments or issue press releases regarding ballot measures.

Several local governments in St. Louis County sued over the law in 2019.

Although Cole County Circuit Judge Cotton Walker ruled in favor of the local governments, the Supreme Court ruled the law doesn't restrict the free speech rights of government officials but instead prohibits the use of public funds to subsidize officials'

speech.

The law “does not purport to regulate the speech of officials when they do not use public funds,” Chief Justice Paul Wilson wrote for the court.

While the appeal was pending, the Missouri General Assembly amended the law in 2021 to clarify some of its provisions, including specifying that it applies to public school districts and charter schools and that violations constitute an election offense punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$2,500 fine.

The case is *City of Maryland Heights, et al., v. State of Missouri*.

SENATE PANEL RESTORES GOVERNOR’S PAY PLAN

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Feb. 16 restored funding for a \$15-an-hour wage floor for all state employees that the governor asked to be included in a nearly \$4.6 billion supplemental spending bill.

The legislation also would distribute about \$2 billion in federal pandemic relief funds to local public school districts and fully fund Missouri’s expanded Medicaid program for the rest of the 2022 fiscal year which ends June 30.

The committee voted 11-2 to advance the measure, House Bill 3014, to the full Senate. In addition to setting a wage floor for state jobs, the bill also would provide a 5.5% pay raise to all state workers.

Gov. Mike Parson has called for urgent action to bolster employee compensation in order to attract well-qualified new employees and stem the current exodus of state employees who often can find better

paying jobs elsewhere.

Missouri's state government workforce consistently ranks among the lowest in the nation in average pay.

Some influential House Republicans said the governor's requested wage floor was too high and cut it to just \$12 an hour for workers in all but four state agencies that each have major roles in providing direct care for people.

When the Senate approves the bill, the two chambers will have to come to an agreement on their differences before granting it final passage. The governor had wanted the bill passed by Feb. 1 so wage increases could be promptly implemented, but the House delayed action on it for about four weeks before finally voting to advance it to the Senate on Feb. 10.

Lawmakers must allocate about \$2 billion in federal education funding to local school districts by March 24 or the spending authority will expire.

MEDICAID EXPANSION FUNDING TARGETED

On a voice vote, the House of Representatives on Feb. 15 granted first-round approval to a proposed constitutional amendment I oppose aimed at thwarting a voter-mandated eligibility expansion for the state's Medicaid program.

A second vote which must be a roll call vote is necessary to advance it to the Senate.

Missouri voters ratified an amendment to the state constitution to expand Medicaid to cover more uninsured Missourians in 2020, but key Republican legislators attempted to stop its implementation in

2021 by blocking sufficient funding in the state budget to cover the added recipients.

The state Supreme Court subsequently ruled the constitution requires the state to provide coverage for all persons who are now eligible.

House Joint Resolution 117 would accomplish what the Supreme Court ruled isn't currently allowed by amending the constitution to grant lawmakers the power to block coverage for the expanded population if they don't specifically appropriate funding to serve the newly eligible recipients.

If HJR 117 clears both legislative chambers, it would go on the Nov. 8 statewide ballot for voter approval.

KC PET PROJECT ♥

FEE-WAIVED ADOPTION EVENT

for adult dogs over 30 pounds and adult cats

FEBRUARY 18TH - 21ST



At the Kansas City Campus for Animal Care, Zona Rosa
Adoption Center, Petco Adoption Center, and pets in Foster Homes.

Medicaid Enrollment

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Kansas City Health Department

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Every Tuesday 12:00pm - 4:00pm

FREE assistance

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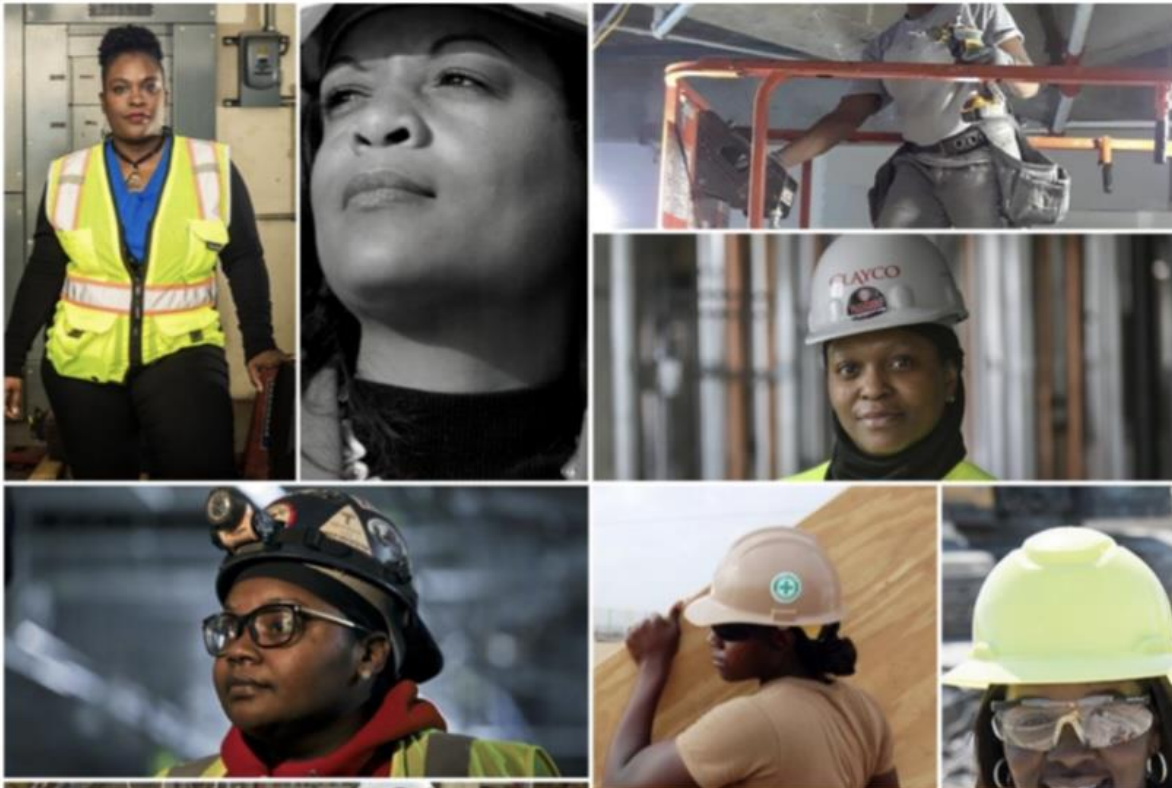
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South KC Mobile Food Pantries

Many families in south Kansas City are being forced to rely on community food pantries such as Community Assistance Council's to have enough to eat.

Fortunately, 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. There will be no mobile food pantry in February.

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.



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