

2023 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

STATE SENATOR LINCOLN HOUGH



Photo credit: Jym Wilson, Springfield Daily Citizen

It is an honor to continue to serve the people of the 30th Senatorial District. On Jan. 4, 2023, I was sworn in for a second term in the Missouri Senate. I am proud of what my team and I have accomplished over the past several years. My priorities remain the same, and my dedication resolute, as I continue to build on these successes in the years to come.

At the start of the 2023 legislative session, I was chosen to lead the Missouri Senate Appropriations Committee as its chairman. This committee is tasked with writing the state's operating budget for each fiscal year. As Appropriations chair, I led the effort to increase education and mental health care opportunities, maintain library funding and promote career investments. I'm extremely excited about the work the committee was able to accomplish. It is an honor and a true privilege to lead such a hard-working group of people and assist in overseeing our state's direction.

I want to thank everyone for supporting and advising me on issues they believe are critical not only to Springfield, but to all of Missouri. 2023 has been a note for the future, a commitment of hope. The investments we make can change lives for the better, and it's important that we protect the progress we've made and continue to push forward. I am looking forward to tackling the challenges that will face us in the coming year and making Missouri a better place to live, work and raise a family.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "L. Hough", on a dark blue background.



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[Senate.mo.gov/Hough](https://senate.mo.gov/Hough)



WORKING FOR A BETTER MISSOURI

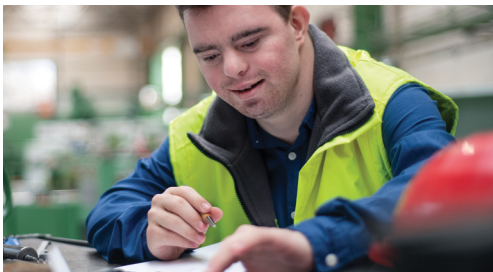
SUPPORTING OUR FIRST RESPONDERS

One of the pieces of legislation I sponsored this session, **Senate Bill 24**, implements a fund specifically designed to help some of our most essential workers. Also known as the First Responders Mental Health Initiative Act, this will widen the current Critical Illness Fund and address post-traumatic stress disorder. This legislation also continues to build on the success of the Critical Illness Pool for Firefighters with cancer.

Every day, our front-line first responders go beyond the call of duty and are exposed to mentally straining events. I feel it is our duty to support those who put their lives on the line for all of us. I'm proud to have our first responders' backs, and I'll continue to fight to improve their wellbeing.



DISABILITY SERVICES



In our community, we have a strong network of providers who help people with intellectual or developmental disabilities lead full and productive lives. These services are funded in partnership with local tax dollars, along with state and deferral programs. As your state senator, I will continue working to support and enhance all of these important services supporting some of the most vulnerable in our community and across the state.

MENTAL HEALTH



We have made great strides for mental health providers across the state, connecting our state's resources across the broad spectrum of hospitals, law enforcement and mental health providers, and improving cooperation between these entities to get people into treatment as quickly as possible. I will continue to make mental health a priority by investing in life-changing and life-saving programs and services.

NEW CRISIS LIFELINE



Behavioral health awareness, especially as it relates to suicide, is a top concern of many Missourians. Financial resources, education and awareness are three major components of our plan to bring this health crisis into the light. The Missouri General Assembly included more than \$30 million in the Fiscal Year 2023 state operating budget to help Missouri launch the new Missouri Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, 988. The number went live nationwide in 2022, and providers across the state have already reported a 50% increase in call volume over the former 800 number.

We also enacted a law requiring this new crisis lifeline number to be printed on student IDs for those in elementary, secondary and higher education. Making students across the state aware that help is available will save lives. We are also continuing to build on the commitment to draw awareness to mental health. These two changes, however, will not solve all our problems. Continued investments into access to care, especially in our rural areas, is vital. I look forward to continuing my support of programs that help everyone gain access to care and resources that provide education and awareness into our current behavioral health crisis.

