

Dear Neighbor,

Senate Democrats continued to block Republican efforts to repeal Missouri's newly enacted sick leave law during a second extended debate that stretched into the early morning hours of April 24.

The Senate has now spent a total of 18 hours debating House Bill 567 which seeks to overturn the sick leave provisions approved by nearly 58% of Missouri voters as part of Proposition A in November.

Republican lawmakers are racing to pass the repeal measure before the law takes effect on May 1. The House of Representatives passed the bill in March on a largely party-line vote of 96-51, with only two Republicans joining unanimous Democrats in opposition.

Proposition A increased Missouri's minimum wage from \$12.30 to \$13.75 per hour in January and includes a scheduled increase to \$15 per hour in 2026.

It also established a mandatory sick leave policy requiring most employers to provide one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked, along with civil and criminal penalties for noncompliance.

As passed by the House, HB 567 would fully repeal Proposition A's sick leave provisions while preserving the scheduled minimum wage increases. However, it would also eliminate a 2006 statutory requirement tying annual minimum wage adjustments to inflation.

Efforts to reach a compromise that would exempt smaller businesses from the sick leave mandate collapsed after Republicans introduced a substitute bill that Democrats said did not reflect the agreed-upon terms. This breakdown in negotiations led Senate leadership to once again set the bill aside.

To prevent the sick leave law from taking effect on May 1, lawmakers must pass a repeal measure and include an emergency clause allowing the legislation to take effect immediately upon the governor's signature. Without such a clause, any new law would not take effect until August 28.

An emergency clause requires a two-thirds majority in both chambers. The House previously failed to secure the necessary 109 votes, falling short by 25 votes. However, if the Senate passes the emergency clause, the House would have another opportunity to approve it.

On April 16, the Senate Appropriations Committee defied Governor Mike Kehoe's recommendations on key education funding issues, voting to increase K-12 public school funding by \$300 million and to block a controversial plan to provide \$50 million in taxpayer-funded private school tuition vouchers.

If the full Senate upholds these decisions, it will set the stage for a budget showdown with the House of Representatives during final negotiations over the fiscal year 2026 state operating budget. The House's version of the budget, passed

earlier this month, aligns with the governor's proposals on both K-12 public school funding and the use of public funds for private school tuition.

Under Missouri's complex school funding formula, the amount of money allocated to local K-12 districts is based on the "state adequacy target" - a perpupil funding level deemed necessary to help students meet academic performance goals. While Governor Kehoe proposed some increases to the formula's components, he did not recommend funding the full adequacy target, leaving state K-12 funding \$300 million short of the minimum required under current law.

The Senate committee's decision to reject direct taxpayer funding for private school vouchers reverses a move by the House, where Democrats had unsuccessfully tried to eliminate that funding. Missouri's existing voucher program is currently funded entirely through private donations, with contributors receiving state income tax credits equal to their donation amount.

This funding structure was designed to comply with the Missouri Constitution's prohibition against direct public funding for private individuals or organizations. The proposed \$50 million public appropriation, critics argue, would likely be unconstitutional and vulnerable to legal challenge if enacted.

In terms of overall spending, the Senate committee's version of the FY 2026 budget more closely resembles the \$50.1 billion plan proposed by Governor Kehoe in January than the \$47.9 billion version passed by the House. The full Senate may propose additional amendments when it takes up the appropriations bills in the coming days.

Once the Senate completes its work, House and Senate negotiators will meet to reconcile differences and craft a compromise budget. Lawmakers are constitutionally required to finalize all budget bills by 6 p.m. on May 9. The new fiscal year begins on July 1.

A wide-ranging child welfare bill - House Bill 737 - is just one Senate vote away from becoming law after the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved

it on April 24, by a vote of 129-14.

The Senate could send the bill to the governor as early as April 28. Senators previously approved an earlier version of the measure unanimously in March, and because the current version contains only minor changes, final Senate approval is widely expected.

House Bill 737 includes several major reforms, including:

- Banning child marriage by raising the minimum legal marriage age to 18. Current law allows marriage at 16 with parental consent, and until 2018, children as young as 15 - or even younger with judicial approval could marry. Child welfare advocates say this change closes remaining loopholes that leave minors vulnerable to exploitation.
- Prohibiting the enforcement of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in child sexual abuse cases. NDAs are often used in civil settlements to prevent victims from speaking about their experiences. Critics argue they silence survivors and shield abusers from accountability. The House unanimously passed this provision days earlier as part of a separate bill, House Bill 709.
- Ending the state's practice of seizing federal survivor benefits from
 foster youth. In the previous fiscal year, Missouri's Children's Division
 collected more than \$10.6 million from approximately 1,200 foster children
 receiving federal benefits, using the funds to offset foster care costs.
 Opponents argue the practice is unethical and leaves youth without
 vital financial resources when they age out of foster care.

With bipartisan momentum and widespread support, HB 737 represents one of the most significant child welfare reform efforts in recent years. If passed by the Senate, the bill will head to the governor's desk for final approval.

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



I had the privilege on April 24 of joining my father John Sharp - president of the South Kansas City Alliance and a former Missouri state representative, KCMO city councilman and Hickman Mills school board member - as he accepted a city council resolution introduced by Councilman Darrell Curls and passed without dissent thanking him for his more than five decades of public service to the people of KCMO and the Hickman Mills School District. Shown here with our friends and supporters who attended the council meeting are, from left, Rodney Bland, Councilman Curls, my father, me, Karissa Varga and Hickman Mills School Board Vice President Byron Townsend.



This week, I rose on the House floor to speak in strong support of House Bill 362, important legislation I previously heard in the House Crime and Public Safety Committee, where I serve as the Ranking Democratic Member. HB 362 creates the criminal offense of disclosing or threatening to disclose a digital intimate image with the intent to cause harm to the person depicted. This bill is a critical step in protecting individuals—particularly women—from digital exploitation and abuse. During my remarks, I thanked the bill's sponsor, Representative Cecelie Williams, for her leadership and commitment to addressing this issue. No man should ever threaten to expose or distribute intimate images of any woman. This kind of behavior is a form of control and humiliation, and our laws must reflect the seriousness of the harm it causes.

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!

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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

September 27, 7 AM - 12 PN October 25, 8 AM - 1 PM



Vendor Signup

Locations from June to October are subject to change, so please follow us on Facebook and check out our page, hmunited.org, 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 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!