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**Capitol Report**

**February 25, 2021**

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*Dear Neighbor,*

It was a beautiful week weather wise in Jefferson City but the political forecast was anything but.

Today, the House passed controversial legislation that would establish tax breaks to provide vouchers for students to attend private K-12 schools. Meanwhile, the Senate on Feb. 24 shelved a charter school expansion bill amid questions about whether it has sufficient support for passage following a late-night debate.

That chamber's major education measure, Senate Bill 55, also would authorize private school tuition vouchers plus expand charter schools to allow them to operate in the state's largest counties, as well as cities with populations of more than 30,000 residents, among other provisions. Charter schools, which currently are authorized only in St. Louis and Kansas City, are independent public schools that operate free of many state regulations. They have had mixed record in Missouri, with some outperforming their local school district and others

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doing worse. Senators debated SB 55 for nearly 12 hours before setting it aside. Further debate is expected.

I will continue to monitor SB 55 as it tries to make its way to the House as I represent four school districts: Kansas City, Hickman Mills, Raytown and Center 58.

*Yours in Service,*

*Rich*

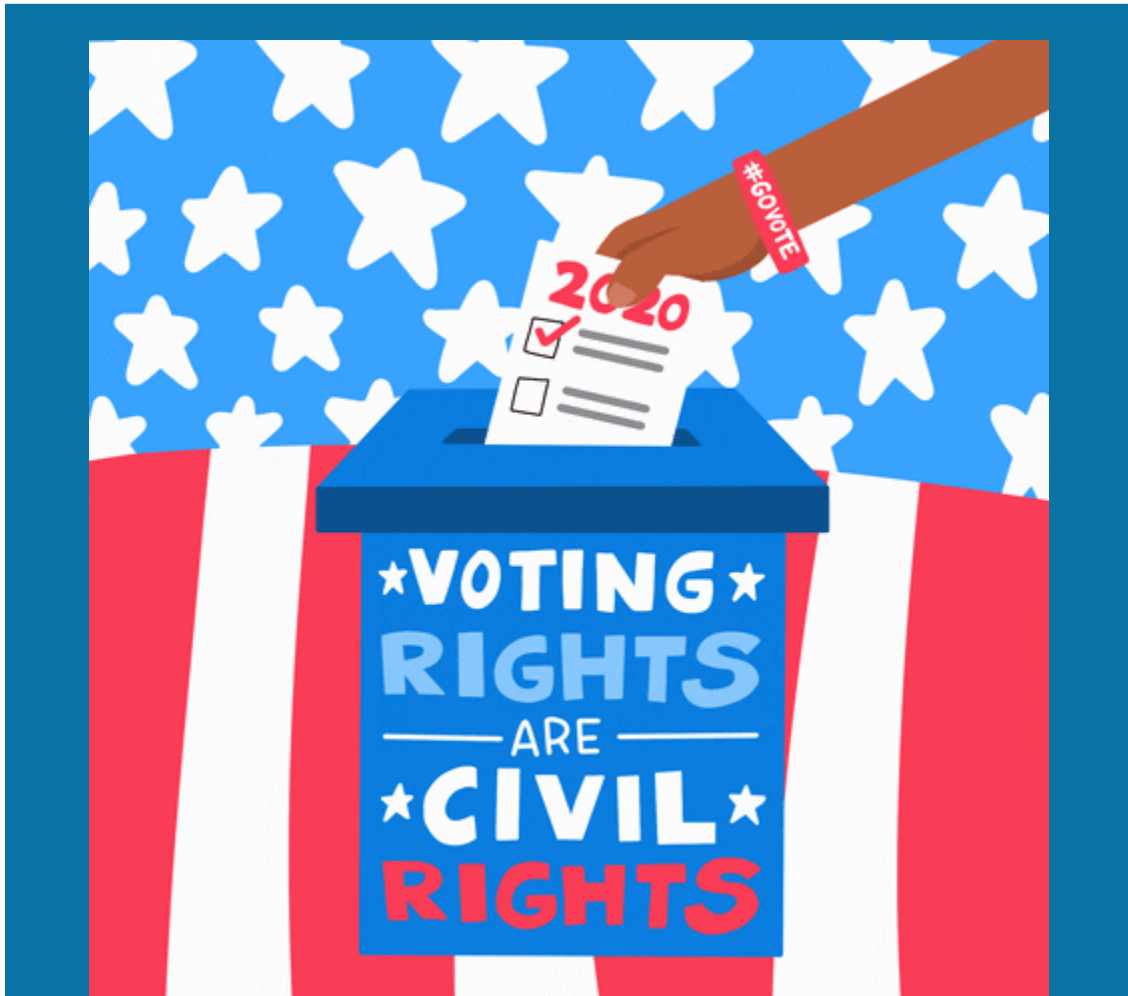


I met with Gov. Parson at the mansion Wednesday evening. I shared with him my concerns for the 46,000 Missourians being forced to repay unemployment benefits they received as a result of mistakes made by the state. I also shared with him my concerns

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about the slow vaccination roll out. He promised to work with me on both issues.

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## HOUSE AGAIN TRIES TO ENACT PHOTO VOTER ID REQUIREMENT

On a near party-line vote, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives on Feb. 24 voted 109-46 in favor of legislation to suppress voter participation by requiring government-issued photo identification in order to cast a ballot. The bill now advances to the

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Senate.

During Republican lawmakers' 15-year quest to impose a photo voter ID requirement, they have twice successfully enacted one into law, but the Missouri Supreme Court struck down both for violating Missourians' constitutional right to vote. Although the current attempt, House Bill 334, avoids some of the specific problems that contributed to the court invalidating the previous two laws, it still has to overcome a high constitutional hurdle that could be hard to clear.

