



**Capitol Report**

**March 31, 2023**

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## *Dear Neighbor,*

This week the legislative session focused on passing the remaining 14 bills that make up the state operating budget and sending them to the Senate to start their process. The Budget bills always start in the House.

The following is a breakdown of how I voted on the 14 appropriation bills for the \$45.62 billion FY 2024 budget. This is the largest budget in the history of Missouri.

**I voted YES** on HB 1 (pays the state's debts). because we need to protect the state of Missouri's AAA credit rating.

**I voted NO** on HB 2 (Elementary and Secondary Education).

There are many good parts to the bill including fully funding K-12 education (and transportation), \$56M for Pre-K and early childhood education. It also includes \$50M for public school safety and \$32M for teacher's career ladder. However, over half of the teachers in the state will see no benefit from this budget. The stipulations that relate to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) will have a profound effect on

school districts. Whether we like it or not, our schools are filled with diversity and equity for our students and staff. Removing elements of DEI will leave all Missourians behind. We also removed over \$100M from general revenue for education and replaced it with lottery money.

Missouri is 49th in our nation when it comes to school funding (behind NH and DC). Many districts in Missouri are now having 4 day school weeks due to a shortfall in funding. We did not add any money for mental health for our kids. We have a \$6 billion surplus in General Revenue. Our children deserve better.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 3 (Higher Education) because Missouri is ranked 49th per capita in the country when it comes to higher education funding.

We have reduced funding by 14% over the past 10 years. This is a safe place to invest our money as we seek to increase workforce development in the state. We have the money in General Revenue to allocate to our colleges and universities. We are not protecting our institutions of higher education. Missouri's HBCU's (Harris Stowe and Lincoln University) continue to receive lower amounts of funding compared to other institutions. The anti- DEI language that was also inserted into this bill weighed into my decision to vote NO as it has already had an impact on hiring practices at Missouri universities.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 4 (Transportation) because we are still one of the worst states when it comes to funding public transportation. Missouri is at the bottom when it comes to funding for highway miles and our MODOT employees deserve a pay increase. We have millions of dollars coming to the state in the form of federal dollars to improve our infrastructure. There is a shortfall for public transportation compared to other states. The House Republicans did not provide funding the governor requested to expand I-70.

I am a strong proponent of public transit as it keeps our economy moving as people need it to get to work and school. Public transit is good for workforce development. The anti-DEI language that was

inserted into this bill again factored into my decision to vote NO.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 5 (Employee Benefits and Office of Administration). We are providing long needed pay raises for state employees and investing in upgrading technology for our state agencies. However, the anti-DEI language that was inserted into this bill weighed into my decision to vote NO.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 6 (Agriculture, Natural Resources and Conservation) because all budgetary requests made by these departments were fulfilled and there were no major programs that were underfunded. I have always been a staunch supporter of agriculture in our state, but, the anti-DEI language that was inserted into this bill weighed into my decision to vote NO.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 7 (Economic Development, Insurance, Labor and Industrial relations) There is a shortage of 150,000 units for low-income housing. A lot of states are investing in this area and addressing homelessness. We should be addressing those issues as it relates to housing. Every Fortune 500 company in Missouri has a DEI statement. Many companies have a DEI statement as a result of litigation from their from the past. I don't believe corporations will find our state as welcoming with this language in this legislation. I believe the the anti- DEI language that was also inserted into this bill will be damaging to doing business in Missouri. It will have a negative economic impact on our state as this anti-DEI language prohibits the state from doing business with companies that have and association to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion. It will also immediately impact MBWE's as these companies also tend to have DEI statements. Also, funding for the Juneteenth Celebrations held around our state was eliminated from this budget.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 8 (Public Safety) because \$2M for re-enlistment incentives for the Missouri National Guard and Civil Air Patrol. There is an increase in pay for the Missouri Highway Patrol and Capitol Police. There is a \$20M appropriation for the long term care for veteran's at the veteran's homes. However, The anti- DEI language that was also inserted into this bill

was a factor in voting NO on the bill.

