

Dear Neighbor,

On May 9, lawmakers raced to finalize Missouri's \$49.82 billion state operating budget for the 2026 fiscal year, completing the task just hours before a hard constitutional deadline.

Missing the deadline would have required a special legislative session to restart the entire process and ensure the state maintained legal authority to spend taxpayer dollars when the new fiscal year begins on July 1.

This marks the seventh consecutive year that budget negotiations were pushed to the brink, largely due to strategic maneuvering between the Republican-led Senate and House of Representatives. In addition to the operating budget, lawmakers approved an additional \$632.69 million for capital improvement projects. However, House Budget Committee Chairman Dirk Deaton, R-Seneca, unexpectedly blocked an additional \$513 million in capital improvement funding at the last minute. Earlier in the day, the Senate made changes to one of the budget bills that Deaton opposed, prompting him to withhold the bill from a final vote. By the time this decision was made, the Senate had already adjourned for the day, leaving no opportunity to return the bill for further revisions before the constitutional deadline.

The stalled bill included several major funding items, such as \$50 million for a Radioisotope Science Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia, \$55 million for upgrades to the Missouri State Fairgrounds and \$35 million for National Guard facilities, along with numerous smaller projects across the state.

Because the bill was separate from the core state operating budget, its failure won't disrupt the delivery of state services in the upcoming fiscal year.

Education funding emerged as a key point of contention in finalizing the state's \$49.82 billion operating budget.

While the Senate—backed by House Democrats—pushed to fully fund local public school districts at the level required by state law, Governor Mike Kehoe's proposed budget fell roughly \$300 million short, a position largely supported by House Republicans. Additionally, in a historic first, Kehoe requested \$50 million in direct public funding for private schools—a move backed by House Republicans but opposed by House Democrats and a bipartisan majority in the Senate.

The final compromise fully funds K-12 public education while also allocating the \$50 million in taxpayer dollars for private schools. However, that private school appropriation is expected to face a legal challenge, as critics argue it violates the Missouri Constitution's ban on providing public funds directly to private individuals or entities.

The budget also restores \$107 million in child-care subsidies, which Kehoe

and the Senate supported but House negotiators initially excluded. Public colleges and universities will receive a 3% increase in their core funding—double the 1.5% hike Kehoe proposed and the House initially approved.

In an ironic turn of events, lawmakers cut 25 vacant staff positions from the office of newly elected Republican Secretary of State Denny Hoskins. As a state senator, Hoskins was a staunch advocate for eliminating vacant state agency jobs, and his former colleagues decided to hold him to that same principle—despite his strong objections. Similarly, Lt. Gov. David Wasinger, another newly elected Republican who campaigned on reducing government, faced a similar fate, with lawmakers cutting one position from his already small staff.

Governor Mike Kehoe has until June 30 to sign the appropriations bills into law and can make line-item vetoes to reduce or eliminate spending he doesn't support. However, the Missouri Constitution prohibits the governor from reducing "any appropriation for free public schools". meaning Kehoe has no authority to reject the additional \$300 million for K-12 education that the legislature appropriated over his objections.

On May 7, the Missouri House of Representatives passed a broad tax-cutting measure that is projected to result in a \$440 million loss in state revenue, along with an additional \$31 million reduction in local revenue. House Bill 594 passed the legislature with a final House vote of 102-41, with 10 members voting "present".

Originally approved by the House in February, the bill aims to eliminate state taxes on income derived from capital gains, such as profits from the sale of stocks and investment property. This provision alone is expected to cost the state nearly \$335 million annually and would primarily benefit wealthier Missourians.

To overcome Senate resistance to another tax cut benefiting the wealthy, the upper chamber included provisions in the bill aimed at providing tax relief to lower-income Missourians—provisions long advocated by minority Democrats. One such measure expands the "circuit breaker" tax credit, which helps offset property taxes for elderly or disabled homeowners. Another provision would eliminate the 4.225% state sales tax on feminine hygiene products and diapers.