In the earlier cases, the Supreme Court held that since voting is a fundamental constitutional right, any regulations must survive strict scrutiny, meaning they must address a compelling governmental interest, be narrowly tailored to achieve that interest and do so by the least restrictive means. Republicans' professed reason for waiting to impose a photo voter ID requirement – to combat fraud – on its face seems to qualify as a compelling state interest.

However, the court also noted in its cases that voter impersonation at polls is the only type of fraud a photo ID requirement could prevent, and there has never been a documented case of it in Missouri. As a result, HB 334 doesn't appear to meet the other elements of strict scrutiny that would justify the drastic action of disenfranchising the estimated 200,000-plus Missourians who don't have a valid government-issued photo ID.

During the years-long debate over this issue, Democrats have maintained the GOP claim of fighting fraud is merely a pretext for voter suppression since those who are least likely to have a driver's license or other form of photo ID – particularly racial minorities – tend to be solid Democratic voters. Only one Republican joined unanimous Democrats in opposing the bill.

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# 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



CITY OF  
KANSAS CITY,  
MISSOURI

[KCMO.GOV/RentHelp](https://www.kcmo.gov/RentHelp)



## Taxing federal aid would generate \$20 million for Missouri, but lawmakers are just saying 'no'

[Kurt Erickson](#) [STLToday.com](#)

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri lawmakers could forgo collecting more than \$20 million in taxes this year by waiving state income taxes on federal stimulus checks.

In action Wednesday, a House panel discussed a plan to allow Missourians to omit the \$600 emergency relief checks from their taxes next year, as well as any additional federal stimulus money that might be approved by Congress.

“This bill seeks to look forward,” said Rep. [Cody Smith](#), a Carthage Republican who sponsored the proposal.

The move is [similar to last year](#) when the Legislature and Gov. Mike Parson approved a waiver.

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Smith said he would like to see a change in tax law that would treat all federal emergency aid or stimulus payments similarly.

“Those should never be subject to state taxes,” Smith said.

There was no opposition to the measure expressed during the brief committee hearing.

All told, the state would net an additional \$20.4 million in tax revenue if the \$600 checks were taxed, according to an analysis by the governor’s budget office.

