

Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased to report that the Speaker of the House has appointed me to a 4th House committee, the **Special Committee on Urban Issues**. I am the only legislator from Kansas City on the 9-member committee.

My other committee assignments are **Crime Prevention**, **Elementary** & **Secondary Education and General Laws**.

I was extremely pleased when Governor Mike Parson announced on January 27 he is recommending \$1.5 million for the next fiscal year beginning July 1 to continue to provide pretrial witness protection services as authorized by the bipartisan legislation I co-sponsored last year that became law in September.

The General Assembly approved \$2 million in December to fund the program for the current fiscal year that ends June 30. Under the program, law enforcement agencies may apply for reimbursement from the Missouri Department of Public Safety for funds they have spent or obligated to protect witnesses to violent crimes and the victims of such crimes (as well as members of their immediate families) if their testimony might subject them to danger.

I am confident encouraging more witnesses to come forward will help to successfully prosecute and incarcerate more of the persistent violent offenders who commit many of our city's most violent crimes before they can harm even more victims. The Kansas City Police Department reported 176 homicides in 2020, a new record for the city far surpassing the previous record of 151 homicides set in 2017 and 2019. Of these, 22 were in South Patrol.

KCPD reported that there also were 623 aggravated assault shootings in KCMO in 2020 that wounded victims, including 48 in South Patrol.

Two of the bills I have sponsored this session already have been referred to committees, and I am working on getting hearings on them scheduled as soon as possible to maximize their chances of passage before the legislative session adjourns in May.

**House Bill 99 (Blair's Law)** to make discharging a firearm within or into city limits with criminal negligence a state offense has been assigned to the **General Laws Committee** I serve on. This committee recommended passage of this legislation by a vote of 12-1 last year.

House Bill 100 to approve issuance of a special Negro Leagues
Baseball Museum license plate to commemorate the centennial of the
founding of the Negro Leagues in Kansas City and to raise funds for
Museum operations has been assigned to the **Transportation**Committee.

Last year without dissent the House passed an amendment to approve issuance of the special NLBM plate that I offered to another bill. The amended bill passed the House and initially passed the Senate but was reconsidered and killed in the Senate after Senators discovered language in another House amendment to the bill that they objected to.

On January 27, the House passed the first two bills it has approved this session and sent them to the Senate for consideration. I supported both these bills which passed with no dissenting votes.

House Committee Substitute for House Bill 429 authorizes a state

income tax deduction for foster parents' direct expenses for caring for their foster children beginning for the 2022 tax year of up to \$2,500 or \$5,000 if married and filing a joint return.

House Committee Substitute for House Bill 430 provides tax credits up to \$10,000 for the nonrecurring expenses of adopting all children beginning for the 2022 tax year. Currently such tax credits are only available for adopting special needs children who reside in Missouri. Such adoptions will have priority for tax credits under this legislation. The overall cap for such tax credits is \$2 million annually, but that can be increased by additional appropriations.



Construction is proceeding quickly on the new Ball's Price Chopper on the southwest corner of Bannister & Hillcrest Roads just across Hillcrest from my legislative district. The 49,000 square foot full service super market is now expected to open for business in June or July.

# **WEEKLY CAPITOL UPDATE**

Friday, January 29, 2021

### PARSON PROPOSES \$34.13 BILLION BUDGET

During his annual State of the State address on Jan. 27, Gov. Mike Parson proposed a \$34.13 billion state operating budget for the upcoming 2022 fiscal year that expands Medicaid eligibility as required by a constitutional amendment Missouri voters ratified last year – without requiring a tax increase or deep cuts to other programs as opponents had claimed would be necessary.

Parson who had opposed Medicaid expansion but pledged to properly implement it if it was approved by voters, noted expansion will extend health care access to approximately 275,000 Missourians who don't currently have it.

Under the federal Affordable Care Act, the federal government will pay 90 percent of the cost. Expansion supporters have long contended the state's share easily would be covered by savings elsewhere in the budget resulting from more people having health care coverage, as well as by the economic growth from the large amount of additional federal money flowing into Missouri.

