



Dear Neighbor,

The Crime and Public Safety Committee, where I serve as the ranking Democratic member, has been very busy this week. Chairman Jeff Myers, from Warren County, called a vote on House Bill 495, which returns control of the St. Louis City police department to the state of Missouri. As you may recall, in 2012, Missouri voters approved a statewide measure transferring control of the St. Louis police department from the state to the city. **Unfortunately, this bill passed on a party-line vote in committee, 13 to 6. This bill does nothing to improve public safety in the City of St. Louis. It merely shifts much of the oversight over the police department from a Democratic mayor to a Republican governor.**

This committee also held votes on House Bills 225 and 117. House Bill 225, sponsored by Chairman Myers, allows the chief executive officer of any law enforcement agency in Missouri to request support from law enforcement agencies outside the state. This bill does not require out-of-state law enforcement agencies to comply. It simply grants

Missouri law enforcement agencies the ability to make the request.

While agreements already exist, such as those between the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and cooperating agencies across the state line in Kansas, officers from out of state currently lack liability protections when performing duties in Missouri. **A notable example occurred during last year's Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl parade, when officers from Kansas provided backup support. Many of these officers likely expected to be directing traffic, only to find themselves responding to an active shooter situation.**

Looking ahead, Kansas City will host several high-profile events, including the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and potentially, another Super Bowl parade for our Chiefs. To be a world-class city, it is critical that we have a robust law enforcement presence capable of providing adequate public safety for both residents and visitors. Ensuring that officers from out-of-state agencies have the necessary protections will be essential to this effort.

I wish the bill had stopped there, as I firmly believe in additional protections when Kansas City is showcased on the national and global stage. However, the bill extends beyond that. It also includes a provision allowing police vehicles to pursue vehicles containing suspected criminals or simply speeding on state or federal highways **without** using audible or visual signals. **Due to this addition, I could not fully support the bill and chose to vote "present" during the roll call. The bill passed out of committee with a vote of 12 to 4, with 2 members voting "present".**

House Bill 117, sponsored by Rep. Jim Murphy from St. Louis County, increases penalties for unlawful entry into a person's vehicle. Given the rise in organized property theft, particularly involving vehicles, I can generally support this bill.

I worked across the aisle with Rep. Murphy to amend the bill by incorporating provisions from my House Bill 645, which strengthens Missouri's DUI laws. This amendment requires individuals with a first-time DUI offense and a blood alcohol concentration over .15 (which is very high) to install an ignition interlock device in their vehicle for at least six months. Currently, 31 other states, including Washington D.C., have all-offender ignition interlock laws, as do all of Missouri's neighboring states. Missouri only requires ignition interlock devices to be installed after an offender's 2nd DUI.

Unfortunately, Missouri experiences over 200 deaths each year due to impaired driving. Among the 31 states with all-offender ignition interlock laws, studies have shown at least a 7% reduction in alcohol-related fatalities. The amendment faced no opposition when I moved to add it. The bill passed out of committee with a vote of 15 in favor, 2 opposed and 1 "present".

As chair of the Special Committee on Urban Issues, I will preside over a public hearing on House Bill 284, known as the Missouri CROWN Act, sponsored by Rep. Raychel Proudie of St. Louis County. Since my first election to the Missouri General Assembly, I have been a steadfast advocate for this legislation.

HB 284 seeks to prohibit discrimination in school settings against hairstyles historically associated with African-American women. With broad bipartisan support over the past five years, this bill represents a crucial step toward equity and cultural inclusivity. As committee chair, I am fully committed to advancing its passage this legislative session.

An education bill that has received strong Republican support in the past appears to be making a comeback this session. House Bill 711, sponsored by Rep. Brad Pollitt from Pettis County, establishes a public school open enrollment program. This would allow students with parental approval to transfer out of their current public school district and enroll in any other participating public school district.

This policy has the potential to significantly disrupt the public school system by incentivizing families to leave improving districts for wealthier ones. For example, the rapidly improving Hickman Mills C-1 School District where I live could lose students to districts such as Lee's Summit. Additionally, the impact on high school athletics could quickly become contentious, further complicating the issue.

This bill was presented to the Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education on January 29th, and the committee is scheduled to hold a vote on February 5th.

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

**Special Committee on Urban Issues, Chairman
Crime and Public 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



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

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.



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