But, the analysis said not collecting that money won’t hurt the state’s bottom line.

“This is not a loss of current funding or a new expense, but rather a non-collection (forgone income) of a potential one-year windfall of income taxes,” the office said.

The \$600 checks [were part of a \\$900 billion package](#) signed Dec. 27 by former President Donald Trump.

President Joe Biden and congressional Democrats are crafting a far larger relief measure that could include an additional \$1,400 check for people earning up to \$75,000 or \$150,000 for a couple.

The bill also would increase child tax credits and offer extra \$400 weekly federal unemployment benefits through August. It would provide hundreds of billions of dollars for state and local governments, shuttered schools, COVID-19 vaccines and testing, and struggling airlines and other businesses.

Missouri is not alone in considering a waiver on the taxes. Alabama has signed off on a similar plan. Oregon is considering it.

Smith’s legislation is [House Bill 991](#).

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## Missouri House Passes ESA Bill

On Thursday afternoon, the Missouri House passed a controversial bill establishing an education savings account (ESA) program.

[HB 349](#), would establish the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program. The program would allow taxpayers to claim a tax credit of up to 50 percent of their tax liability for contributions to educational assistance programs. The funds would be pooled in ESAs for use on tuition, textbooks, tutoring services, and other costs.

The bill was narrowly passed by a vote of 82 to 71. *I voted NO as I support traditional public education.* The Speaker of the House quickly closed the board to stop voting as soon as the 82 vote total was reached. There were 8 absences and one "present" vote. The bill now moves on to the Senate.





## **SENATE APPROVES MORE PROTECTIONS FOR ACCUSED POLICE**

The Senate on Feb. 25 voted to advance legislation that has the potential to spark more protests over police brutality similar to those that repeatedly have flared in Missouri in recent years by making it even more difficult to hold law enforcement officers accountable for abuses of power or violating the constitutional rights of citizens.

Senate Bill 26 would place tight restrictions on investigations of police and grant officers special privileges that aren't afforded to civilians whom police investigate. For example, officers would be required to be notified in writing that an investigation is underway and given the name of the investigator. Officers and their counsel would be entitled to review all video and audio evidence prior to questioning. In addition, only a single investigator could ask an officer questions, and investigations would be required to end after 90 days, even if not complete.

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The bill also requires local governments to indemnify officers against civil claims for job-related misconduct, putting the financial responsibility for misconduct on taxpayers instead of officers. Officers would be empowered to sue their department for alleged violations of the investigative restrictions and be entitled to damages of \$5,000 per occurrence for unintentional violations, with purposeful violations carrying a \$10,000 penalty.

In Missouri and throughout the nation, cases of police abuse, particularly those targeting Black residents and other racial minorities, have led to widespread protests in recent years and calls for greater oversight and accountability for law enforcement officers and agencies. Legislation to provide such accountability and make it easier to remove problem officers consistently has languished in the Republican-controlled General Assembly.

Other SB 26 provisions would impose harsher penalties on protestors who block traffic, discourage local governments from reducing police budgets and create a new crime of “institutional vandalism” for damaging a public monument, even though such vandalism already is illegal. During protests last summer, several Confederate monuments around the country were torn down as symbols of the institutionalized racism protestors were opposing. A second vote is required to advance the bill to the House of Representatives.

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**REAL ID WILL BE REQUIRED FOR  
ALL U.S. RESIDENTS TO FLY OR  
ENTER FEDERAL BUILDINGS  
EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2021.**

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## WHAT IS IT?

"REAL ID" comes from the REAL ID Act of 2005, a federal law that focused on fraud protection, anti-terrorism, and driver license and nondriver license identification card (ID card) security. The REAL ID Act prohibits federal agencies from accepting driver licenses and ID cards from states that do not meet these standards. Beginning **October 1, 2021**, residents of every U.S. state and territory will be required to present a REAL ID-compliant driver license or ID card, or another form of ID accepted by the Transportation Security Administration, to board federally regulated domestic flights.