Parson's budget also calls for increased infrastructure spending, including \$100 million to begin working through a backlog of delayed maintenance and repairs at state facilities. The governor's budget plan continues to rely heavily on federal COVID-19 relief funds to free up state general revenue for other spending priorities.

The governor pledged to "fully fund" basic state aid for public school districts. However, under changes enacted a few years ago that drastically cut the amount of new revenue required each year to claim "full funding" under the law, "full funding" now amounts to a relatively small increase of \$8.5 million to the \$3.56 billion public education budget.

Parson's budget also calls for restoring cuts to public colleges and universities that were imposed last year after state revenue collections cratered due to the economic turndown caused by the pandemic. However, state higher education funding still would remain well below historic highs.

The State of the State address traditionally is delivered in the House Chamber to a joint session of the General Assembly. However, the joint session was cancelled and the speech moved to the much smaller Senate Chamber just hours before it was to begin.

Among his policy priorities, Parson called for legislation to prohibit lawsuits against businesses and other organizations related to COVID-19 exposure, despite the apparent lack of any such lawsuits in Missouri nearly one year into the pandemic. The governor also advocated for changing the law to allow the state and local governments to capture sales tax revenue from online purchases.

In addition, Parson announced the creation of a new Office of Childhood that will be created by consolidating existing programs relating to early childhood care and education at the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Health and Senior Services, and Social Services. DESE will oversee the new agency.

Although the state constitution requires the governor to submit a proposed state budget to the legislature each year, lawmakers can accept, reject or modify the governor's recommendations as they see fit. Lawmakers must pass the various appropriations bills that make up the budget by a constitutional deadline of May 7. The 2022 fiscal year begins July 1.

### RAISES FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO TAKE EFFECT JULY 1

Missouri lawmakers and statewide elected officials will get their first pay raises since 2008 later this year after the General Assembly failed to pass a resolution rejecting increases recommended in December by the State Salary Commission. The 2.5 percent raises will take effect on July 1.

Under the Missouri Constitution, the Salary Commission is charged with setting pay rates for state elected officials every two years. However, lawmakers can – and usually do – reject the raises which requires two-thirds majorities in both legislative chambers.

Although the House of Representatives voted 97 to 11 in favor of a rejection resolution with 41 representatives voting present and 13 absent on Jan. 28, the measure failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority of 109 votes.

By the time of the vote, however, the resolution already was dead since the Senate had adjourned for the week and wasn't scheduled to reconvene until Feb. 1 – one day after the constitutional deadline for rejecting the Commission's recommendations. I voted present (which I hardly ever do) since the resolution was already dead, and this vote seemed to me to be just for show.

At present, state senators and representatives earn \$35,915 a year. After the 2.5 percent bump, they will make \$36,813 annually. The governor's salary will go from the current \$133,821 to \$137,166. The remaining five statewide elected officials also will get raises. Under the Salary Commission's recommendations, lawmakers and statewide officeholders will get a second 2.5 percent increase on July 1, 2022.

### PHOTO VOTER ID REQUIREMENT PUSHED AGAIN

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee on Jan. 27 heard legislation seeking to require Missourians to show a government-issued photo identification card at their polling place or at the office of their local election authority if they are casting an absentee ballot in person in order to vote. It is estimated that more than 200,000 Missourians don't have a driver's license or non-driver state ID and could be disenfranchised under the measure, House Bill 334.

The bill also eliminates a provision in current election law requiring the Missouri Secretary of State to provide advance notice to the public through advertisements and public service announcements about the photo ID requirements.

Proponents have been seeking to impose a photo voter ID requirement for more than 15 years. During that time they've successfully enacted such requirements twice, but the Missouri Supreme Court struck down both laws for infringing on the constitutional right to vote. The court invalidated the first law in 2008 and the second in 2020.

During the long photo voter ID debate, proponents have contended it is necessary to combat fraud, despite the lack of documented cases in Missouri of voter impersonation at the polls for many decades – the only type of fraud a photo ID requirement could prevent. Opponents note that the populations most likely not to have a photo ID include racial minorities and older persons who no longer drive.

