



CAPITOL REPORT

DALE WRIGHT

DISTRICT 116
MISSOURI HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES



COMMITTEES

January 20, 2022

*CONSENT & HOUSE PROCEDURES
*CORRECTIONS AND
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
*HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH
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Dear Friends,

Governor Parson addresses the General Assembly for the Annual State of the State Address

Members of the Missouri General Assembly gathered in the Missouri House of Representatives Chamber this past Wednesday afternoon to listen to the annual State of the State Address delivered by Governor Mike Parson. The Governor used the address to deliver a message to the people of Missouri that the state “is strong today and will be even stronger tomorrow.”

His speech focused on budget priorities and American Rescue Plan Act spending goals for 2022 including workforce and education, infrastructure, agriculture, community development, health care, and public safety.

He said, "With a historic budget surplus and federal dollars coming to our state, we want to build on our past momentum to capture even greater opportunities for the future of Missourians. When other states will be filling spending gaps and budget shortfalls, we will be making investments in the future, because in Missouri, we took a common sense approach to the pandemic, never shutdown businesses, and have always had a conservative and balanced budget."

- **Workforce and Education**

During his speech, the Governor called for the legislators to make permanent the Missouri Fast Track program, budget \$31 million for colleges and universities through MoExcells and \$20 million for the state's 57 area career centers. Governor Parson proposed multiple investments in K-12 education, including fully funding the Foundation Formula and raising starting pay for Missouri teachers to \$38,000 per year. He also recommended spending \$600 million in higher education investments that will generate over \$1.1 billion in economic impact for the state. He also plans programs that will strengthen communities' assets, and bolster workforce development programs throughout the state.

- **Infrastructure**

Governor Parson called for major investments in infrastructure, including \$75 million for the Transportation Cost-Share program, established by his administration in 2019, \$100 million for low-volume roads across the state, and \$400 million for drinking water, wastewater, and storm water systems. Additionally, He called for \$400 million be

invested on broadband expansion projects statewide which will be the single largest broadband investment in state history. This proposal would connect 75,000 households to the internet, expand access to rural areas and underserved urban areas, and update and expand statewide wireless networks.

- **Agriculture**

During his speech, Governor Parson reminded the General Assembly of the continued need to support Missouri agriculture, our number one economic driver, bringing in \$94 billion to the state. He also called for \$10 million to expand agriculture innovation and workforce programs.

- **Community Development**

Governor Parson asked legislators to make meaningful long-term investments in local communities by allocating \$250 million for a statewide revitalization program. With local matching funds, the competitive grant program will encourage strategic local investments to revitalize communities and spur local economic recovery and growth. To expand tourism, and drive small business growth and job creation, the Governor proposed investing \$69 million to begin construction of the Rock Island Trail, which will become the largest circular rail-to-trail network in the United States.

- **Health Care**

To strengthen health care networks across the state, the Governor proposed \$34 million to increase telehealth and telemedicine services in rural communities and to construct a new multi-agency health lab to increase cross-collaboration for safer, healthier Missourians. He also called for doubling capacity at Missouri's six Autism Centers to help more families navigate the challenges of diagnosing and treating autism as well as reduce wait times for families needing services.

- **Public Safety**

During his speech, Governor Parson expressed his continued support for Missouri's law enforcement officers. He proposed investing \$11 million to upgrade Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) academies and provide more scholarships for law enforcement officers to receive POST certification and put more officers on the streets.

These investments will aid recruitment and retention efforts statewide and help keep communities safer. Additionally, he asked the General Assembly to invest nearly \$140 million in certain community health centers across the state for vital capital improvements to help meet the increased demand for mental health and substance use disorder services.

- **Legislative Priorities**

Governor Parson called on the members of the House and Senate to establish a Cash Operating Expense Fund that sets aside 2.5 percent of general revenue to mitigate budget cuts and provide greater flexibility during emergencies and dips in revenue.

Governor concluded his address by emphasizing that we look to the future and not dwell in the past and we should find solutions instead of focusing on problems. He reminded us if we stand

together instead of apart we can accomplish anything and that Missouri is strong today and will be even stronger tomorrow.

Missouri House Approves Congressional Redistricting Bill (HB 2117)

The members of the Missouri House approved and sent legislation to the Senate that will establish new boundaries for Missouri's eight congressional districts. The House approved the congressional redistricting plan (HB 2117) this past Wednesday morning by a vote of 86-67.

The chair of the House Special Committee on Redistricting, who sponsored the bill, said the map approved by his committee and the House of Representatives was created with input from legislators representing their constituents, public testimony from citizens across the state of Missouri, and from the 2020 census data. He stressed that the map contains compact and contiguous districts as required by the constitution while also keeping communities of interest and like-mindedness together.

Data from the Census and the input of Missourians from all around the state was used to create the fairest map and bill possible. The map keeps communities of interest intact, abides by our constitution, and provides the best representation of voters in Missouri that could be achieved.

With the approval of the House, the bill now moves to the Senate for consideration. The Senate will now go through the same process the House undertook, which means changes to the map can be expected.

Show Me Strong Recovery Task Force Report Unveiled

This week lawmakers received the final report of a task force charged with making recommendations to support small businesses across the state. The report issued by the Show Me Strong Recovery Task Force provides potential solutions related to workforce, supply chain, access to resources, broadband, and support for minority- and women-owned businesses.

Formed by an executive order issued by Governor Parson, the task force began its work last year to study and develop recommendations on ways to support Missouri small businesses, including those that are minority- and women-owned. The group conducted a seven-city listening tour and worked closely with the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on small businesses across Missouri.

The analysis confirmed that businesses in some industries, such as hospitality and retail, were particularly negatively affected by the pandemic, and businesses across all sectors are experiencing ongoing difficulties with hiring, supply chain issues, and workforce challenges. In response, the task force provided recommendations to help alleviate some of the issues that were identified.

Some of the group's recommendations are:

- Improve childcare availability and affordability to aid working families,
- Expand and promote hospitality industry apprenticeships,
- Update and promote Missouri's Fast Track program,

- Streamline small business interaction with state agencies by creating a "One-Stop Shop" business portal, and
- Promote and enhance existing state programs and services to support small, women-, and minority-owned businesses.

The full report is available online at <https://ded2.mo.gov/show-me-strong-recovery-task-force>.

As our state's economy has recovered, it's important to continue to support our small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy.

My best to all of you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. L. ...", written in a cursive style.