## DO I NEED ONE?

### YES

- Flying domestically
- Accessing federal facilities, military bases and federal courthouses
- Entering nuclear power plants



### NO

- Driving
- Voting or Registering to Vote
- State Purposes
- Age Verification
- You hold another form of identification that meets federal requirements, such as a valid U.S. passport or passport card



## WHEN CAN I GET ONE?

Customers were able to apply for a REAL-ID compliant Missouri driver license or nondriver ID card beginning March 25, 2019. **HOWEVER**, your Missouri-issued license or ID card that was issued prior to March 25, 2019, will give you the same access as a REAL ID-compliant license or ID card until **October 1, 2021**.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



Missouri's REAL ID-compliant driver licenses and nondriver ID cards will have a **star** in the upper right-hand corner.



A license or ID card that is not compliant with REAL ID will have "Not for REAL ID Purposes" in the upper right-hand corner.

Learn more at [dor.mo.gov/drivers/real-id-information](http://dor.mo.gov/drivers/real-id-information)

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF  
**REVENUE**

## REAL ID REQUIREMENTS



Arrive *prepared* to apply  
for your new REAL ID

Form 5794 (Revised 05/2020)





Rep. Jerome Barnes and I took a brief stroll around the capitol on Tuesday to enjoy the unseasonable warm weather after experiencing last week's extreme cold.

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## **Brutal February weather leads to early pothole season**

Missouri Department of Transportation crews are focusing on pothole repair through April. When you see a MoDOT crew making repairs, motorists should slow down and move over a lane to give them room to work. Crews started working to address the pesky potholes as soon as there was a break in the weather last week. MoDOT will have about 300 pothole patching crews statewide working to make roadways safer. In 2020, MoDOT patched approximately 760,000 potholes spending \$18 million on pothole patching.

“While following COVID-19 social distancing procedures, MoDOT is working as hard as we can to fill the potholes quickly,” said Natalie Roark, MoDOT state maintenance director. “Brutally cold temperatures coupled with ice and snow throughout February have led to a high number of potholes blossoming on Missouri highways already. We ask motorists to please be patient with us as the repairs are being done.”

MoDOT maintains 34,000 miles of road including interstates, U.S.

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and Missouri routes and lettered routes.

Potholes form when temperatures warm up during the day but continue to be cold at night. The rain and snow from winter leave moisture that seeps into cracks and joints in the pavement. Frozen water in cracks and under the surface of the roadway causes the pavement to bulge and bend. Then when ice melts, the pavement contracts and leaves gaps or voids in the surface under the pavement. When cars and trucks drive over the bulging pavement, it weakens the roadway eventually causing chunks of pavement or asphalt to pop out, creating potholes.

Short-term repairs are made using a cold asphalt mix with a priority to fill the deepest potholes first. The long-term fix, a hot asphalt mix, isn't effective until temperatures remain warm for a prolonged period.

Potholes are also a sign of an aging transportation system. Missouri's budget for road repairs is largely financed by a 17-cent per gallon gas tax that has remained the same since 1996. Many roadways that would benefit from resurfacing can only be patched due to limited resources.

If you can't avoid a pothole, try to slow down before you hit it. Here are some other safety tips:

- Don't brake directly over a pothole as this can cause more damage.
- When driving over the pothole, hold the steering wheel firmly to avoid losing control.
- Use caution when driving over a puddle of water because it might be a pothole in hiding.
- Make sure your tires are properly inflated. Properly inflated tires hold up better against potholes than tires that have too much or too little air.
- You can watch a video about potholes by [clicking here](#).