### **COMMITTEE HEARS BILL AIMED AT STREET PROTESTS**

A Senate committee on Jan. 26 considered a lengthy bill that includes a provision aimed at unapproved street protests that would make intentionally blocking vehicular traffic by walking, standing, sitting, kneeling or laying on any public street or highway without permission from a government authority a felony.

Senate Bill 66 would make this new offense of unlawful traffic interference a class E felony and provides that a court shall grant a suspended imposition of sentence for the first offense and impose a term of supervised probation for five years, 100 hours of community service and a fine of up to \$750.

Persons directing traffic away from hazardous road conditions, obstacles or accident scenes would be exempted.

The bill also would grant immunity from civil damages to motorists who injure protesters blocking traffic in a public right-of-way if they were "exercising due care" operating their vehicles. This immunity would not apply to any act or omission by motorists "that constitutes gross negligence".

The Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee did not take immediate action on the bill.

### Missouri Governor — Michael L. Parson

Office of Communications

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2021

Governor Parson Announces Launch of New COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard

(JEFFERSON CITY, MO) –Today, Governor Mike Parson announced the launch of a new COVID-19 vaccination dashboard containing Missouri-specific data submitted by providers from across the state.

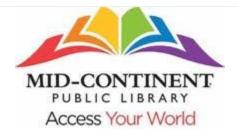
"We are excited to announce the launch of Missouri's COVID-19 vaccination dashboard. This dashboard will provide Missourians with the most up-to-date, Missouri-specific data available," said **Governor Parson**. "It is important that we provide this resource and be as transparent as possible, especially as some individuals tasked with reporting Missouri's vaccine data often fail to report the complete picture."

Enrolled vaccinators throughout the state of Missouri continue to vaccinate those living or working in Missouri who are eligible under Phase 1A and Phase 1B - Tiers 1 and 2.

The interactive dashboard includes total doses administered and also distinguishes the number of individuals who have received one dose or both doses. Seven-day averages of doses administered are also included as well as demographic information on individuals who have received at least one dose. This information shows the shares of individual populations by age group, sex, race, and ethnicity.

Additionally, those who live in Missouri and have received at least one dose are also captured in a county-level vaccination table. This shows how many residents have received a dose per reported county of residence.

The vaccination dashboard was incorporated into the <u>larger COVID-19</u> public health dashboard and is also available at MOStopsCovid.com.



# Library Adds Access to Public Computers, Printers, Copiers, and Fax Machines

This phase of service will continue to operate the same way it did until late last year. Customers will be allowed inside MCPL branches for no more than 90 minutes per day. Limited public computers will be available for use (these will be spaced to comply with social distancing recommendations and cannot be used longer than 60 minutes per customer) as well as printing, copying, and faxing services and indoor use of Wi-Fi (Wi-Fi is available outside each of the Library's branches 24/7).

Customers are asked to maintain social distance while utilizing all available Library services and must wear masks inside the branches throughout their entire visit. Services that are **still NOT available** include:

- Browsing the shelves
- In-person Library events (Virtual events are available on MCPL's social media pages; Dial-A-Story, a phone-based storytime, is available at 816.701.6904)
- Meeting room usage
- Gathering in large groups
- Using children's computers

MCPL staff will regularly clean high-touch surfaces throughout the day and will continue to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) while working with customers and Library materials.

All returns must continue to be placed in the outdoor book drops. Returned items will be retrieved from the book drops and quarantined for 72 hours before being checked back into the Library's collection (this time does not count against the item's due date).

More information about the Library's available services can be found at mymcpl.org/COVID.

