



Dear Neighbor,

I was extremely pleased that Representative Rodger Reedy, R-Windsor, included most of the language from the bill I introduced to make unjustified discharging of a firearm with criminal negligence within or into city limits a state offense in a bill he sponsored which received a very favorable bipartisan response Thursday during a hearing by the House Rural Community Development Committee.

My bill, House Bill 1568, is intended to deter the scourge of celebratory and indiscriminate gunfire that has caused deaths, injuries and property damage in Kansas City and many other Missouri cities by making it a serious state offense.

It is named Blair's Law to honor the memory of 11-year-old Blair Shanahan Lane who died after being struck here by celebratory gunfire on July 4, 2011. Her mother, Michele Shanahan DeMoss, testified at Thursday's hearing, and her heart-wrenching testimony brought tears to the eyes of some committee members.

She has made numerous trips to the state capitol to testify on behalf of this legislation to put real teeth in the penalties against celebratory and indiscriminate gunfire in cities since her daughter's tragic and unnecessary death, describing the current penalties in some city ordinances for unlawfully discharging firearms within their boundaries as more suitable for parking tickets than for such dangerous and irresponsible behavior.

Rep. Reedy's legislation, House Bill 1696, also allows the discharge of firearms from stationary motor vehicles on private property in rural areas to protect livestock from predators. I added Blair's Law by amendment to a similar bill of his last year which passed the House overwhelmingly and was recommended for passage without dissent by a Senate committee, but time ran out during that year's session before the bill could be voted on by the full Senate.

While the language in his bill only makes unjustified discharging of a firearm with criminal negligence within or into city limits a Class A state misdemeanor, he has committed to me that he will strengthen the penalties to mirror those in my bill which make the first such offense a Class A misdemeanor, the second a Class E felony and the third and subsequent offenses a more serious Class D felony.

Hopefully this common sense legislation can be enacted into law this year and its stricter penalties will deter much of this gunfire and prevent more injuries, deaths and property damage. During the recent New Year's holiday two persons in Kansas City required hospital treatment after being struck by celebratory gunfire.

And last April, 24-year-old KCUR radio reporter Aviva Okeson-Haberman who had interviewed me about Blair's Law when I was first running for this office in the fall of 2019 died after being struck by a bullet that came through her apartment window.

Turning to local news, I was very pleased to see the City Neighborhoods & Community Services Department has launched a new program offering Rebuild KC Neighborhood Grants to homes associations, neighborhood groups, nonprofits and others to improve their communities.

The grants may be used for housing improvements, infrastructure projects such as sidewalks, job creation and workforce development, crime and violence prevention, climate protection programs such as tree planting, activities to promote healthy communities and other neighborhood improvement programs in KCMO.

“We welcome projects of all sizes, whether it's something small as a tree

planting or park bench installation to something as large as a new building with 500 affordable housing units,” said Forest Decker, newly appointed director of the department.

Funds for the new program are coming primarily from American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

For more information and to apply, persons should go online to [KCMO.gov/rebuildkc](https://kcmo.gov/rebuildkc).

If anyone would like to contact me about legislation, they would like me to introduce or support or legislation they would like me to 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 had the opportunity to reconnect at the Capitol this week with my former Cougar football teammate at Hickman Mills High School Siddik Lartey, right, who is the employment coordinator for Project CU, Inc., a St. Louis nonprofit that provides employment for St. Louis area adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and to meet Kit Brewer, the agency's executive director, who both told me about the agency's important mission and successful track record.

WEEKLY CAPITOL UPDATE

Friday, January 28th, 2022

ATTORNEY GENERAL SUES 45 DISTRICTS

Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt has filed 45 separate lawsuits against local public school districts seeking to block mask mandates put in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff.

Many districts, however, have pushed back, noting their actions are authorized under state law.

For nearly two months Schmitt had been threatening Missouri school districts over their mask mandates, claiming that a November ruling by a Cole County circuit judge prevents them from imposing such requirements.

However, despite previously basing his position on that ruling, Schmitt didn't even mention it in his lawsuits. That likely because – Schmitt's prior claims notwithstanding – the judge's decision was limited to

striking down four state health department regulations and didn't invalidate or restrict the statutory authority of public school districts to take actions to mitigate the spread of communicable disease.

In fact, the nearly identical lawsuits, while declaring that mask mandates are illegal and violate the rights of students and parents, cite little in the way of relevant legal authority in support of those declarations.

Schmitt sued 36 districts on Jan. 21, trickling out announcements on social media about each one over the course of the day. He filed the remaining nine lawsuits on Jan. 24.

So far, Schmitt hasn't sued every public school district with a mask mandate and has not sued any public charter school with such a requirement.

GOP HARDLINERS PUSH FOR 7-1 MAP

The Missouri Senate's hardline conservative faction held the floor for five hours on Jan. 26 to protest a congressional redistricting bill that would preserve the current split of six Republican-leaning congressional districts and two Democratic-leaning districts.

The handful of hardliners are demanding the chamber instead enact a plan they believe would result in a 7-1 split favoring Republicans.