**I voted NO** for HCS HB 9 (Corrections) This budget provides funding to increase pay for correctional employees. There are other employers in the marketplace that pay higher salaries than the salaries of our correctional officers and we need to be competitive in pay to retain and recruit Department of Corrections employees. The budget also included money to outsource the food service for the correctional facilities. The anti- DEI language that was also inserted into this bill was a determining factor in my NO vote.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 10 (Mental Health and Health) A lot of the money allocated for Mental Health came from federal funds. There is funding for autism research. We had an opportunity to raise provider rates for persons with disabilities, but the Republicans voted against it. Providing needed health care should be a priority in our state. There are Missourians sitting in hospitals because there is no one who can care for them at home. We have banned abortion in Missouri, but the Republicans still want to defund Planned Parenthood. Many women rely on Planned Parenthood for health services. Black women have higher maternal mortality rates than white women when giving birth and we did not provide any money to try to help reduce the mortality rate. The anti-DEI language that was also inserted into this bill once again was a factor on my vote.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 11 (Social Services) because the bill has some specific concerns that need to be addressed. Our elderly deserve better. The budget \$73 million for nursing home reimbursement rates. Nursing home providers have contacted me over the years for this increase in the reimbursement rates. Our Children's Division is critically underfunded and this hurts our most vulnerable children. This budget provides \$24M to improve Missouri's Children Division. The anti-DEI language that was also inserted into this bill once again was a factor on my vote. I am concerned the language may conflict with federal regulations/requirements and could have an impact on our state receiving federal funds. Social work applies to a broad range of people across this state and I am concerned the loss of federal

funds will unnecessarily bring harm to people who have done nothing to deserve this.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 12 (Elected Officials, Judiciary, Public Defender and General Assembly) because this is an area that we could spend more money, especially with the \$6 billion we have in surplus in General Revenue. This budget does not provide enough funding for public defender legal services. People have a right to adequate counsel in our legal system. Poor people will continue to suffer in the criminal justice system without adequate legal representation. Public libraries were stripped of funding because two library associations are challenging book bans in Missouri. Missouri statute established public libraries but here we go again not doing the right thing. The anti-DEI language that was also inserted into this bill once again was a factor on my vote.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 13 (pays the leases of state offices and related services). The anti-DEI language that was also inserted into this bill once again was the factor on my vote. I believe in paying our bills but I cannot agree with the DEI language on the bill.

**I voted NO** on HCS HB 15 ( 2nd Operating Supplemental Budget). We previously passed this bill at the beginning of session to keep the state operating. The anti-DEI language that was also inserted into this bill was the factor on my vote.

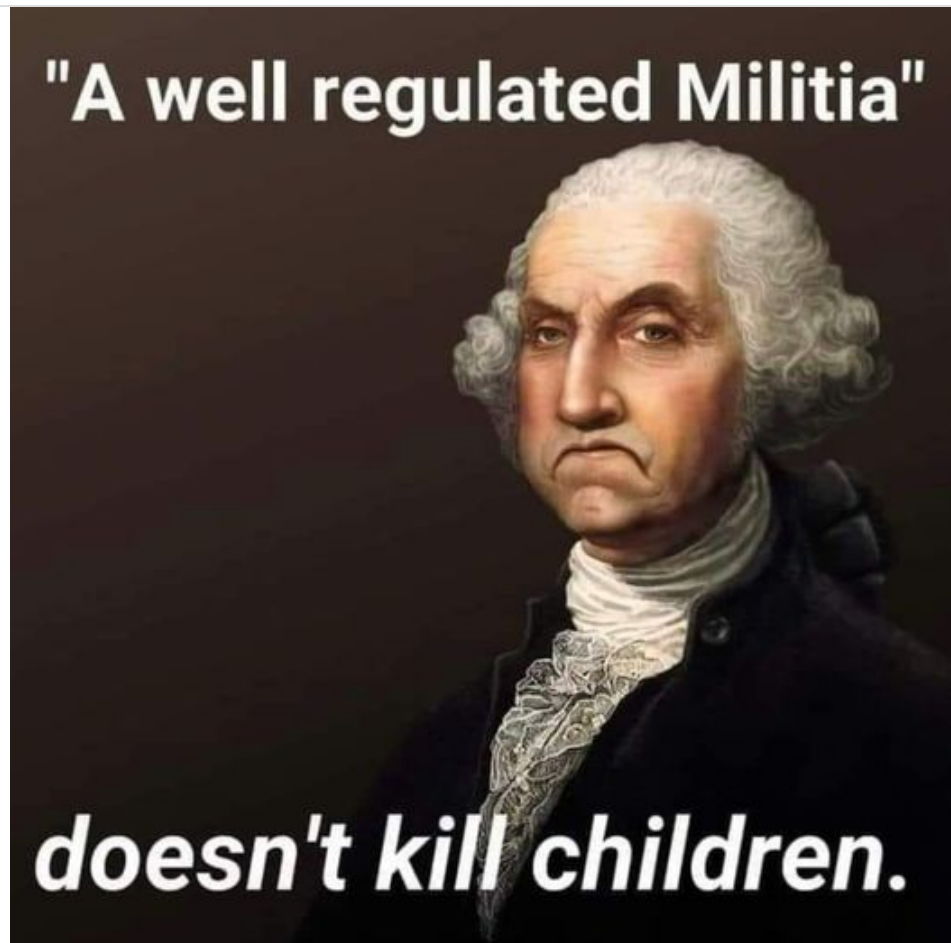
**All the bills were passed with more than 100 votes in favor of passage for each portion of the budget.**

