



## State Representative Rep Ron Copeland District 120

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This week I had the opportunity to present **HB 2700** on the floor of the House. This bill addresses many criminal justice issues our citizens of this state are dealing with on a daily basis. Go to [house.mo.gov](http://house.mo.gov) for the entire bill content. This bill addressed the sale of schedule I & II controlled substances when someone is injured or dies from the use. It addresses, human trafficking, jury duty fees, DWI interlocking devices, enhanced penalties for fleeing from the police, using a child in the process of criminal activity, violent offender registry, and other criminal violations. Hopefully, this bill will get to the senate for their approval in the upcoming weeks. If this bill becomes law it will make our communities a safer place to live.

The big issue this week was the education bill **SB 727**. This bill is a behemoth dealing with many different issues in education. Educational Saving Accounts (similar to a voucher system), charter school in Boone County, increase in teacher pay with a minimum salary of \$40,000.00, which would be funded by the state for two years, with no guarantees of funding in the years following. It also did not address increased funding for tenured teachers, so the school districts would be responsible for funding the seasoned teachers' salaries increases to match the minimum salary increase. There was also some changes to homeschooling as well. The estimated cost of this bill is in the area of \$600,000,000 the first year.

Due to the disagreement from members of the house over issues in **SB 727**, there were some correction made on **HB 2287**, which dealt with virtual school issues. In **HB 2287** they kept transportation funding at least 40% before the voucher system could be funded and it fixed the definition of a home school. I feel the totality of both these bills will be harmful to our rural school districts in the future. Especially, since the teacher increase in pay will have to be funded from the state in the future, and if the state does not fund the increase our local schools will be held responsible for the increases. The most frustrating part of this process is that the changes were made late Wednesday evening and a forced vote on Thursday morning. This process does not give the citizens of the state time to become informed on critical issues that will affect the state of Missouri for years to come.

Last week, I had the opportunity to present **HJR 97** and **HB 2272** in committee, which addresses state agencies receiving revenues from the sale of Missouri's natural resources. During my time in the legislature I have learned that state agencies regularly harvest Missouri's natural resources off of state owed property and keep the revenues with in their department. I feel the funds for the sale of natural resources should be directed back to the county in which it was take. For instance one state agency received over \$4,700,000 in five years for the sale of natural resources from one county and put those funds into their account. This is a travesty, when a state agency takes that many natural resources out of a

county and takes the funds to Jefferson City. It was great to see several county commissioners, Missouri Teachers Association, Farm Bureau, and concerned citizens travel to Jefferson City to testify.

To all the valued citizens of Dent and Shannon Counties who attended the public meeting, provided information and/or expressed their opinions during the open comment period for MoDOT's plan to close Dent County Route 19 for the replacement of the Standing Rock Creek Bridge near Gladden: THANK YOU!

I want you to know the design team from Missouri Highway Department heard your concerns and looked at alternatives that could meet the needs of the community and achieve the goals of the project, without significant increases to the overall cost. After discussion, analysis and redesign, Dent County Route 19 is now expected to stay open through the replacement of the bridge.

Read about the new, phased construction plan that will keep traffic moving on Route 19 while the nearly 100-year-old truss bridge is replaced with a wider, longer, updated bridge: <https://www.modot.org/missouri-route-19-bridge-replacement-over-standing-rock-creek-dent-county>.

### **Legislation to Prevent Medicaid Funding Going to Abortion Providers Returns to the House**

This week, the Missouri Senate returned a House bill, **HB 2634**, which seeks to make it illegal for public funds, including Medicaid reimbursements, to support abortion facilities or their affiliates. It grants taxpayers and the Attorney General the right to take legal action to enforce these provisions. **House Bill 2634** would seek to simply codify that in statute and say that we are not going to allow abortion providers or their affiliates to be reimbursed through our state's Medicaid program. The bill also amends an existing statute, requiring MO HealthNet participants to obtain services only from qualified providers and empowering the Department of Social Services to revoke contracts with providers found unqualified due to specific offenses, such as intentional discrimination or support for eugenics. Additionally, the bill prohibits reimbursement to abortion facilities under the "Uninsured Women's Health Program".

The legislation, which was sent to the Missouri Senate in March, was passed out of that chamber this week after more than 11 hours of filibustering with changes, requiring the House to approve those changes in order to truly agree and pass the legislation, sending it to the Governor's desk.