The full Senate had been expected to take up the bill Jan. 26, one day after the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting voted 9-5 in favor of it. However, the hardliners took control of the Senate floor while the chamber was conducting procedural business. After a lengthy break, the Senate ultimately adjourned for the day without ever formally taking up the bill.

House Bill 2117, which has already cleared the House of Representatives, would largely maintain the status quo with two Democratic-leaning districts – one each in the St. Louis and Kansas City areas – and six Republican-leaning districts.

The hardliners want to carve up the Kansas City area's 5th congressional district represented by Congressman Emanuel Cleaver by moving some

portions of it that normally vote Democratic to adjoining districts and moving areas in those districts that generally vote Republican into the 5th district to create another Republican-leaning district,

Republican legislative leaders are concerned the plan would dilute the party's voting strength in adjoining districts, resulting in a so-called "dummymander" in which an overly aggressive gerrymander causes the party in power to lose seats instead of gaining them.

The Senate could debate the bill as soon as Jan. 31. If the measure passes without changes, it would go straight to the governor to be signed into law.

Since the House previously rejected adding an emergency clause allowing the bill to take effect immediately upon being signed, it won't take effect until Aug. 28 – nearly four weeks after the Aug. 2 primary elections. With candidate filing set to open Feb. 22, adding an emergency clause is expected to be reconsidered, and if approved by the Senate it would then need to also be approved by the House.

COURT NAMES REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

The Missouri Supreme Court has appointed a commission of six appellate judges to draw new state Senate district boundaries after a bipartisan commission that had first crack at the job deadlocked along partisan lines.

The court quietly issued an order appointing the new commission on Jan. 11, but it didn't officially take over the process until Jan. 23.

Under the Missouri Constitution, the Appellate Redistricting Commission has through April 23 to finalize 34 new Senate district boundaries that reflect population shifts over the previous decade. As a practical matter, however, the commission needs to complete the job before candidate filing for the Aug. 2 primary elections opens on Feb. 22.

The appellate commission consists of judges from the Missouri Court of Appeals' three districts, which are based in Kansas City, St. Louis and Springfield. The panel is split evenly between judges appointed by Democratic and Republican governors.

The Democratic appointees are Judges Cynthia Martin of the Western District, Angela Turner Quigless of the Eastern District and Mary Scheffield of the Southern District. The Republican appointees are Judges Thomas Chapman of the Western District, Michael Gardner of the Eastern District and Gary Lynch of the Southern District.

The original Senate redistricting commission consisted of 10 Democrats and 10 Republicans appointed by the governor from nominees submitted by the two political parties. It reached an impasse before the Dec. 23 constitutional deadline for submitting a preliminary map and was formally discharged on Jan. 23.

A similar House redistricting commission completed its work of drawing new district boundaries for the 163-member lower chamber and finalized its plan on Jan. 19.

KIDS EAT FREE



**AGES
18 AND
UNDER**



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SUPPLIES
LAST**

MEAL DISTRIBUTION

- CHILDREN DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT -

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**WINTER
FRENZY**
ADOPTION SPECIAL

JANUARY 28TH - 30TH
\$30 ADOPTIONS

FOR ADULT DOGS OVER 30LBS AND ADULT CATS

AT THE KANSAS CITY CAMPUS FOR ANIMAL CARE, ZONA ROSA ADOPTION
CENTER, PETCO ADOPTION CENTER, AND PETS IN FOSTER HOMES

KC PET PROJECT ♥

KC SCHOLARS

Scholarship applications are **OPEN NOW** for 9th graders, 11th graders, and adults as well as the application to volunteer as a scholarship reviewer. Please share these opportunities with your network!

Traditional Scholarship - 11th graders

250+ students
will earn up to
\$50,000



Feb. 25 Deadline
Apply at kcscholars.org

College Savings Match - 9th graders

250 students
will earn up to
\$1,400



Feb. 25 Deadline
Apply at kcscholars.org

Adult Learner Scholarship

200 awards
up to
\$25,000



Feb. 25 Deadline
Apply at kcscholars.org

Volunteer to be a Scholarship Reviewer

200 community members
needed to review
personal statements
& recommendations



100% virtual
Jan. 28 Deadline
Apply at kcscholars.org

Follow KC Scholars on Social Media

Like and share our posts to spread the word about these opportunities!



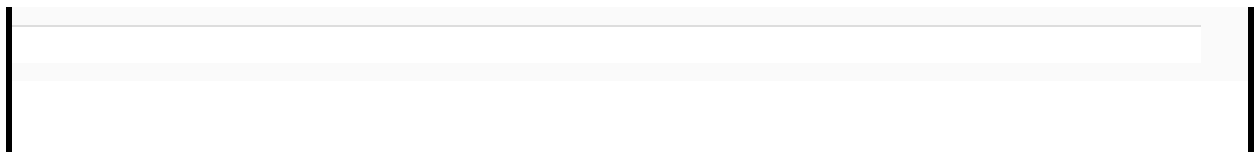
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Do you want to work but first need:

- A resume
- Help preparing for an interview
- To know where and how to start the process
- To work out transportation or childcare
- Your social security card, ID or birth certificate
- GED or other training
- Interview clothes
- Other supports



Join Us for FREE Overcoming Barriers to Employment

INFORMATION • PRESENTATIONS • 1:1 SUPPORTS

10 am - 1 pm, Feb. 16, 2022

St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 9420 James A. Reed Road, KCMO

Organizations will share their expertise, services and provide 1:1 supports to help you overcome barriers to employment. If you can, bring basic info of your work history, social security card, ID and/or birth certificate. Masks will be required at all times.