The appropriations bills that make up the state operating budget will now be sent to the Senate, which in the coming weeks will craft its own version of the bills. Lawmakers will then negotiate final versions of the measures that must win final passage by a May 5 constitutional deadline. The 2024 fiscal year begins on July 1, 2023. Although **I do not serve on any Budget or Appropriations Committees**, I do believe we can and must do better as a state in meeting the needs of our people. We also need to avoid harmful language. The world is a better place when we celebrate our

diversity, our opportunities and are Inclusive of all people.

*Yours in Service,*

*Rich*





## House Legislative Dashboard



Closing out a difficult, infuriating, disappointing week where divisive, racist language from a lone House Republican derailed discussion from how we should better invest in Missourians



## **Diversity debate overshadows \$45.62 billion state budget**

The House of Representatives on March 30 voted out a nearly \$45.62 billion state operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year following two days of debate focused on language Republicans inserted in the plan to broadly prohibit all state agencies and anyone who does business with them from promoting “diversity, equity or inclusion.” Because it would have wide-ranging negative consequences for the state, the Senate’s top budget official has vowed to strip the language when the appropriations process moves to the upper chamber.

During initial debate on March 28 on the various bills that make up the 2024 state operating budget, Republican lawmakers voted to add language barring the state from spending any money for “staffing, vendors, consultants or programs associated with” diversity, equity or inclusion, commonly known as DEI.

Supporters of the language argued DEI promotes “neo-Marxism.”

However, both government and the private sector, including many companies that contract with the state, commonly promote diversity, equity and inclusion as a way to attract and retain workers, as well as foster stronger relationships with historically marginalized groups. Because DEI policies are so ubiquitous in



modern society, the impact of attempting to defund everything connected to them could be devastating for Missouri by making it impossible for the state to hire outside contractors, prohibiting countless state programs and costing Missouri all of the \$20.69 billion in federal funds it expects to receive in FY 2024.

Initially, Democrats largely stood alone in opposing the anti-DEI language, but as the House worked its way through initial passage of the appropriations bills, more Republicans began realizing the implications for the state, with about two dozen eventually joining the opposition. As the House was taking its final budget votes, the Republican chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee told news reporters the controversial language will be removed.

With debate focused on diversity, equity and inclusion, discussion was limited on the substance of the House budget plan, which cuts \$2.14 billion in spending authority from the governor's request and leaves billions more from the state's unprecedented \$6 billion revenue surplus unexpended.

One Republican-initiated change eliminated more than \$100 million in spending authority earmarked for local public school districts. While the House Budget Committee chairman argued this was excess authority that wouldn't be spent, Democrats countered that instead of cutting it, lawmakers should let schools spend it, perhaps on increasing minimum teacher pay, a category in which Missouri already ranks as worst in the nation. Such proposals were rejected.

In another controversial move, House Republicans completely eliminated all state funding for local public libraries in retaliation for a lawsuit filed on their behalf challenging the constitutionality of a new "book banning" law that prompted many libraries to pull many popular and acclaimed books from their shelves out of fear of prosecution.

Democrats also criticized Republicans for failing to tap the state

budget surplus to increase reimbursement rates for providers of critical in-home care and address staffing shortages throughout state government. In addition, the House plan eliminated \$1 billion requested by the governor to begin rebuilding key sections of Interstate 70.

The budget debate now shifts to the Senate, which is expected to restore most of the governor's requested spending, as well as further tap the surplus revenue for a variety of other programs and projects. The two chambers must approve identical versions of the 13 appropriations bills that make up the operating budget by a constitutional deadline of May 5.



## **Democrats filibuster attempt to limit constitutional changes**

Senate Democrats on March 29 blocked – at least temporarily – a proposed constitutional amendment intended to make it harder to amend the Missouri Constitution. Since the change is a priority for majority Republicans, the Senate is expected to resume debate on it at some point during the final weeks of the

2023 legislative session.