If you or someone you know is battling depression or having suicidal thoughts, reach out, whether it's to friends, family or by calling 988. There are a lot of great people in our state who want to help.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE
MISSOURI

LOWER TAXES

Senate Bills 3 & 5 made several changes to our state's income tax laws, and nearly all Missouri filers benefited from this measure in 2023. The largest tax cut in our state's history, we reduced taxes by \$1 billion. Signed by the governor in 2022, this law eliminated the bottom income tax bracket and allows Missouri taxpayers to earn their first \$1,000 of income tax free. It also reduced the top individual income tax rate from 5.3% to 4.95% in 2023, with another reduction possible in 2024. Taxpayer savings will continue to increase in future years when net general revenue increases by \$200 million, adjusted for inflation. Missourians can keep more of their hard-earned dollars where they belong: in their pockets. In addition to easing the burden of high inflation, it creates a blueprint that will make Missouri more competitive for decades to come.

INTERNET ACCESS



One of my priority measures this session, **Senate Bill 25**, exempts 100% of any federal grant money received by a Missouri taxpayer for the purpose of providing or expanding access to broadband internet to underserved areas of the state, to the extent such grant money is included in the taxpayer's federal adjusted income. Simply put, it allows the use of federal grant money to expand broadband coverage throughout the most rural parts of our state without having to pay state taxes on the money. In my opinion, there is no reason for those enrolling in service to their community to pay taxes on grant money. This only hinders the purpose of the grants and discourages people from applying for available funds. Now we can help more Missourians get the access they need to high-speed Internet and keep our state moving forward.

KEEPING OUR STATE MOVING FORWARD

MUCH-NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS TO TRANSPORTATION



Our largest investment this session accompanied the governor's continued effort to revitalize our infrastructure, building on our bridges program and adding \$100 million for low-traffic and smaller roads across our state. I share the vision he created in his State of the State: "To those who say we can't afford it, I say

we can't afford not to. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and the time is now." The time is now, and by investing \$2.8 billion into I-70, we can ensure its longevity throughout the next several decades.

Interstate 70 connects Missourians and businesses to the rest of the country. If we want to continue to attract new businesses and economic partners, we must upgrade this roadway. I was also able to get the ball rolling on much-needed and long-overdue improvements to Interstate 44, which runs through Springfield. The next step will be an environmental impact study, which is a critical first step toward improvements to this highway.



BUILDING ON FAST TRACK SUCCESS



To attract and retain businesses, we must have a skilled and trained workforce. This is offered through our trade schools, community colleges and universities. In addition, financial aid programs, such as the Fast Track Work Incentive Grant, can provide adults with the education and skills they need to enter the workforce in fields that are in high demand. I

remain committed to doing all I can for education in Missouri and will keep pushing to fund training programs, certifications and apprenticeships, while also supporting the needs of traditional higher education.