# Missouri Governor — Michael L. Parson Office of Communications January 27, 2021 Governor Parson Delivers 2021 State of the State Address (JEFFERSON CITY, MO) - Today, Governor Mike Parson delivered the 2021 State of the State Address to the Missouri General Assembly. Governor Parson highlighted several accomplishments the state has made in combating COVID-19 as well as major successes in infrastructure and workforce development despite the challenges of the past year. Following a recap of 2020, Governor Parson's speech focused on priorities for 2021: education and workforce development, infrastructure, stronger communities, health care, and **government reform**. Governor Parson also expressed his hope that the legislature will make COVID-19 liability protection and Wayfair a top priority this session. "Time and time again, our administration has addressed the challenges of our communities and our state head on rather than leaving them for another day, another administration, or another generation," Governor Parson said. "It is important that we continue to follow through on key investments in workforce development and infrastructure," Governor

**Parson** continued. "We must also continue finding ways to strengthen public safety, improve health care, and make state government more accountable."

### **Workforce and Education**

During his speech, Governor Parson emphasized the importance of Missouri's children to the state's future workforce. To strengthen Missouri's early childhood system, Governor Parson announced the consolidation of several different programs and divisions across three state agencies into a new Office of Childhood.

In addition to early childhood development, Governor Parson also proposed multiple investments in K-12 education, including a fully funded Foundation Formula and the expansion of the WorkKeys curriculum (Career Ready 101) to all 57 existing career centers in Missouri.

For college-bound students, Governor Parson called for an increase of more than \$13 million for the A+ scholarship program as well as the continued funding for the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant program.

### <u>Infrastructure</u>

Building on Missouri's progress over the past two years, Governor Parson again called for major investments in infrastructure, including \$6.3 million for shovel-ready projects at Missouri's established ports and \$25 million to fulfill the transportation cost-share program established by Governor Parson's administration in 2019.

Additionally, Governor Parson announced his administration will once again seek \$5 million to continue expanding and improving broadband services across the state.

This year's budget proposal will also seek approval for infrastructure projects at 22 state parks and a one-time expenditure of \$100 million to clear the backlog of maintenance projects for state assets, facilities, and buildings.

# **Stronger Communities**

During his speech, Governor Parson recalled his challenge to the Missouri Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) Commission

to take a leading role in advancing officer training and improving public relations. The POST Commission followed through on this challenge, voting in October to require annual training in deescalation techniques and implicit bias.

The state also recently granted Lincoln University a basic training center license to establish the nation's first law enforcement training academy at a Historically Black College and University to help recruit more minority officers to serve in law enforcement. The state is currently working to find commitments for all program scholarships for the first three years.

To further support law enforcement, Governor Parson proposed \$1.5 million for the witness protection fund passed by the General Assembly during the special session on violent crime.

Governor Parson also expressed his commitment to supporting more coordination among local, state, and federal law enforcement through initiatives like Operation Legend.

Governor Parson concluded today's State of the State Address with a quote from President Teddy Roosevelt, titled "Man in the Arena," in honor of the many Missourians who have gone above and beyond the call of duty over the past year.

"It is an honor to stand shoulder to shoulder with Missourians in the arena," **Governor Parson** said. "Those who have lifted one another up, pushed one another to be better, and have remained devoted to a cause greater than themselves in the face of critics who will never know the strength it takes to endure these challenging times."

# KANSAS CITY'S NEW EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Application process announcement mid-February

# **IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE**

These agencies have city-provided funds available now for rent and/or utility help:

- Journey to New Life (816) 960-4808
- Metro Lutheran Ministries (816) 285-3137 (north) (816) 285-3139 (south)
- Greater KC Housing Info Center (816) 931-0443
- **Guadalupe Center** (816) 421-1015
- Save, Inc. (816) 531-8340, ext. 260





KCMO.GOV/RentHelp



Crime Prevention Committee voting on House Bill 784. I'm sitting on the first row on the left.

# ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR EITC? GET IT, AND GET IT RIGHT

Kansas City, Missouri — Workers may get a larger tax refund this year because of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). But to get it, you must file a tax return and claim it.

Today, January 29, 2021, marks the 15th anniversary of EITC Awareness Day, a nationwide effort to increase awareness about the EITC and other refundable credits. This year, IRS is promoting EITC

and providing information on other refundable tax credits that you may be eligible for. This includes the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC), the Credit for Other Dependents (ODC) and/or the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC). In 2020, 476,000 workers in Missouri received about \$1.2 billion in EITC refunds with an average of \$2,452 per worker.

