



Dear Neighbor,

On April 1, the Republican majority in the Missouri House rejected an effort by Democrats to block Gov. Mike Kehoe's plan to allocate \$50 million in direct taxpayer funding for private schools.

**At the same time, the proposed budget underfunds local public school districts by \$300 million - falling short of the minimum amount required by state law for the 2026 fiscal year.**

During debate over the FY 2026 appropriations bills, state Rep. Betsy Fogle, D-Springfield, introduced an amendment to eliminate the \$50 million earmarked for private schools and redirect those funds back to public education. The amendment was defeated by a 48-90 vote, with only one Republican joining a united Democratic caucus in support.

Missouri's private school voucher program is currently funded exclusively through private donations, with donors receiving a state income tax credit equal to the amount of their contribution. This structure was designed to circumvent a provision in the state constitution that prohibits the legislature from providing direct public funding to private individuals or organizations. As a result, the proposed direct appropriation of taxpayer dollars for the voucher program could be unconstitutional and subject to legal challenges in court.

**On another controversial topic, House Republicans appear committed to debating legislation in the coming days aimed at nullifying the reproductive rights protections Missouri voters added to the state constitution in November.**

However, the Republican caucus remains sharply divided over how to proceed, with two separate committees completely rewriting the measure on consecutive days, and additional substantial changes are expected to be offered when the issue is debated by the entire House.

Voters ratified Amendment 3 in November to restore reproductive rights in Missouri, following the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision to overturn the federal right to abortion. The new constitutional protections declare that "reproductive freedom shall not be denied, interfered with, delayed, or otherwise restricted" except in cases where the state can demonstrate a compelling state interest is being achieved by the least restrictive means.

On February 4, the House Children & Families Committee held a hearing on the legislation to nullify Amendment 3. However, the measure - House Joint Resolution 54 - stalled for nearly two months before the committee voted 11-5 on March 31 to advance a radically revised version.

In an unexpected move, HJR 54 was then immediately referred to the House Legislative Review Committee, which again completely rewrote the proposal and approved it by a 7-3 vote on April 1. In both committees, Republicans supported the legislation while Democrats opposed it.

**As currently written, HJR 54 would not alter the text of Amendment 3. Instead, it would add a new section to the Missouri Constitution that effectively nullifies reproductive rights protections and grants lawmakers broad authority to impose restrictions on abortion, contraception, and other reproductive health care services.**

The full House of Representatives is expected to debate HJR 54 soon. If approved by both legislative chambers, the measure would automatically appear on the November 2026 ballot for voter approval. Notably, the ballot language drafted by Republicans does not mention that the proposal would overturn Missouri's new voter-approved constitutional protections for reproductive rights.

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](mailto:Mariah.Gilmore@house.mo.gov)



**This past week, I had the honor of celebrating the accomplishments of my father, John Sharp, and Mr. Alvin Brooks as two schools at the Hickman Mills C-1 School District's Ervin Campus on Greenwood Road were renamed in their honor - the John Sharp Early Childhood Center and the Alvin Brooks Middle School. Congratulations to both of you and thank you for your lifelong commitments to public service, not only in the Hickman Mills School District but throughout our city. In the photo with me from left to right are KCMO City Councilman Darrel Curls, Jackson County Legislature Chairman DaRon McGee, me, Hickman Mills School Board President Irene Kendrick, John Sharp, Alvin Brooks, Hickman Mills School Superintendent Yaw Obeng, former KCMO City Councilman Jermaine Reed and KCMO Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks Shaw.**





**Representative Melissa Douglass and I found some time in between votes this week on the House side gallery to pose for a photo. Rep. Douglass has been a strong advocate for our children and schools in our state and it has been a pleasure to serve alongside her this session.**



**This past weekend I had the chance to attend the town hall meeting of my colleague and office suite mate Representative Pattie Mansur and to interact with her constituents in the Brookside/Waldo area which is a little way north of parts of my legislative district in the South Kansas City area. Shown with me here at the event are Representative Pattie Mansur (center) and Grandparents for Gun Safety Executive Director Rachel Casey.**

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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](mailto: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. 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.

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***State Representative Mark A. Sharp***

**Missouri House of Representatives**

**Room 102-BA**

**201 W Capitol Ave**

**Jefferson City, Mo 65101**

**Phone**

**573-751-0238**

**Email**

**[mark.sharp@house.mo.gov](mailto:mark.sharp@house.mo.gov)**

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