House Joint Resolution 43's main provision would raise the vote threshold for ratifying future constitutional amendments from a simple majority – which has been the case for more than two centuries – to a 60 percent supermajority. As so-called “ballot candy” to entice voters into supporting something they might otherwise oppose, it also includes a provision falsely purporting to prohibit non-U.S. citizens from voting on constitutional amendments. Since, the constitution already bars non-citizens from voting in Missouri elections, this provision actually would change nothing.

The deceptive ballot language included in HJR 43 lists the ballot candy first, with the higher ratification requirement appearing last. The House of Representatives approved HJR 43 nearly two months ago on a straight party-line vote, with minority Democrats opposed.

During the Senate debate on the measure, Democrats filibustered for nearly four hours before Republican leaders set it aside. If the Senate ultimately passes HJR 43, it automatically will go on the November 2024 statewide ballot, unless the governor exercises his constitutional authority to set an earlier election date. Ratification would require just a simple majority.

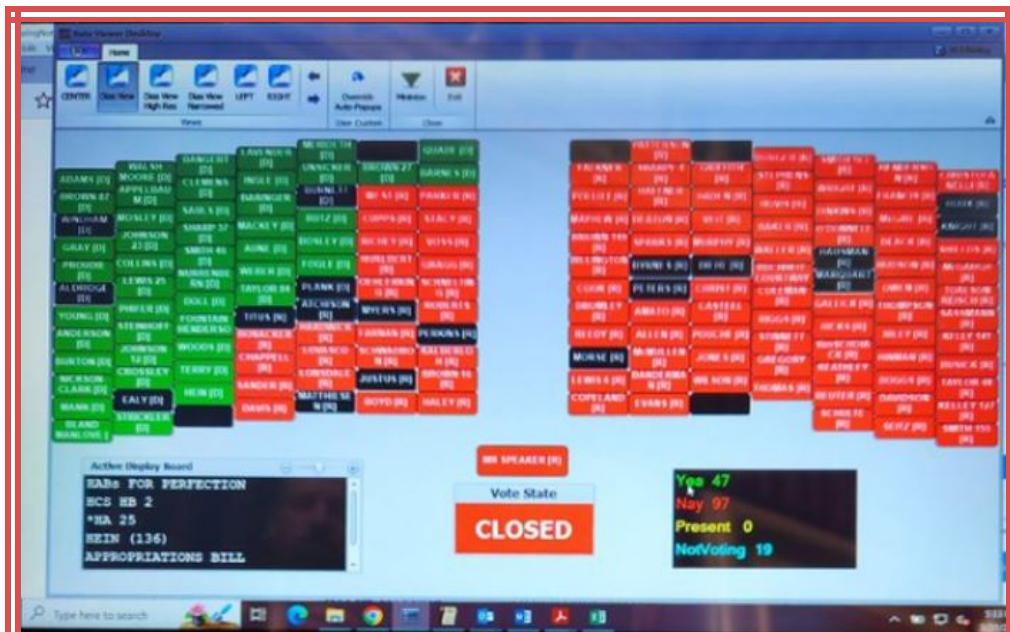


## **House okays letting utilities bill customers for future projects**

The House of Representative voted 108-39 on March 29 to advance legislation that would give investor-owned power companies the authority to charge their customers upfront for the costs of planning and building nuclear power plants. The bill now goes to the Senate.

Missouri utilities have been prohibited from passing on the costs of new facilities until they are online and generating power since 1976, when 63.1 percent of voters approved a statewide ballot measure outlawing the practice, known as “construction work in progress.” House Bill 225 would lift that restriction.

Supporters say the existing law is an impediment to building additional nuclear power plants in the state. Opponents say utility company investors – not customers – should bear the financial risks of pursuing such projects and noted several instances from other states in which customers were stuck with billions of dollars in costs for facilities that never were completed.



Every Republican on the floor voted against a \$1,000 pay raise for teachers. Remember \$16B in the bank, this would have cost \$75M. Even with the recent pay increases, Missouri teachers are still some of the lowest paid in the nation.



I am an ally to the LGBTQ Community and supported our Transkids on Wednesday at a rally on the steps of the Capitol.





It takes all of us to stop HATE!



I had the rare opportunity to take a photo with all four of my House Speakers during my terms of service: Rob Vescovo (2021-22), Elijah Haahr (2019-20), Dean Plocher (present) and Todd Richardson (2017-18).



I had the pleasure of meeting the new Chief of the St. Louis Police Department, Robert Tracy.



My colleagues and I celebrate  
the opening of the 2024 MLB Season.