Motorists can report the location of potholes on state-maintained roads using the following tools:

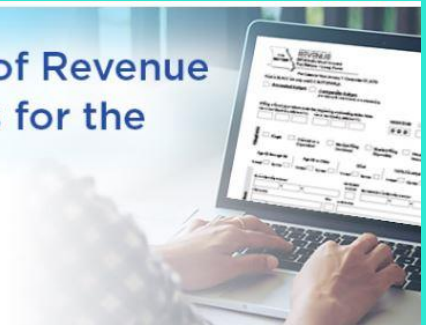
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- Call the 24/7 Customer Service Center at 1-888-ASK-MODOT (888-275-6636).
  - Use the Report a Road Concern form on the web at [modot.org](http://modot.org).
  - Use a smartphone/tablet with a mobile friendly form at [modot.org/roadconcern](http://modot.org/roadconcern).
  - Potholes on city streets or subdivisions should be reported to local city or county maintenance.

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The IRS and Missouri Department of Revenue will begin accepting e-filed returns for the 2020 tax year on **Feb. 12, 2021**.

[Click here for more information](#)



**HAVE  
UNEMPLOYMENT  
QUESTIONS?**

**Ask our virtual assistant.**

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Need food and hygiene items, emergency rent or utilities assistance, diapers or pull-ups, help with medicines and medical devices?

**CAC may be able to help.**

Click [HERE](#) for more information

**Harvesters Community Food Network**

Click [HERE](#) to find service in your area

**Spire - Natural Gas Assistance**

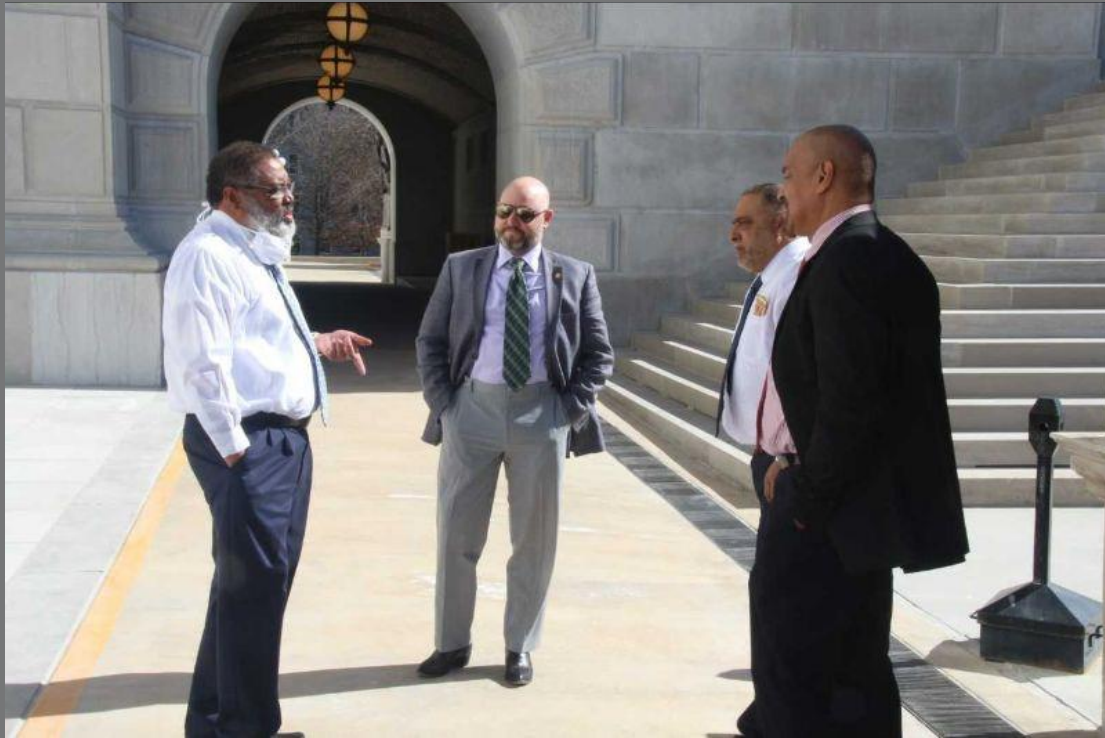
Click [HERE](#)

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### House Legislative Dashboard







I took advantage of the warmer weather to strategize with some of my Democratic colleagues outdoors this week. I am pictured with (L-R) Rep. Mark Ellebracht (Liberty), Rep. Neil Smith (St. Louis County) and Rep. Michael Person (St. Louis County).

