Sept. 22, 1954

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was Sept. 22, 1954, the day the riots at the Missouri State Penitentiary began.

Similar riots had taken place throughout the country, in both 1953 and ‘54. Because of this, the [Missouri State Highway Patrol](https://www.mshp.dps.missouri.gov/MSHPWeb/Root/index.html) had already started training for something that could happen at MSP.

It started around 6:30 in the evening, when two offenders pretended to be sick, overpowered two corrections officers, stole their keys and started releasing others.

Law enforcement from all over the state was called in to help the Patrol, with some 2,500 rioters loose inside prison walls.

The riot continued throughout the night. It’s worth noting no one escaped the prison.

The following day, then-Gov. Phil Donnelly asked for a special session. This extra session would not start until Feb. 27, 1956. It would end exactly two months later. Lawmakers discussed moving funds from the Second State Building Fund to the Corrections budget. The total price tag was just above $14 million, and was in addition to the standard budget allotment for MSP.

It’s not as well-known, but a second riot would break out at MSP just one month after the infamous riot happened.

September 22, 1954, the date marking start of the riot at Missouri State Penitentiary, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Sources: [MSP riot](https://www.missouripentours.com/1954-riot), *Journal of the Missouri Senate*)