If you worked last year and your income is less than \$56,844, check out your eligibility for EITC. EITC can mean up to a \$6,660 refund when you file a return and have qualifying children. Workers with no qualifying children could be eligible for a smaller credit, up to \$538. According to the Internal Revenue Service, the average EITC credited for 2020 was \$2,461.

Why is it important to have an EITC Awareness Day each year? Onethird of the EITC population changes each year. The IRS estimates only four out of five workers claim the EITC they earned. This leaves billions of dollars on the table each year. We want to get the word out to those who are eligible to file a tax return even if they don't owe any tax to claim the EITC. Its money workers can use for groceries, rent, utilities and other bills.

EITC is complex. It varies by income, family size and your filing status. To be eligible, you must have earned income or certain disability income. This means you must have income from working for someone or working for yourself.

Find out if you are eligible using the EITC Assistant; it's available in both English and Spanish. The Assistant helps you:

- find your filing status,
- find out if you have a qualifying child or children,
- verify if you are eligible for EITC, and
- estimate the amount of your credit.

Let the Assistant help you get it and get it right.

Visit www.irs.gov/eitc to find the Assistant.

Also, if you make less than \$57,000, you qualify for free tax return preparation through volunteer sites. IRS-certified volunteers prepare your tax return and find out if you qualify for EITC and other refundable credits. Find a location for <a href="free tax return preparation">free tax return preparation</a> near you at irs.gov; search VITA.

Make sure you get the right amount of credit due you. If you have someone prepare your return, bring the following to your preparer:

- A valid driver's license or other photo ID card
- Social security cards, a social security number verification letter for all persons listed on the return
- Birth dates for all persons listed on return
- All income statements: Forms W-2 and 1099, Social Security, unemployment, and other statements, such as pensions, stocks, interest and any documents showing taxes withheld. If you run a business or farm, records of all income earned.
- All records of expenses, such as tuition, mortgage interest or real estate taxes. And, if you run a business or farm, records of all related expenses.
- Copies of last year's state and federal tax returns, if you have
- Bank routing numbers and account numbers to direct deposit any refund
- Dependent childcare information: name and address of who you paid and either the caretaker's SSN or other tax identification number
- If you purchased coverage through the <u>Health Insurance</u>
   <u>Marketplace</u>, <u>Form 1095-A PDF</u>, <u>Health Insurance Marketplace</u>
   <u>Statement</u>.
- Both spouses to sign forms to e-file (electronically file) a joint tax return