### **Bills Approved by the House**

With just weeks until the end of the 2024 legislative session, Missouri lawmakers are working diligently on a wide variety of legislative proposals to address issues and concerns for Missourians. The House approved the 2024 state operating budget in the previous week, which is now being worked on by the Senate. Meanwhile, the House has continued moving legislation in an effort to vet the proposals in hopes of advancing it through the process in the days to come. The House officially passed one bill out of the chamber in a shortened week, due to the eclipse, but the body has given initial approval to more than a dozen others, including several legislative packages combining numerous pieces of legislation while continuing to advance measures out of committee.

### **Missouri House Approves HB 2719 to Boost Tourism with Dedicated Funding Mechanism**

The Missouri House of Representatives has signed off on legislation to reestablish the state's "Division of Tourism Supplemental Revenue Fund". **HB 2719** aims to establish a dedicated funding mechanism exclusively for the Division of Tourism within the Missouri Department of Economic Development. This fund is intended to support the Division's efforts in promoting tourism, marketing destinations, and bolstering the state's tourism industry.

Under this legislation, the revenue funds can solely be utilized for fulfilling the Division's duties and functions. The sources of funding include appropriations by the General Assembly and contributions from federal, private, or other entities.

Before any funds are allocated to the Supplemental Revenue Fund, the Division of Tourism is required to present a comprehensive promotional marketing strategy to the House of Representatives and Senate committees responsible for tourism matters. This strategy must cover various aspects such as targeted markets, duration of market plans, ensuing market strategies, and projections of investment returns. This process ensures transparency and accountability in the use of funds and strategic planning for tourism promotion.

**HB 2719** is a crucial step towards revitalizing our state's tourism industry. By reestablishing the Division of Tourism Supplemental Revenue Fund, we're providing the necessary resources to promote our state's attractions and boost economic growth in communities across Missouri. This bill ensures that our tourism efforts are adequately funded and strategically targeted, paving the way for increased visitor numbers and enhanced prosperity for our state. Tourism plays a vital role in our economy, creating jobs and generating revenue for local businesses. By establishing clear guidelines for the use of the Supplemental Revenue Fund and requiring strategic marketing plans, this bill ensures that taxpayer dollars are being invested wisely to maximize the impact of our tourism efforts. With a vote of 128-16, **HB 2719** now heads to the Senate for further consideration.

### **Safeguarding the Voting Process**

The Missouri House of Representatives this week gave initial approval to a resolution aimed at strengthening the state's electoral process and ensuring the integrity of our elections. **HJR 104** would amend the Constitution to enshrine key voting procedures and requirements, passed with a majority vote, underscoring the legislature's dedication to ensuring fair and transparent elections for all Missourians. Here's a breakdown of the key points:

- Only citizens of the United States would be entitled to vote in public elections.
- All elections must be conducted using paper ballots or any mechanical method prescribed by law. This aims to ensure transparency and prevent tampering.
- Each voter is entitled to only one vote for each issue or open seat being voted on in an election. This prevents multiple votes by a single individual.
- The candidate who receives the highest number of votes in a primary election for a party becomes the sole candidate for that party in the general election, unless removed or replaced by law. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes in the general election is declared the winner.
- Voting machines must be tested and certified as secure according to federal standards before each election in which they will be used. This is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the voting process.

This legislation aims to protect our democracy by embedding vital voting procedures in our state Constitution, affirming the importance of election integrity. It enhances public trust, prevents alternative voting systems like ranked choice voting, and underscores Missouri's dedication to fair elections. With just one more vote required, its passage by the Missouri House will mark a significant move towards ensuring transparent and secure elections for all citizens.

### **Combatting Opioid Trafficking**

The Missouri House of Representatives has also perfected **HB 2576**, a pivotal legislative move in the battle against drug trafficking, particularly concerning potent opioids such as fentanyl and carfentanil. This legislation aims to confront the escalating crisis associated with these substances by updating the classification of drug trafficking offenses related to fentanyl and carfentanil. Currently, the severity of these offenses is determined by the quantity of fentanyl involved, but the bill proposes revised thresholds for classifying felonies, aiming to better align with the risks posed by these highly potent opioids.

**HB 2576** proposes significant changes to the classification of first and second-degree trafficking offenses involving fentanyl. It introduces stricter penalties, with first-degree trafficking escalating to a class A felony for amounts exceeding 14 milligrams and second-degree trafficking becoming a class B felony for quantities over 14 milligrams. By

implementing these revisions, the legislation seeks to stem the illicit distribution of opioids and shield communities across Missouri from the dire consequences of opioid abuse and overdose.