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### [COVID-19 Vaccine Navigator](#)

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### **COVID-19 vaccine website**

Missouri has launched a new vaccine website, which answers common questions and clarifies what it calls misinformation.

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The new website is [mostopscovid.com](https://mostopscovid.com), and provides Missourians with information about the safety of the vaccines, research and production processes and when they could be eligible for vaccination.

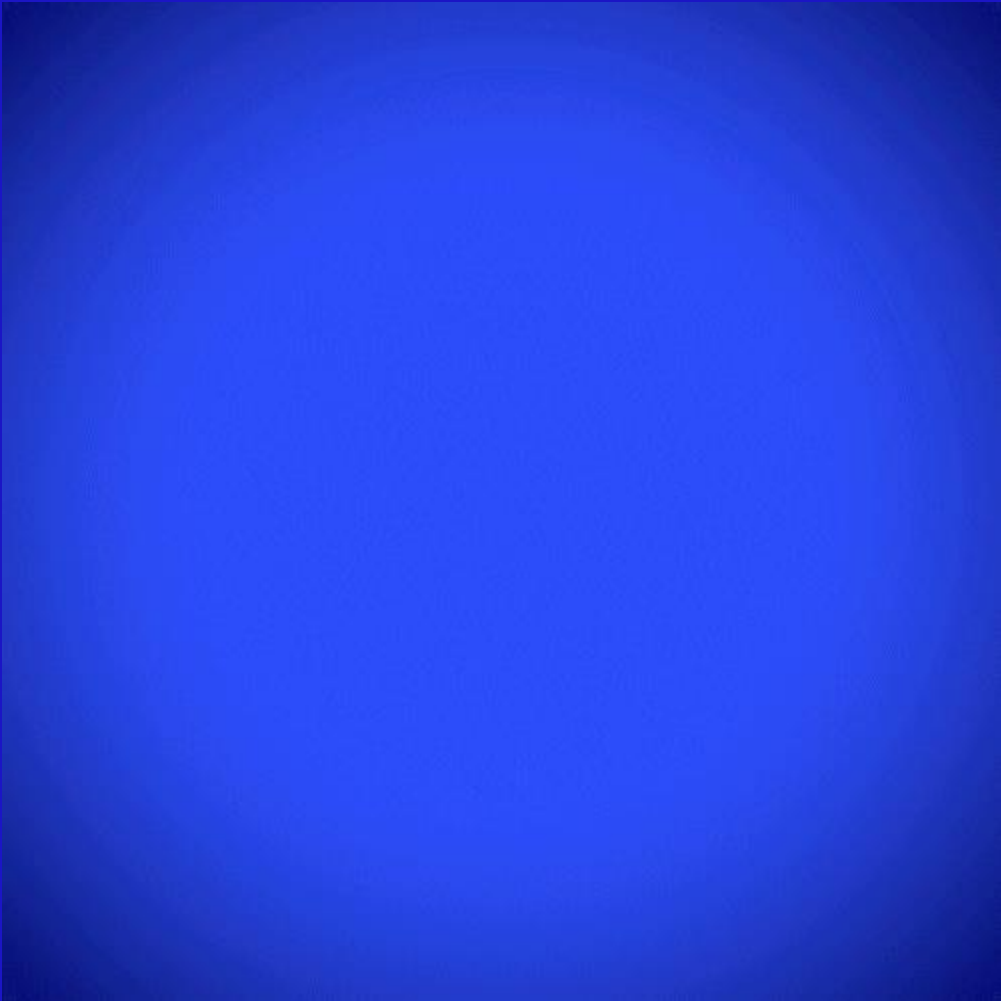
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[Click Here for Frequently asked questions & answers about the COVID-19 vaccine](#)

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Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is hosting several testing events in the Kansas City area. These testing events are separate from the KCMO Health Department. [You must register online.](#) DO NOT call 311 to register for the following events.