**PEACE FOR  UKRAINE**

## **COMMUNITY NEWS AND HAPPENINGS**





Let's Go Royals!

## DEADLINE REMINDER

2023 Personal Property Declarations are due April 30



# ★ ★ EARLY VOTING ★ ★



United Believers Community Church  
5600 East 112 Terrace  
Kansas City, MO 64137

**First day- March 21st**  
**Last day- April 1st**

**Weekdays, March 21-31:**

10am - 6pm

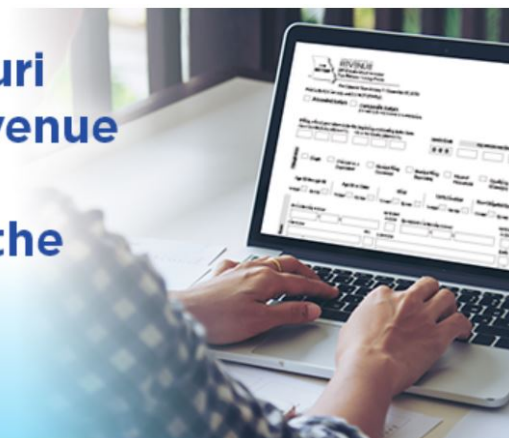
**Saturday, April 1:**

8am - 12pm  
(This is the only Saturday)

## Individual Income Tax Electronic Filing

**The IRS and Missouri  
Department of Revenue  
are now accepting  
e-filed returns for the  
2022 tax year**

[Click here for more information](#)





## Obtaining the status of your tax return

The Missouri Return Inquiry System provides information regarding the status of your Missouri tax return. After entering your information, you will also have the option of being notified by text or email when the status of your tax return changes. You may only view the status of 2018 or later year returns.

*Sign up*  
to receive  
automatic updates!

Receive text or email  
notifications each time the  
status of your return changes.

Access the  
**Missouri Return  
Inquiry System**  
to find out how.



### What tax years and returns can I check on?

- 2018 and forward Missouri Individual Income Tax returns
- 2018 and forward Missouri Property Tax Credit (PTC) claims

### What information do I need to get started?

- Social security number
- Filing status
- Anticipated refund or balance due

### When will my return information be available?

- Up to 5 business days after filing electronically
- Up to 3 - 4 weeks after mailing your paper return

### What information will I receive?

- Easy-to-read graphics indicating the status of your return
- Refund issue date, if applicable



Welcome Hunger Stoppers!

**2023 Pantry On Wheels!** *NO COST shopping for fresh produce, proteins, dairy, and nonperishables.*

**FEB 19 | MAR 19 | APR 16**

**2 pm - 4 pm**

**7820 Prospect, KCMO 64132**

**Heavy Construction Laborer's Union Hall Parking Lot**



**FEB 2 | MAR 2 | APR 6**

**2 pm - 4pm**

**8200 Paseo, KCMO 64132**

**NEW!** Enter Marlborough Community Center Front Door on 82nd to Sign In

*Resource Rep's Inside: Community Assistance Council, ReStart Outreach, ReDiscover Outreach*

*Distribution while supplies last. Check [cor.org/hunger](http://cor.org/hunger) for inclement weather and COVID updates.*

**POWERHOUSE**  
CYCLE & DYNO

**BASHLIN**  
INDUSTRIES INC  
UP · DOWN · ALL-AROUND COMPACT



**MIKE'S 71**  
CYCLE  
PARTS & SERVICE  
IN LAS VEGAS

**Milwaukee**

**Local 53 Riding Group**  
Invites you to ride for



**Working  
Families'  
Friend**

**SATURDAY, MAY 6<sup>TH</sup>**

**(RAIN DATE SATURDAY MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>)**

**REGISTRATION AT 9:30 AM TO 10:30 AM**

**KICKSTANDS UP AT 11:00 AM**

**STARTS AND STOPS AT**

**IBEW LOCAL 53 UNION HALL**

**1100 ADMIRAL BLVD**

**KANSAS CITY, MO**

**RIDER \$25**  
**PASS \$10**  
**RAFFLE, FOOD &**  
**DRINKS PROVIDED**

For More Information Contact

Chad McGregor

816.699.9437

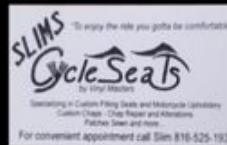
Bruce VanCompennolle

816.289.3356

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



**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.



**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)**

**\* A program of the KC Metropolitan Crime Commission**

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 Gentsch 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



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573-751-7639

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

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