This legislation marks a crucial stride in addressing the opioid crisis gripping Missouri, acknowledging it as a pressing epidemic that demands immediate action. With a surge in fatalities, particularly among the younger population, associated with potent opioids like fentanyl and carfentanil, strengthening penalties for trafficking in these substances sends a resounding message of commitment to safeguarding citizens and holding accountable those who profit from addiction's devastation. By reinforcing laws against opioid trafficking, we aim to save lives and foster safer communities. **HB 2576** now awaits one final vote in the House before heading to the Missouri Senate, where it is poised to further advance the state's efforts in combating drug trafficking and protecting our residents from the ravages of opioid addiction.

### **Protecting Access to Clinician-Administered Drugs**

**HB 2267**, a bill aimed at ensuring that people have access to essential clinician-administered medications without facing unnecessary hurdles, needs just one more vote in the Missouri House of Representatives to continue its legislative journey.

**HB 2267** is designed to protect patients' access to important drugs given directly by healthcare providers, like injections or infusions. It prohibits health insurance companies and pharmacy benefit managers from imposing penalties or restrictions on patients, providers, or pharmacies for using these medications, regardless of where they're sourced from. Additionally, the bill prevents discrimination against pharmacies participating in programs like 340B, which helps ensure access to affordable medications for underserved communities.

This legislation is crucial for several reasons. First, it helps maintain the viability of rural hospitals and federally qualified health centers by ensuring they can continue providing necessary medications without facing excessive costs. It also aims to keep healthcare dollars within Missouri by supporting local pharmacies and healthcare providers, rather than benefitting large corporations located elsewhere.

Overall, **HB 2267** prioritizes the well-being of Missouri residents by ensuring they can access vital medications without facing financial barriers. It's a significant step forward in improving healthcare access and affordability for all Missourians.

### **Supporting Small Businesses Affected by Shutdown Orders**

The Missouri House of Representatives has passed **HB 2874**, the "Protecting Missouri's Small Businesses Act," aimed at providing critical support to small businesses across the state facing economic losses due to shutdown orders imposed during emergencies.

Small businesses in our state have faced immense challenges due to these shutdown measures, enduring substantial financial strain as a result. With **HB 2874**, we acknowledge their sacrifices and strive to offer meaningful assistance to facilitate their recovery efforts. Recognizing the vital role small businesses play in Missouri's economy, this bill underscores our dedication to standing by them during times of adversity and ensuring they have the necessary support to thrive.

**HB 2874** includes several important provisions aimed at alleviating the burdens faced by small businesses. It mandates that local authorities consider the economic impact of shutdown orders, waives business license fees for the duration of closures or up to six months, provides property tax relief corresponding to the length of shutdowns, and requires tax beneficiaries to extend relief to affected tenants leasing properties.

This legislative victory represents a significant milestone in our collective efforts to support Missouri's small business community and foster broader economic recovery across our state.

### **Creating More Jobs in the Show-Me State**

Legislation perfected by the Missouri House of Representatives this week will help revitalize the state's economy and generate hundreds of new job opportunities in the Show-Me State.

**HB 1480**, or the "Missouri Advanced Manufacturing Recruitment Act," would leverage tax credits to incentivize the expansion of manufacturing in Missouri. The bill seeks to ensure the long-term economic prosperity of qualified manufacturing entities, thereby offering higher-quality employment opportunities to the citizens of Missouri.

**HB 1480** sets strict requirements for companies to qualify for significant tax credits, considering factors like program benefits, economic impact, company size and stability, and local economic conditions. Qualified manufacturing firms must submit investment plans of at least one billion dollars and meet performance criteria, with penalties for non-compliance. The bill also introduces a multi-year accountability system, requiring a twenty-five percent capital investment within three years to access full tax credits.

An amendment mandates that of 500 jobs created, 150 must go to Missouri residents. Another amendment gives preference to U.S.-owned companies relocating manufacturing operations back to the United States from overseas. In passing **HB 1480**, we will pave the way for a stronger, more vibrant Missouri economy. **HB 1480** isn't just about tax credits; it's about investing in Missouri's future. This legislation will not only create jobs but also attract substantial investment, leading to a ripple effect of prosperity across the state.