Friday, Feb. 26

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**Kansas City Zoo (Cheetah Parking Lot) 12  
p.m. - 4p.m.**

6800 Zoo Dr., KCMO 64132

**Monday, March 1**

**Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center 9 a.m. -  
3p.m.**

3700 Blue Parkway, KCMO 64130

**Monday, March 1**

**Bartle Hall (front entrance on 13th Street) 8  
a.m. - 10 a.m.**

301 W. 13th Street, KCMO 64105

**Wednesday, March 3**

**Worlds of Fun Main Entrance 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.**

4545 Worlds of Fun Ave., KCMO 64161

**Friday, March 5**

**Kansas City Zoo (Cheetah Parking Lot) 10  
a.m. - 4p.m.**

6800 Zoo Dr., KCMO 64132

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**Truman Medical Centers has available services for Jackson County residents during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.**

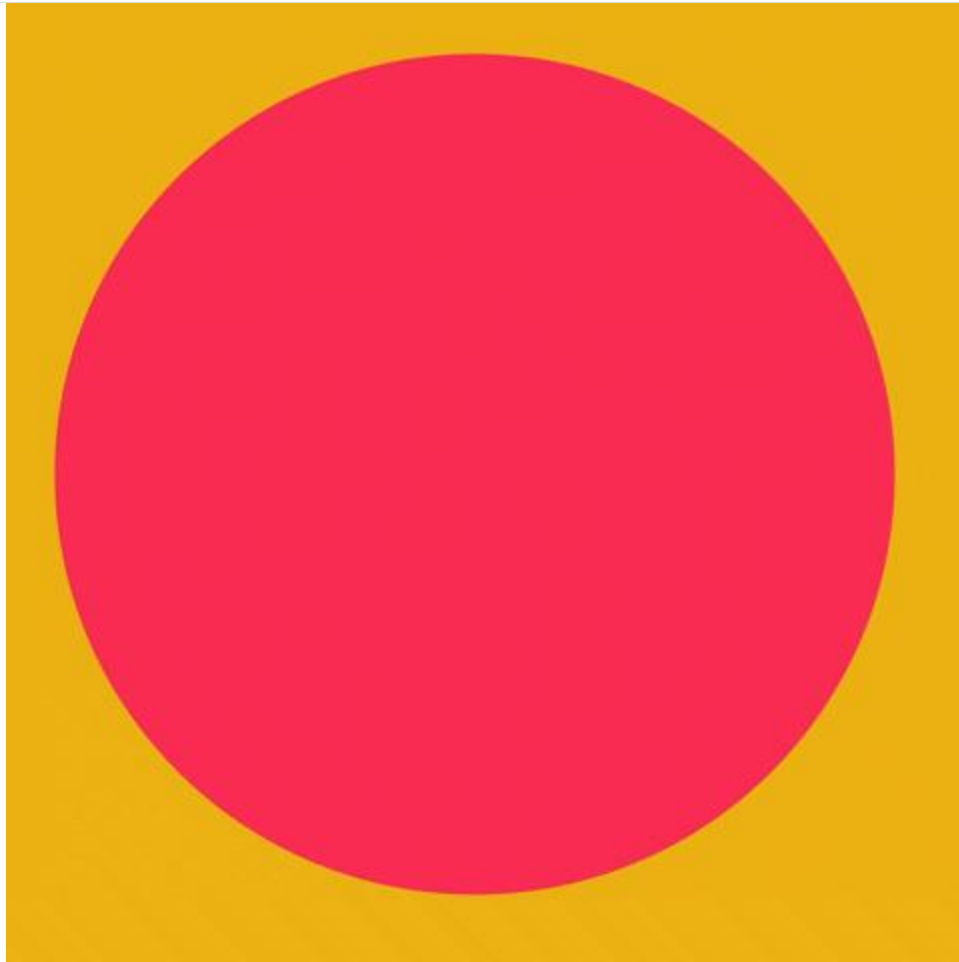
If you are experiencing a fever, a new cough or new shortness of breath, you can call **404-CARE (2273)** and speak to a health care professional to be screened for COVID-19.



