



Dear Neighbor,

By a vote of 113-39, with seven lawmakers voting “present”, the Missouri House of Representatives sent legislation to the governor on March 12 to once again place the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department under state control. The Senate approved the bill a day earlier by a vote of 25-7.

The state originally took control of the St. Louis police at the outset of the Civil War in 1861, as Missouri’s pro-secession governor and state legislature sought to limit the power of Union-leaning city officials and suppress the city’s Black population. Missouri voters restored control of the department to local officials in 2012 by the passage of a statewide ballot measure with nearly 64% voter support.

House Bill 495 essentially overturns that vote, placing the police department under the authority of a board of commissioners consisting of five voting

members. Four members who must be city residents will be appointed by the governor, with the St. Louis City mayor filling the final spot. This structure mirrors the state board that currently oversees the Kansas City Police Department. Like the Kansas City model, local taxpayers will continue to fund the department.

Gov. Mike Kehoe, a Republican, has made ending local control of the St. Louis City police a top priority for his first year in office and could sign the bill into law at any time. HB 495 includes an emergency clause, allowing the St. Louis police provisions to take effect immediately upon signing, rather than the usual effective date of Aug. 28. This means there will be no transition period between local and state governance of the department.

In addition to the St. Louis police provisions, HB 495 contains several other measures - some of which have broad support and are long overdue - including:

- **Prohibiting stunt driving on public streets**
- **Cracking down on organized retail theft**
- **Requiring law enforcement agencies to report the immigration status of criminal offenders**
- **Banning the use of restraints on pregnant prisoners in their third trimester**
- **Establishing the Missing and Murdered African-American Women and Girls Task Force**

On March 11, the Missouri House of Representatives voted 88-69 to authorize a system of “open enrollment”, allowing students to attend public schools in districts outside of their own. The bill now moves to the Senate.

House Bill 711 would create a voluntary system in which public school districts could choose to accept transfer students from other districts. To somewhat minimize the impact on districts losing students, the bill includes a 3% cap on how many students from any given district can transfer to another.

Supporters argue that the bill would provide a school choice option within the framework of traditional public schools. However, opponents are concerned that it could weaken financially struggling school districts by diverting students—**and the state funding that accompanies them**—to wealthier districts. There are also worries that, in the future, the legislature could make open enrollment mandatory rather than voluntary.

On March 13, the Missouri House of Representatives voted 96-44, with three lawmakers voting “present”, to give final approval to controversial omnibus utilities legislation. Supporters argue that the bill is crucial for modernizing and upgrading utility services in the state, while critics contend it will allow significant rate increases on customers to benefit investors. Senate Bill 4, which the Senate previously approved by a vote of 22-11, now goes to Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe to sign into law.

Consumer advocates warn that SB 4 could cause the average customer’s electric bill to increase by more than \$1,100 per year, with low-income and elderly Missourians bearing the heaviest burden. While investor-owned utilities, along with business and labor organizations, acknowledge that bills will rise, they argue that the increases will be lower than predicted. They maintain that customers will ultimately benefit from a more reliable power grid and the jobs and economic activity generated by new facility construction.

A key provision of SB 4 would authorize power companies to charge customers upfront for so-called “construction work in progress”. This would circumvent a nearly 50-year-old voter-approved prohibition against utilities passing on the cost of building new facilities until they are operational and generating power.

Another controversial provision would allow the Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC), the regulatory body overseeing the state’s investor-owned utilities, to set rates based on a company’s predicted costs for providing service in a “future test year”. Traditionally, the PSC has based rates on a company’s actual costs from previous years.

A third major section of the bill would alter accounting rules to make it easier for utilities to recover costs.

A state law approved by Missouri voters in November, which requires most employers to offer paid sick leave to their workers, could be repealed under legislation passed by the Missouri House of Representatives on March 13. The bill passed on a largely party-line vote of 96-51, with all but two majority Republicans supporting it and all Democrats opposing it. The bill now moves to the Senate.

However, because the House voted down an emergency clause that would have allowed House Bill 567 to take effect immediately upon being signed into law by the governor, the sick leave provisions of the ballot measure will still take effect on May 1 as scheduled. These provisions will only be repealed on August 28 if the bill becomes law. The emergency clause, which required a two-thirds supermajority (109 votes) for passage, failed with a vote of 84-62.

Just over four months ago, nearly 58% of Missouri voters approved the sick leave provisions as part of Proposition A, which also raises the state's minimum wage in two steps from \$12.30 per hour to \$15 per hour. The first increase, to \$13.75 per hour, took effect on January 1, and the second increase is set to take effect on January 1, 2026, raising the wage floor to \$15 per hour.

While HB 567 would not stop the second minimum wage increase from taking effect as scheduled, the bill would repeal a provision that requires the state's minimum wage to be adjusted annually for inflation. This requirement has been in state law since 2006 and was not part of Proposition A.

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



Before the Missouri Legislature took its much-needed Spring Break, I had the privilege of presenting House Bill 1350 which extends the sunset for the Kansas-Missouri Border War Truce. It appears the Kansas Legislature and Governor Kelly are no longer recognizing the established border war truce established in 2019. This bill was presented to the Committee on Commerce, chaired by Representative Casteel from St. Louis County and my hope is to bring Kansas back to the table and extend this agreement. I plan to make one amendment to the current version of the bill: explicitly naming professional sports teams in the agreement.



Over the years in the legislature, you develop friendships, and these gentlemen I'm pictured with have been a pleasure to serve alongside. In the photo with me are (from left) Missouri Legislative Black Caucus Chairman Rep. Michael Johnson, Special Committee on Urban Issues Chairman/Ranking Minority Member for Public Safety - me, Democrat Assistant Minority Floor Leader Rep. Marlon Anderson and Ranking Minority Member for Judiciary Rep. David Tyson Smith.

Let's Celebrate

JOHN A. SHARP's 81 years of life and over 50 years of service to south Kansas City as a public official and community volunteer while raising funds for a great cause.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22

5:30–6:30 p.m. – Reception & Free Museum Tours

6:30–8 p.m. – Dinner & Program

NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM

1616 E. 18th St. in the Historic 18th & Vine District

Featured Speaker

U.S. CONGRESSMAN EMANUEL CLEAVER



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SINGLE TICKET \$25**

Sponsors and table purchasers will be recognized in the program and at the event.

No gifts please, but all donations of \$25 or more are gratefully accepted. All net revenue from this event will go to the matching **John Sharp Student Leadership Scholarships** awarded annually through the **Hickman Mills Educational Foundation** to two Ruskin High School seniors involved in student government or community service who are also receiving a Foundation scholarship. **Donate by mailing a check to the Hickman Mills Educational Foundation with Sharp Scholarship on the memo line to: John Sharp, 8401 E. 103rd Terrace, Kansas City, MO 64134-2106**

PLEASE BE SURE TO RSVP AT **JSHARP122@HOTMAIL.COM**
SO ENOUGH FOOD AND SEATING ARE AVAILABLE.



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- ALL INCOME DOCUMENTS (W2, 1099'S, 1098, 1095S, BUSINESS RECORDS)

Every Saturday starting January 25, 2025

Time: 8:00 am -12:00 pm

Where: Community America Credit Union- Hickman Mills

11501 Blue Ridge Blvd.

Kansas City, MO 64134

Call 913.229.4159 to make an appointment



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!**