With **HB 1480**, we're not just opening doors; we're building bridges and connecting Missourians with new opportunities and brighter futures. By incentivizing manufacturing expansion, we're investing in the livelihoods of Missourians and fostering job growth statewide that will have a lasting impact for generations to come.

### **Protecting the State's Water Resources**

The Missouri House of Representatives has given initial approval to a legislative measure that seeks to protect one of the state's most vital resources: water. **HB 2153** seeks to regulate the exportation of water from the state by limiting or eliminating the shipping of water out of the state, ensuring its availability for residents and businesses within Missouri. Under the proposed legislation, it would be unlawful for any entity to withdraw water for exportation out of the state without obtaining a water export permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources. The bill outlines a comprehensive process for permit issuance, including rigorous review by the Department and approval by the Clean Water Commission. Water is the state's most valuable resource, second only to land. While acknowledging potential exceptions, our priority is to retain water within Missouri to meet the needs of our communities. The passage of **HB 2153** is a significant step towards safeguarding our state's water resources, especially in light of increasing water scarcity in neighboring states. As Missouri remains a water-rich state, the passage of **HB 2153** signifies a commitment to striking a balance between utilization and conservation of water resources, taking into account both local needs and broader regional concerns.

### **Combating School Bullying**

In addressing the pressing issue of school bullying, I'm proud to share that the Missouri House of Representatives has given the initial green light to **HB 1715**, also known as the "Missouri Childhood Hero Act". This legislative move marks a major stride toward safeguarding the safety and welfare of students statewide.

**HB 1715** brings forth comprehensive measures and explicit policies aimed at combatting bullying in schools. It encompasses various aspects such as categorizing violent acts as bullying, revising disciplinary policies to ensure fairness for victims, strengthening reporting obligations, providing training for school personnel, and granting legal protections for those who intervene and educational institutions. Additionally, an amendment has been incorporated to extend assistance to both the bully and the victim, along with clarifying immunity provisions.

This legislation is paramount in prioritizing the security and dignity of our students. By instituting transparent policies and support frameworks, we empower educational institutions to effectively tackle and prevent bullying, thereby fostering a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students.

**HB 1715** exemplifies our commitment to safeguarding our students and cultivating a culture of respect and compassion within our schools. Through collaborative efforts, we can make meaningful progress in eradicating bullying and ensuring every child feels secure and supported. The approval of **HB 1715** marks a significant triumph in the ongoing battle against school bullying in Missouri. Backed by strong bipartisan support and a dedication to prioritizing student well-being, this

legislation lays the groundwork for proactive and impactful measures to cultivate safer educational environments. With just one more vote before sending this to the Missouri Senate, we remain hopeful for its continued success in further deliberations.

### **Advancing Justice and Modernizing Civil Proceedings**

The Missouri House of Representatives this week perfected **HB 2064**, a comprehensive legislative package designed to reform civil proceedings throughout our state. This bill covers a broad spectrum of areas within civil law, including workers' compensation, estate planning, and the establishment of mental health courts.

One major highlight of **HB 2064** is the inclusion of mental health courts as part of treatment court divisions. These specialized courts offer an alternative approach to addressing criminal offenses related to mental health disorders, emphasizing rehabilitation and reducing recidivism.

In addition to mental health courts, **HB 2064** introduces various modifications to civil proceedings. These include waiving charges for certain certificates, amending workers' compensation laws, establishing alternative dispute resolution processes, and implementing new provisions such as "Bentley and Mason's Law" and the "Missouri Electronic Wills and Electronic Estate Planning Documents Act."

The passage of **HB 2064** reflects Missouri's commitment to modernizing its legal framework to better serve its citizens. By addressing a wide range of civil proceedings, the bill aims to streamline processes, enhance protections, and promote justice throughout the state.

The bill now requires one final vote in the House before moving forward to the Senate for further consideration. Its provisions will undergo evaluation to ensure their potential impact aligns with the needs and values of our state's legal system.

### **Bringing Reform to Judicial Proceedings and Processes**

The Missouri House of Representatives also gave approval to **HB 1886**, a comprehensive legislative measure aimed at reforming various aspects of judicial proceedings and related matters.

**HB 1886** encompasses a multifaceted approach to legal reform, addressing critical issues such as the dissolution of limited liability companies (LLCs), alternative dispute resolution processes, electronic estate planning, guardianship proceedings, juror compensation, and more.