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[Click Here to get on the Wait List for COVID 19 Vaccine at Truman Medical Center.](#)





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Wearing is Caring

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As of the time I have sent this mailing, there have been  
37 homicides in the Kansas City metro area in 2021.

*In Kansas City, Missouri, 20 people have been killed.*

[Click here for the Homicide Tracker.](#)



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## COMMUNITY NEWS AND HAPPENINGS



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## In Memoriam

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# L.C. Richardson

Legendary Pitmaster and BBQ Icon  
L.C.'s Barbeque

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The reward has been raised to  
**\$30,000** for Dominic

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**GREATER KANSAS CITY CRIME STOPPERS  
816-474-TIPS HOTLINE**

**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FROM: Det. Kevin Boehm, Crime Stoppers Coordinator**

**SUBJECT: Reward Increase – 9 Year Old Dominic Young Homicide**

**KANSAS CITY, MO --- The Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Greater KC Crime Stoppers TIPS Hotline continue to seek information in the January 20, 2018 homicide of 9 year old Dominic Young Jr. at 71 Highway and Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd.**

**Dominic Young Jr. was apparently hit by a stray gunshot while occupying a vehicle driven by his father and died as a result of his injuries. Dominic, his father and brother were en route to Grandview at the time. The vehicle driven by Dominic's father was hit by gunshots from other vehicles apparently engaged in a gunfight according to statements.**

**KCPD found a possible crime scene near the intersection where the father said the shooting happened. When the father arrived home in Grandview, Dominic was not responsive. Grandview police initially responded to the father's home and found the boy in critical condition. He was later pronounced dead at a hospital.**

**A number of community leaders and organizations including State Representative Richard Brown, Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McManus, former City Councilmen Scott Taylor, Scott Wagner, John Sharp; the City of KCMO and Concord Fortress of Hope Church (Pastor Ron Lindsay) have come forward to increase the existing reward in the case up to \$30,000.00. Those leaders are available for comment in regard to the case.**

**Anyone with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers Greater Kansas City TIPS Hotline at 816-474-TIPS (8477), TIPS may also be submitted electronically at [www.KCcrimestoppers.com](http://www.KCcrimestoppers.com), or by downloading our NEW mobile app, P3TIPS, on Google Play or the Apple iOS stores for FREE. Information leading to an arrest and/or filing of charges could be eligible for up to \$30,000.00 in reward money. ALL INFORMATION IS ANONYMOUS.**

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**Remain Anonymous • Receive Cash Rewards**

**Tips Hotline**

**816-474-8477**

**Web Tips**

**[www.KCcrimestoppers.com](http://www.KCcrimestoppers.com)**

**Free Mobile App**

**[www.P3Tips.com](http://www.P3Tips.com)**

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\* A program of the KC Metropolitan Crime Commission

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My office in Jefferson City is available to assist you with questions you may have about state government or legislative issues. Please call, email or write anytime. If you are unable to reach me, my assistant, Donna Gentzsch is ready to help you. If you are in Jefferson City, come by my Capitol office in room 134, and introduce yourself. The door is always open and I encourage you to visit.

[Please forward this email to your friends and family who want to know how what is happening in Jefferson City will impact them here at home.](#)



**Rep. Richard Brown**

Assistant Minority Floor Leader

MO House of Representatives

201 West Capitol Avenue

Room 134

Jefferson City, MO 65101

Phone

573-751-7639

Email:

[richard.brown@house.mo.gov](mailto:richard.brown@house.mo.gov)

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any feedback,

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questions or ideas!

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