Pre- Registration is Required

Use this Link to Register

https://mako.exchange/scheduler/registration/?location=2730

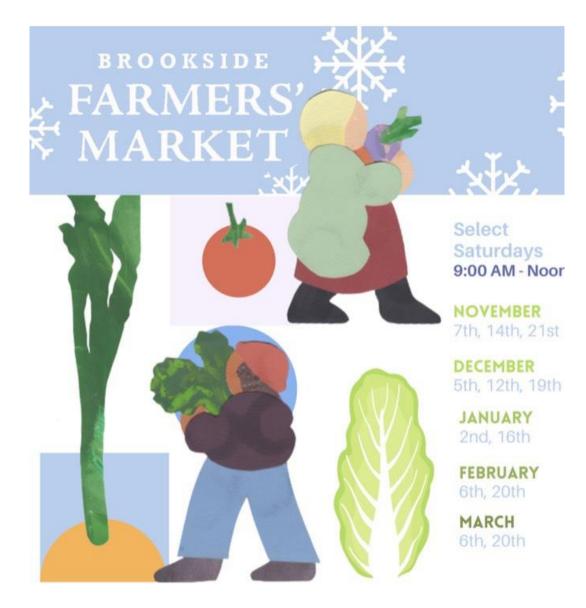
# **TESTING IS INSIDE THE BUILDING**







# Harvest Report



Winter Market

HJ's Community Center 6425 Wornall Road

SUSTAINABLE FARMS ARTISAN FOOD LOCAL PRODUCE HOLIDAY GIFTS



www. brooksidefarmersmarket.com



# SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

Join the FDIC's Alliance for Economic Inclusion of Kansas City webinar on Thursday, February 25, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. where we will discuss Small Business Resources to support and enhance low-income entrepreneurs and small disadvantaged businesses development and growth. Due to COVID-19, small businesses struggle to access the resources needed to stabilize their business. The webinar is targeted to small businesses in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area and broad area. In addition, this webinar will assist CRA officers, Small Business Bankers, Loan Officers, and Community Development Lenders and community organizations to help meet the needs of small businesses in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area.

This webinar is FREE!



For more information contact:

Teresa Green 816-234-8084 email: tegreen@fdic.gov

#### WEBINAR

February 25, 2021 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

> New Small Business Resources

HUD Section 3 New Rule

Small Business Registry

Small Business
Opportunity Portal

New Markets Tax Credits

Credit Building Program

Small Business Grants/Loans

## **South KC Mobile Food Pantries**

With so many people out of work due to the coronavirus pandemic, a growing number of families in south Kansas City are being forced to rely on community food pantries such as Community Assistance Council's to have enough to eat.

Fortunately, Harvesters (the community food network) brings the semi-truck that serves as its mobile food pantry to five sites in south Kansas City monthly to distribute fresh produce and other healthy food to families in need. The sites are:

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 food will be loaded in the vehicles when they reach the school by staff and student volunteers. This event is sponsored by the school and Community

Assistance

Council.

**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.

Center High School, 8715 Holmes Rd., from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. as long as food

is left on the third Saturday of the month. The event is sponsored by Three Trails Community church in partnership with the Center School District.

# **Coronavirus Facts and Resources**

# **Kansas City**

If you would like to receive updates about what the City is doing in response to the coronavirus, **text COVIDKC to 888777** or go online tokcmo.gov/coronavirus

## Missouri

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is operating a <a href="https://hotspace.new.org/hotspace">hotline</a> for residents and health care providers to call for information and guidance about COVID-19.

The statewide hotline number is <u>877-435-8411</u>. The hotline is being operated by medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

# UNEMPLOYMENT

## **How to File?**

If you're eligible, you'll need the following:

- Your Social Security number;
- Any amount you were paid in the past week, before taxes and deductions;
- The name and mailing address of each job you worked in the past 18 months:

The dates you started and ended work at each of those jobs.

If this is your first time filing for unemployment please watch **this video** on unemployment basics. Visit <u>uinteract.labor.mo.gov</u>, create an account and file your claim. If your job loss is related to coronavirus issues, make sure to check a box that says "COVID-19" in your application to waive a requirement to search for a new job amid the crisis.

Missouri provides benefits for up to 20 weeks, which can be extended to 33 weeks under the federal provisions.

The state will pay you up to \$320 per week, and the federal government will provide \$600 on top of whatever you get from the state for each week you're on umployment prior to July 31.

Benefits can be paid within 22 days unless there is an issue with your eligibility, which on average can take 4-6 weeks to resolve.

You should continue filing weekly requests for payment even if you have not yet received benefits.

Regional Claims Center representatives are available by phone Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM by calling:

Kansas City Claims Center: <u>816-889-3101</u> or visit Missouri Unemployment Website

Please visit the Missouri Department of Labor's website for more information about COVID-19 FAQ's for Businesses and

Workers: <a href="https://labor.mo.gov/coronavirus">https://labor.mo.gov/coronavirus</a>

US Department of Labor has a few sites dedicated to Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employee-paid-leave



### REMAIN ANONYMOUS • RECEIVE CASH REWARDS



TIPS HOTLINE

816-474-8477



WEB TIPS

KCcrimestoppers.com



P3Tips.com



### State Representative Mark A. Sharp

Missouri House of Representatives
Room 102-BA
201 W Capitol Ave
Jefferson City, Mo 65101
Phone

573-751-9469

**Email** 

mark.sharp@house.mo.gov

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