The Senate passed its version of HB 594 with a 27-6 vote last month. After sitting on the measure for several weeks, the House eventually accepted the Senate's changes, granting the bill final passage. Gov. Mike Kehoe is widely expected to sign the bill into law.

State Representative Ben Baker, R-Neosho, resigned on May 4 after being appointed by President Donald Trump's administration to serve as the Missouri state director of rural development for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Baker was in his fourth and final term in the Missouri House of Representatives and, due to term limits, was not eligible to seek re-election next year. He was first elected to the legislature in 2018.

Baker's seat, which represents a portion of Newton County in southwest Missouri, will remain vacant until after the next general election in November 2026 unless Governor Mike Kehoe calls for a special election. Notably, another House seat in south St. Louis County, once held by a Republican, has been vacant since January, yet Kehoe has not called a special election for that vacancy.

Here is my current list of committee assignments for the 103rd General Assembly:

Special Committee on Urban Issues, Chairman Crime and Pubic Safety, Ranking Minority Member Joint Committee on Capitol Security Joint Committee on Legislative Research Revision Subcommittee - Joint Committee on Legislative Research Consent and House Procedure Local Government

If you would like to be added to this email or have any questions regarding state legislation or state issues please feel free to reach out to my legislative assistant Mariah Gilmore. Mariah.Gilmore@house.mo.gov



This week, I had the opportunity to step in for Representative Holly Jones and present House Bill 1298 before the Missouri Senate Committee on Agriculture and Outdoor Resources. Originally heard in the Missouri House Special Committee on Urban Issues, which I chair, HB 1298 requires cross-training for animal control officers to help them better identify signs of child abuse or neglect while responding to animal welfare calls. The bill also mandates that officers report any suspected abuse or neglect to the state. Child abuse and neglect are often underreported, and this legislation adds an important layer of protection for Missouri's most vulnerable children living in unsafe environments. The connection between animal abuse and child abuse is staggering and if this bill doesn't pass this session, I will continue to fight for its adoption in the future.



Earlier this week, the newly elected Mayor of the City of St. Louis Cara Spencer visited the House Chamber. I had a brief opportunity to speak with her and congratulate her on her recent victory. I also shared information about my work as Chair of the Special Committee on Urban Issues and my role as the Ranking Minority Member on the Crime and Public Safety Committee. I'm committed to supporting our local elected officials, especially in our diverse urban communities. I'm always ready to be of help in any way I can. Jackson County Legislators Donna Peyton and DaRon McGee announce the

# I NAUE 5 CAREER FAIR

SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 2025

11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

#### MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH Parking Lots

1700 E Linwood Blvd. Kansas City, MO 64109

**Promoting Awareness & Possibilities** 

### Hickman Mills United Neighborhoods Presents



## Calling All Vendors, Food Trucks & Volunteers!

Join us on the 4th Saturday of every month from April 26, 2025, to October 25, 2025 at <u>Consuming Fire Ministries</u> (10306 Blue Ridge Blvd, Kansas City, MO 64134).

Come be a part of a vibrant community event where you can sell your products, advertise your business, and connect with your neighbors.



**Stay in Contact!** 

April 26, 9 AM - 2 PM May 24, (Memorial Day Weekend) 7 AM - 12 PM June 28, 7 AM - 12 PM July 26, 7 AM - 12 PM August 23, 7 AM - 12 PM September 27, 7 AM - 12 PM October 25, 8 AM - 1 PM



Vendor Signup

Locations from June to October are subject to change, so please follow us on <u>Facebook</u> and check out our page, <u>hmunited.org</u>, for updates.

For Inquiries, Email Contact@hmunited.org



#### **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. Persons should call 816-763-3277, ext. 100, or email info@cackc.org for appointments or questions.

**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 <u>https://catholiccharities-kcsj.org/pantry/</u>

**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. 103<sup>rd</sup> 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. 111<sup>th</sup> 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. 117<sup>th</sup> St., from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on the fourth Friday of the month in the church parking lot.





State Representative Mark A. Sharp

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