By expanding the circumstances under which LLCs may be dissolved and establishing provisions for alternative dispute resolution, we are empowering businesses and individuals with more efficient and equitable legal mechanisms.

Additionally, the establishment of the Missouri Electronic Wills and Estate Planning Documents Act modernizes estate planning practices, ensuring greater accessibility and convenience for Missourians. **HB 1886** also includes provisions related to guardianship proceedings, court fees, interstate depositions and discovery, public expression protection, and amendments to criminal offenses, among others.

The bill reflects the Missouri House's commitment to enacting meaningful reforms that benefit the citizens of the state. **HB 1886** is a significant step forward in advancing judicial reform in Missouri. This comprehensive legislation addresses critical areas of concern while prioritizing the rights and interests of all stakeholders.

The bill needs just one final vote in the House before advancing to the Senate.

### **Providing Tax Incentives for Nuclear Security Enterprise in Kansas City**

**HB 2710**, a bill aimed at bolstering both security measures and economic growth in Kansas City, now awaits one final vote in the Missouri House has passed. This bill authorizes a state and local sales tax exemption for essential items required for the construction of a nuclear security enterprise in Kansas City. The exemption encompasses tangible personal property, building materials, equipment, fixtures, manufactured goods, machinery, and parts crucial for the construction process. The bill reflects a concerted effort to fortify the region's security capabilities while stimulating economic activity through the establishment of the nuclear security enterprise.

**HB 2710** represents a strategic investment in our state's security infrastructure, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of safeguarding our nation's interests. Moreover, the economic benefits stemming from the construction and operation of the nuclear security enterprise will create numerous opportunities for growth and prosperity in our communities.

**HB 2710** shows the House's proactive efforts and commitment to both security and economic prosperity in Missouri. By providing tax incentives for the construction of the nuclear security enterprise, we are not only strengthening our state's defense capabilities but also laying the groundwork for long-term economic growth.

The bill now requires one final vote in the House before moving forward to the Senate for further consideration. As Missouri continues to prioritize security and economic development initiatives, **HB 2710** signifies the state's proactive approach in addressing critical challenges and seizing opportunities for progress.

### **Ensuring Reliable Energy Transition**

The Missouri House of Representatives has given the first round of approval to **HB 1753**, a crucial piece of legislation aimed at ensuring the smooth transition of the state's energy sector while safeguarding reliable electricity supply.

**HB 1753** mandates that before the closure of existing electric generating power plants, electric corporations in Missouri must certify that they have secured and placed on the electric grid an equal or greater amount of replacement reliable electric generation. Additionally, the bill requires the full operationalization of adequate transmission infrastructure necessary to interconnect the new generation to the state's electric grid.

This legislation serves as a vital consumer protection bill, and is crucial for ensuring that Missouri's energy transition is not only environmentally sustainable but also maintains the reliability of our power grid. By requiring adequate replacement generation and transmission infrastructure, we are securing a brighter energy future for all Missourians.

As we move towards renewable energy sources, it's essential to ensure that we do not compromise the stability of our power grid. This legislation strikes the right balance by prioritizing reliability while promoting cleaner energy alternatives.

### **Missouri Allocates \$5 Million in First Responder Equipment Grants**

Missouri's Department of Public Safety has allocated \$5 million in grants to enhance equipment for first responders in class three counties. The funds will support law enforcement, fire service, and EMS providers, facilitating upgrades such as patrol vehicles, body cameras, firefighter gear, ambulances, and emergency communication devices.

Emphasizing the importance of aiding first responders in tackling emergencies, Sandy Karsten, Director of the Missouri Department of Public Safety, highlighted the significance of modern tools for effective communication and operation.

The grants, distributed among 35 fire service agencies, 18 EMS providers, and 17 law enforcement agencies, cater to specific equipment needs in each category. This funding initiative is part of Missouri's utilization of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, governed by Missouri **House Bill 20**.

Recipients are obliged to provide a 50% local match, potentially retroactive to March 2020, which can be covered using local ARPA grant funds.

I have enjoyed each and every visit to my office week; please feel free to stop by in you are in Jefferson City.

Rep. Don Mayhew and I discussing HB 2700, a criminal proceedings bill.



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Visitors from Crawford County (Impact 100)





County Commissioners visited the Capitol to testify at a hearing on **HJR 97** and **HB 2272**



I enjoyed my visit with Viburnum FFA group

To see information about any of the legislation in this report go to <https://house.mo.gov/LegislationSP.aspx>

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