



Dear Neighbor,

As of today, May 30, the Missouri House of Representatives held a technical session so that Speaker of the House, Dean Plocher of St. Louis County, could sign the remaining House and Senate Bills that were truly agreed to and finally passed.

In total, only 28 policy bills were passed this session (the lowest in 30 years) including the omnibus public safety Senate Bill 754 carrying Blair's Law that I've championed for the previous five sessions. Of the 28 policy bills that were passed, 11 were House bills and 17 were Senate bills.

Blair's Law is named after Blair Shanahan Lane who was 11 years old when she was struck by a bullet while playing in her back yard in the early evening of the 4th of July, 2011 and died as a result. The bullet was fired in celebratory fashion for the holiday, and that bullet found in Blair's neck was later matched to the user's firearm.

Blair's Law creates serious state penalties for recklessly discharging a firearm within or into city limits. Currently, such an offense is only punishable

as a mere city ordinance violation. Blair's Law will enable law enforcement to crack down on celebratory gunfire during holidays such as the 4th of July and New Year's Eve, and the occasional Super Bowl win. Though we want it to be enforced year round, those are the days specifically we would like to see a drastic decline in celebratory gunfire in our city and across our urban communities throughout Missouri.

Blair's mother, Michele Shanahan DeMoss has been an advocate for firearm safety ever since Blair's death, and **Blair's Law was first introduced as a bill in the Missouri legislature beginning in 2012.**

Last session, a similar omnibus public safety bill (Senate Bill 189) passed that included Blair's Law. However, SB 189 was ultimately vetoed by Governor Parson because of separate provisions in the bill that he didn't agree with.

Governor Parson has since come out with written support for Blair's Law and said he hopes he'll have another chance to sign it on a "cleaner" bill. I believe SB 754 is that bill! It is a repackaged version of the previous session's SB 189 minus the provisions Governor Parson found problematic.

Another provision that I support in SB 754 is Valentine's Law, which increases penalties for fleeing from a law enforcement vehicle that is in pursuit.

This is the only public safety bill that the Missouri legislature could truly agree to and finally pass this session.

Other bills that are sure to make a positive impact in the Kansas City area are Senate Bill 756 and House Bill 1751.

SB 756 relates to property taxes and clarifies that the property tax freeze is available to all eligible homeowner-taxpayers who are 62 years of age or older. Essentially, SB 756 changes the eligibility language to an age based eligibility of 62 years of age or older so that it does not inadvertently exclude taxpayers who do not qualify for Social Security as the current law does.

House Bill 1751 is the “Kill the fill!” bill, which requires landfills proposed in Kansas City within one-mile of a neighboring municipality to be approved by both cities. This legislation directly addresses the controversial attempt to put a landfill near a residential area in Raymore.

There is another bill I would like to address that has had its share of controversy. Senate Bill 727 authorizes public charter schools, which are currently only allowed in the Kansas City Public School system, St. Louis City and

unaccredited school districts, to open in Boone County (Columbia, MO).

This bill also expands tax credits that redirect revenue from the state treasury to provide vouchers to pay for private school tuition for certain students.

Ultimately, that is why I voted no on SB 727.

However, there were some good provisions included in the bill that I'm happy were passed. One, increases minimum teacher salaries from \$25,000 to \$40,000 and raises the minimum salary for more experienced teachers from \$33,000 to \$48,000, which will undoubtedly help teachers in rural Missouri. The only catch is the Missouri legislature has to appropriate the necessary dollars to do this each legislative session, which is no guarantee beyond this year.

In addition, it requires school districts located in more

populous cities and counties to have a five-day school week unless voters approve a four-day school week schedule. It also authorizes increased state funding for districts that maintain a five-day school week schedule, assuming the Missouri legislature appropriates those dollars in future sessions.

Lastly, it makes a significant change to the K-12 education formula by modifying how daily attendance is calculated. Currently, it is based on how many students are physically in the classroom. SB 727 gradually shifts how this is determined beginning in 2026 to the number of students enrolled instead of the number of students that are physically showing up to school. This will be of great benefit to schools that have more transient students or low attendance rates.



I made a promise to the mother of Blair Shanahan Lane, left, that we would eventually pass Blair's Law. This reminds me of a quote: *"I know what it's like to lose, to feel so desperately that you are right, yet to fail nonetheless. It's frightening, turns the legs to jelly, I ask you to what end, dread it, run from it, destiny arrives all the same, and now it's here."*

It took me five years, and I've been told from people I admire, don't be married to any bill, but I'm glad we didn't give up.



After the Missouri House truly agreed to and finally passed Senate Bill 754 which includes Blair's Law,

Michele Shanahan DeMoss and I were invited up to the dais with Speaker of the Missouri House Dean Plocher for a photo to celebrate the victory.



During the Democratic press conference I was asked by members of the media to answer questions about the passage of Blair's Law and what it felt like seeing it pass. Most of us got a good laugh at when I told the members of the media *"I passed it twice."* First in

2023, on omnibus public safety Senate Bill 189 that was ultimately vetoed for separate provisions, and again this year on a "clean" omnibus public safety Senate Bill 754.



It was an honor to speak about the passage of Blair's Law during the Democratic press conference and the journey to get here the last five sessions.



Before we all left town as session came to a close, I had a chance to take a photo with Representatives Yolanda Young of Kansas City, Jerome Barnes of Raytown and Joe Adams of St. Louis. Before they finish their final term in the Missouri House, I want to personally thank Representatives Barnes and Adams for their incredible service to the state of Missouri.



I want to give a special shout out to my legislative aide Mariah Gilmore for all of her hard work in my office. She has helped me tirelessly to chair the Special Committee on Urban Issues and meet my obligations as ranking minority member on several special committees. It has been a pleasure to have you in this office to help serve the people of District 37 in the Missouri House.



Recently, I was invited to the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce annual Missouri State Affairs end of session luncheon where I was recognized among other state legislators for our dedication to help improve the overall business climate in Kansas City and across the state of Missouri. Other legislators in the photo with me are Representative Sherri Gallick, Senator Cindy O'Laughlin, Speaker of the House Dean Plocher and Senator Lauren Arthur.

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| 2 | \$46,500 |
| 3 | \$52,320 |
| 4 | \$58,080 |
| 5 | \$62,760 |
| 6 | \$67,380 |
| 7 | \$72,060 |
| 8 | \$76,680 |

*AREA MEDIAN INCOME



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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, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Persons should call 816-763-3277, ext. 100, or email info@cackc.org for appointments or questions.

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.

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/>



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