

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

MISSOURI STATE SENATOR
RUSTY BLACK

Serving Missouri's 12th Senatorial District



2025





2025 Legislative Report

Legislative Priorities



The 2025 regular legislative session concluded on May 16, with the Missouri General Assembly adjourning sine die after Truly Agreeing and Finally Passing approximately 50 bills, not including appropriations bills. The governor then had until July 14 to sign or veto legislation passed during the session. The only vetoes this year were in the form of line-item vetoes to some of the appropriations measures, none of which were overridden during the annual veto session, which was held in September.

Several key legislative priorities were at the forefront this session:

- Tax reform:** We are committed to letting Missourians keep more of their hard-earned money. Our focus was on reducing the tax burden, simplifying the tax code and making Missouri more competitive for businesses and families.
- Amendment 3 and pro-life issues:** Protecting the sanctity of life remains a cornerstone of our caucus's values. Legislation passed addressing challenges arising from Amendment 3 and ensuring Missouri remains a strong pro-life state.
- Initiative petition reform:** The integrity of our democratic process is essential. We worked to reform the initiative petition system to prevent out-of-state interests from abusing it while preserving it as a tool for grassroots engagement. Voters will see these last two measures on the ballot.

Senate Committee Assignments

This year, I served as chair of the Local Government, Elections and Pensions Committee, which oversees legislation related to county governments, township organizations and political subdivisions. Additionally, this committee considers bills concerning election law, retirement and pension systems.

In addition to this role, I served as vice chair of Appropriations, where I helped shape the state's budget and oversaw distribution of public funds. I also served as vice chair of Fiscal Oversight, a committee responsible for reviewing legislation that requires new appropriations or expenditures exceeding \$250,000. Through these roles, I believe I played a critical part in ensuring responsible state spending, prioritizing fiscal discipline and crafting a conservative budget that wisely allocates our resources.

Ahead of the next regular legislative session, I have been named as chairman of the Missouri Senate Appropriations Committee, a task I take seriously. We have a great team of people who help craft our state's spending blueprint, and I look forward to working with them on the next state budget.



Thank you for your interest in state government. You can learn more about the legislation passed during the First Regular Session of the 103rd General Assembly by scanning the QR code to the right or visiting senate.mo.gov.



The Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee addressed crime in our major cities and decided the state should take control of the St. Louis City Police Department. The goal is to provide law enforcement with the tools they need to enhance public safety. Missourians deserve safe communities, and the Legislature is committed to prioritizing legislation that combats violent crime, strengthens law enforcement and ensures justice for victims.

Meanwhile, the Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy and the Environment Committee worked on utility reform to protect consumers from unfair costs. The focus was on reducing outdated regulations that drive up utility bills, lead to unreliable services and contribute to reckless energy policies. By ensuring fair tax treatment and transparent regulations, we can modernize infrastructure, reduce service disruptions and blackouts, and prevent costly emergency repairs.

I remain committed to fiscal responsibility, public safety and policies that protect Missouri families and taxpayers. I look forward to making a meaningful impact on our state.

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Legislative Successes

House Bill 147 strengthens the Missouri Sheriffs' Retirement Fund to ensure sheriffs receive the benefits they've earned. It caps service of process fees at \$75,000 per county, with excess going to the General Revenue Fund. The bill also updates LAGERS eligibility rules, adjusts cost-of-living increases to match the federal Consumer Price Index, and bans public retirement systems from investing in restricted entities, including those on federal sanctions lists. It also removes the requirement for actuaries to calculate employer contributions as a fixed payroll percentage. I was proud to handle HB 147 in the Senate. I believe these reforms modernize retirement systems and better support our rural sheriffs.

Senate Bills 49 & 118 allows for school districts to employ or accept chaplains as volunteers. I believe that educators, counselors and administrative staff do a good job of educating our youth. However, rules and regulations have burdened our teachers, not allowing them an adequate amount of time with students. Allowing a school district to employ a chaplain or have one as a volunteer would benefit students and teachers, and provide schools with additional resources to address students' emotional and spiritual needs. School boards wouldn't need to adopt this policy until March 1, 2026.

In late June, the governor officially signed the Fiscal Year 2026 state operating and capital improvement budget bills, marking a significant investment in Missouri priorities for the coming year.

Where the Money Goes

1	Judiciary & Public Defender - \$399,918,781
2	Office of Administration - \$767,270,370
3	Corrections - \$1,043,613,331
4	Public Safety - \$1,232,815,948
5	Higher Education & Workforce Development - \$1,419,907,258
6	All Other Agencies (Includes Revenue, National Guard, Elected Officials, General Assembly and Statewide Real Estate) - \$1,487,487,462
7	Agriculture, Conservation & Natural Resources - \$1,544,126,849
8	Employee Benefits - \$1,708,572,983
9	Health & Senior Services - \$2,337,806,425
10	Economic Development, Labor & Insurance - \$2,664,508,332
11	Transportation - \$3,564,927,863
12	Mental Health - \$4,376,271,419
13	Elementary & Secondary Education - \$8,630,865,463
14	Social Services - \$16,994,175,469



Among the key highlights of this budget is a strong focus on enhancing public safety across the state. The budget allocates \$10 million to the Blue Shield Program, which will provide critical funding to assist local communities in meeting their equipment and training needs to better protect citizens and law enforcement officers alike.

Additionally, \$7 million has been designated for a groundbreaking initiative to conduct fentanyl testing in wastewater systems at schools, a proactive measure to address the fentanyl crisis and protect Missouri's youth. The budget also includes \$2 million to support the Missouri Sheriff's Retirement System, a commitment to those who have dedicated their careers to keeping communities safe.

In education, the FY 2026 budget fully funds the state's Foundation Formula, ensuring stable and adequate resources for Missouri's public schools. Furthermore, it provides \$376.6 million to cover the state's full reimbursement of transportation costs to school districts, including an additional \$15 million in new funding. Another key investment is \$33.4 million to guarantee that all teachers in Missouri receive at least the statutory minimum salary, which will help with attracting and retaining quality educators.

Looking ahead, preliminary revenue projections for FY 2027 show that Missouri's revenues are expected to remain consistent with FY 2026.



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