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Election Day Nearly Here

The upcoming election is just days away and Missourians have a full ballot, from key state and local races to several important ballot measures that could impact our communities for years to come. The Missouri Secretary of State's Office is forecasting statewide voter turnout to be roughly 70 percent for the general election.

In addition to the presidential, congressional, and local races, here's a quick look at the statewide measures appearing on the ballot:

- **Amendment 2 – Sports Wagering:** Would legalize sports betting for individuals 21+ in Missouri, with a 10% tax on revenues for education and gambling prevention.
- **Amendment 3 – Reproductive Health:** Proposes constitutional rights for reproductive health choices, lifting Missouri's abortion ban but allowing certain restrictions after fetal viability.
- **Amendment 5 – Additional Gambling Boat License:** Allows a new gambling boat license on the Osage River to fund early-childhood literacy programs.
- **Amendment 6 – Law Enforcement Salaries and Benefits:** Supports funding for law enforcement compensation, including sheriffs and attorneys.
- **Amendment 7 – Voting and Candidate Election Rules:** Limits voting to U.S. citizens, restricts ranked-choice voting, and clarifies primary election rules.
- **Proposition A – Minimum Wage and Paid Sick Leave:** Increases minimum wage to \$15 by 2026 and introduces paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

No-excuse in-person absentee voting is already underway across Missouri with thousands of Missourians casting their ballots early, and the Secretary of State's office is urging voters to rely on trusted sources—such as county clerks, local election boards, and the Missouri Secretary of State's office—for accurate election information rather than third-party organizations.

County officials report high turnout, resulting in lines at designated polling sites. A county clerk raised concerns after a voter arrived expecting to skip the line, claiming they had registered online for an appointment. The voter had provided personal information, including their home address, phone number, and email.

“We are seeing a rise in the number of third-party groups claiming to provide information – sometimes misinformation, to voters. Not only are you handing over your personal data without having any way of knowing how it might be used in the future, but appointment voting is not an option,” said Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft. “I want to make sure Missouri voters are receiving information they can trust. Always check with your local election authority or my office if you’re unsure.” Missouri has 116 local election authorities who work to protect election integrity and make sure things run smoothly across the state. To find contact information for your LEA, select the appropriate county from the [drop-down list](#) found on the Missouri Secretary of State’s [website](#).

Missouri Lawmakers Continue Looking to Improve Missouri Workforce and Combat Substance Abuse

Missouri lawmakers continue to meet in the interim to discuss ideas, receive testimony, and try to find solutions to better serve the citizens of the state.

The House Special Interim Committee on Workforce Innovation and Technology has continued meeting to strengthen and prepare Missouri’s workforce for future demands, focusing on adaptability and increasing training across the state. The committee is also tackling workforce housing, integrating technology into sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, expanding logistics jobs using Missouri’s highway system, and examining AI’s potential impact on jobs over the next 10-20 years. Engaging with universities, commissions, and businesses, the committee is gathering insights to better equip Missouri’s workforce for the future.

The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Task Force also met to advance its mission of evaluating Missouri’s efforts to address the crisis of substance use in the Show-Me State. The task force is focused on assessing both the financial and programmatic aspects of current initiatives and develop recommendations to enhance the state’s response to substance abuse. In addition to reviewing existing prevention and treatment programs, the task force is considering new approaches to increase funding efficiency, improve access to care, and expand support for recovery services across Missouri. Through collaboration with healthcare providers, community leaders, and experts, the task force hopes to find comprehensive solutions to curb the impact of substance abuse statewide. The committee finished up its fact-finding hearings for the year and will now put its efforts toward creating a report with findings and recommendations using the vast amount of information collected through multiple hearings.

Missouri Launching New Licensing System with Faster Renewals and Online Options

In early November, the Missouri Department of Revenue will launch a new driver licensing system to modernize and expedite the license renewal process, offering online renewals and faster service at licensing offices. The system’s features include upgraded computers, scanners, and customer tablets to help ensure accuracy and streamline the in-office experience across 275 locations.

Adult drivers between 21 and 49 will benefit from online renewal options, reducing required in-person visits to every twelve years. Additionally, individuals who lose or damage their licenses will have the option to order duplicates online once within a renewal period, thus limiting unnecessary office visits.

The implementation, funded by a \$33 million allocation from auto dealership fees under a 2021 law, requires a temporary suspension of licensing services from November 6 to November 11. Offices will close on November 8 for the Veterans Day holiday and resume with the new system on November 12.

This system’s second phase, set for 2026, will integrate with dealerships for sales tax collection at vehicle purchase, addressing issues with expired temporary tags by ensuring taxes are paid upfront. Security upgrades include a new online app for license access, incorporating biometric verification for added protection.

Missouri Schools Awarded State-Funded Grants to Recruit Local Teachers

Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) awarded its second round of "Grow Your Own" (GYO) grants to 125 local education agencies (LEAs) to help recruit local educators and address the state's teacher shortage. DESE allocated \$2.5 million for Fiscal Year 2025 to fund \$10,000 one-time grants, supporting programs that encourage local students, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers to pursue teaching careers. These grants fund dual-credit courses, scholarships, student internships, and certification pathways. Funding was also provided to award Grow Your Own grants to 15 educator preparation programs and five community colleges.

"Investing in Missouri students and their achievement means investing in our educator workforce — both the teachers serving classrooms today and those that will join the profession in the coming years," said Commissioner of Education Karla Eslinger. "Grow Your Own programs are an important part of continuing to address the statewide teacher shortage, so we are thrilled to be able to provide a second round of funding to support this work at the local level."

LEAs applied to DESE through a competitive grant application process. Grant funds must be obligated, and reimbursement requested by May 31, 2025. You can find [the list of LEA grant recipients here](#), as well as the [list of educator preparation program and community college grant recipients](#).

State of Missouri to Hold Fall Hiring Event in Kansas City on November 12th

The State of Missouri will host a hiring event on November 12, 2024, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Harrah's Kansas City. Multiple state departments will be present, offering on-site interviews, resume support, and information on state benefits. This event aims to connect job seekers with opportunities to build a career in public service. If you know of anyone looking to make a difference every day in serving the citizens of Missouri and customers, please have them check out the hiring event on November 12 or visit mocareers.mo.gov to get more information.

Missouri Under a Drought Alert

Governor Mike Parson has signed an executive order declaring a drought alert for Missouri until March 31, 2025, as drought conditions persist in parts of 88 counties across the state. This order enables the state to direct resources to the affected areas and closely monitor conditions through winter.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources will activate the Drought Assessment Committee to evaluate drought levels and coordinate response efforts. Residents are encouraged to report local drought conditions on the Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) platform. Additional resources, drought news, and response information are available at www.dnr.mo.gov/drought.



My wife, Denise and I were very happy to donate \$250 Dent-Phelps R-III School District in support of Special Olympics.

To see legislation mentioned in this report, go to <https://house.mo.gov/LegislationSP.aspx>

To see my legislation, go to <https://house.mo.gov/MemberDetails.aspx?year=2024&code=R&district=120>

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