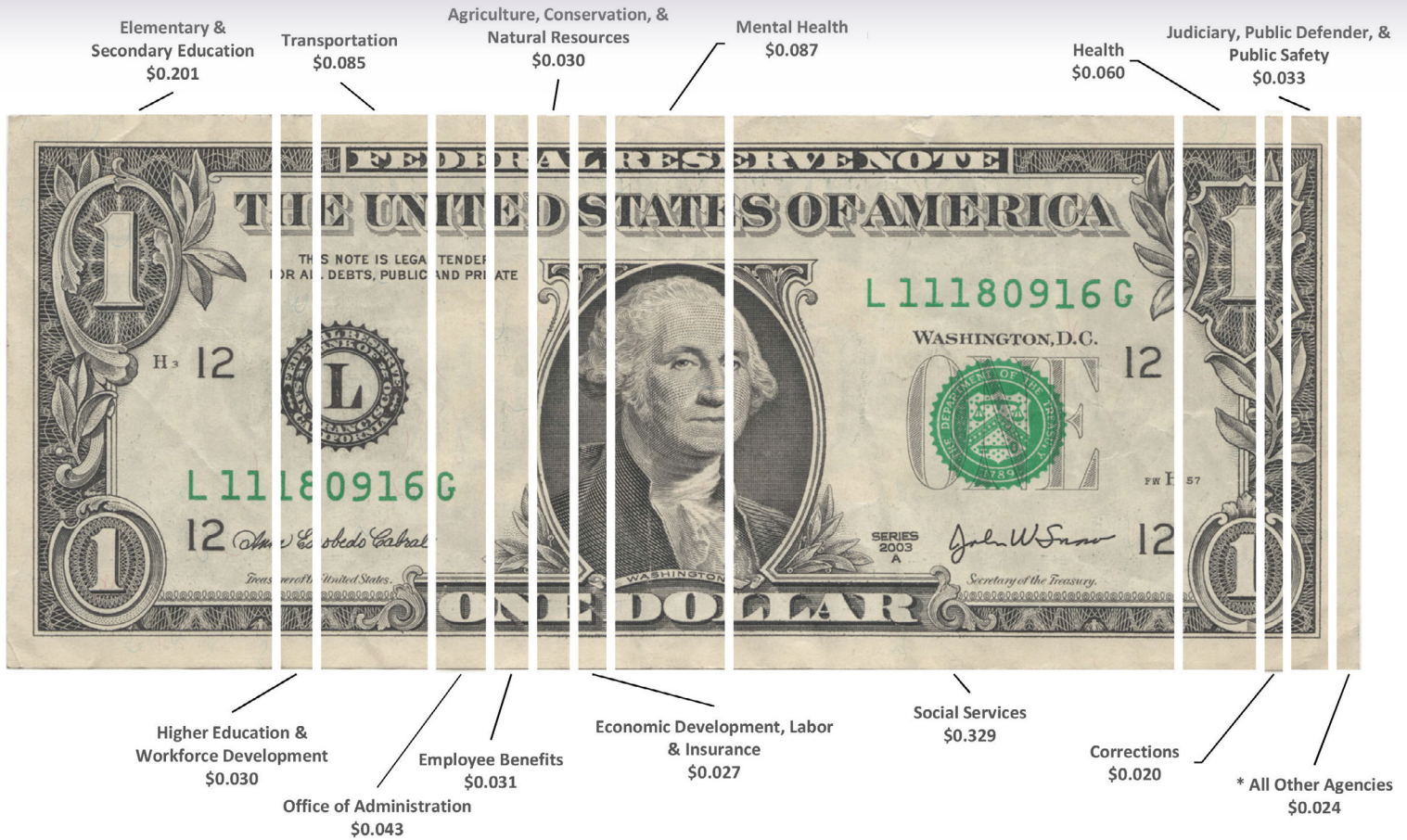
WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Learn more about these bills or any other legislation passed by the General Assembly by visiting www.senate.mo.gov/bts_web/legislation or by scanning the QR code at right. You can view bill summaries, fiscal notes, committee testimony and more.



FISCAL YEAR 2024 STATE OPERATING BUDGET

\$48.579 BILLION: A BALANCED BUDGET



* Includes: Revenue, National Guard, Elected Officials, General Assembly and Statewide Real Estate

This budget addresses big issues that concern Missourians. You are talking about the roads you drive on, the jobs you have and the jobs you want, caring for the aging generations and providing education and a future for the children of Missouri. This budget focuses on tackling these issues right now, primarily through one-time capital investments. It also gives Missourians a better footing to weather and overcome whatever economic challenges are yet to come. I want Missouri families to feel secure and confident that their state government works for them.

This budget uses the surplus funding available from the federal government and the monies entrusted to us by the people of Missouri to aggressively improve our state while remaining fiscally responsible with an eye on the future. It allows for the recruitment, development and retention of teachers as well as expanding education



opportunities to the most vulnerable families. Veterans and seniors will continue to receive the care and support services that are needed, and our Adult Areas on Aging will continue to receive and extend support to seniors across the state.



"While I worked on the budget, I kept in mind the state's great motto: 'The welfare of the people shall be the supreme law.' I'm proud to have fought tirelessly to ensure that the wellbeing of both my constituents and those across Missouri is the primary goal of the state, and that we only tax what is needed. We have a responsibility to take care of those who cannot care for themselves, while providing a low-tax cost of living for everyone."

— Senator Lincoln Hough