Catholic Charities

1:1 – Building Your Resume
Presentation - 10 Tips for a Successful Interview

Community Assistance Council

1:1 - Get Your Critical Documents
(bring Social Security Card, ID, Birth Certificate, we'll help get the rest)

Express Employment Professionals

1:1 - Online Job Applications / Practice Interviews
Presentation - How to Keep the Job

Full Employment Council

1:1 – Get Registered in the FEC Employment Portal
Presentation - Overview FEC's Employment Services

Goodwill

1:1 – Building Your Resume

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

Help With Your Best Public Transportation Route/Options

Mid-Continent Public Library

1:1 - Assessments and Best Resources for You

Women's Employment Network

Presentation - Essential Skills You Need for ANY Job

Also, Walk Away With:

- Resume In Hand
- Childcare Resources
- Interview-Ready Outfit
- Phone Ordered (if needed)
- COVID Vaccination or Booster

TO REGISTER

**REGISTRATION HELPFUL
WALK-INS WELCOME**

Scan QR code:

Visit: www.cackc.org

Email: info@cackc.org

Call: 816-763-3277 X 103

For general information:

Rachel Casey

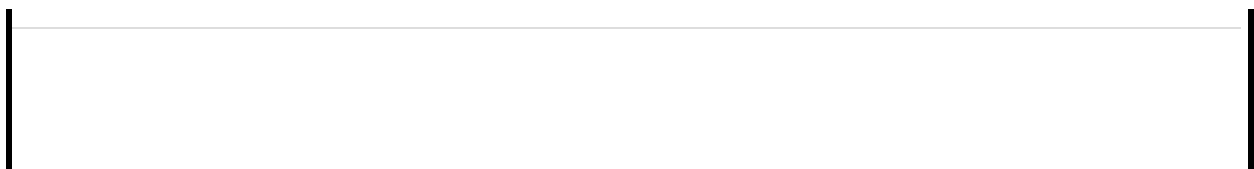
816-763-3277 X 103

rachel.casey@cackc.org



Sponsors





The background of the entire flyer is a solid purple color. It is decorated with stylized, overlapping leaf patterns in shades of red, orange, and yellow, reminiscent of tropical foliage like monstera leaves. These patterns are positioned around the edges of the purple field.

VIRTUAL NEIGHBORHOOD ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD TRAINING

The Center for Conflict Resolution is offering our FREE, Neighborhood Accountability Training online to provide community members the opportunity to be a part of restorative justice processes that happen in their communities around Kansas City.

Neighborhood Accountability Boards allow for all parties affected by harm, such as shoplifting, underage drinking and more, to share their side of the story and work together on a solution that makes this right.

***FEBRUARY 18TH, 2022 9 AM - 4 PM
FREE ONLINE ZOOM TRAINING***

To register for this training, send email to dbayless@ccrkc.org or go to our website, www.ccrkc.org for more information.

Internet, Zoom, and computer access required.



**3
DAYS!**

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Saturday, February 19, 2022 — 9-10:30 AM

Sunday, February 20, 2022 — 3-4:30 PM

Monday, February 21, 2022 — 9-10:30 AM

Trailside Center - 9901 Holmes Rd. - Kansas City MO

What is a Great Backyard Bird Count?

It is an annual event since 1998 where birders observe birds anywhere and record the species and the number of birds they see. The results are submitted to Cornell University where they can deduct what is happening to the bird populations in the world. Now more than 160,000 people participate each February.



Northern Cardinals
Male and Female
Cardinalis cardinalis



Downy Woodpecker
Male
Picoides pubescens



Red-bellied Woodpecker
Male
Melanerpes carolinus

How can I participate?

Just come on any of the dates and times above for Trailside Center for this FREE outdoor event.

- All levels of birding expertise are welcome. All ages welcome.
- Be prepared — group will be hiking for about 1 mile along the paved Indian Creek Trail.
- Dress in layers for warmth; wear comfortable hiking shoes.
- Bring binoculars and birding field guides, if you have them.
- Estimated time of event is 90 minutes.
- Questions:

Trailside-center@sbcglobal.net

Trailside Center Covid Guidelines:

- ♦ There will a brief introduction of birds to watch for on the outing, so come inside if you desire.
- ♦ Mask optional.
- ♦ Social distance once inside, please.



Volunteers from the
Missouri Master Naturalists
will lead the hike.

For further information about The Great Backyard Bird Count:
www.birdcount.org

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. (There will be no pantry in January.)

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.



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TIPS HOTLINE

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WEB TIPS

KCcrimestoppers.com



FREE MOBILE APP

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State Representative Mark A. Sharp

Missouri House of Representatives

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573-751-9469

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mark.sharp@house.mo.gov

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