



# CAPITOL REPORT

## DALE WRIGHT

DISTRICT 116  
MISSOURI HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES



### COMMITTEES

May 16, 2022

\*CONSENT & HOUSE PROCEDURES  
\*CORRECTIONS AND  
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS  
\*HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH  
\*PENSIONS



Dear Friends,

### **Missouri House Wraps Up 2022 Legislative Session**

After nearly five months of hard work and numerous negotiations and compromises, the General Assembly wrapped up the 2022 legislative session with a long list of substantive policy wins for Missouri families, Missouri business and St. Francois County! After months of discussion, the House and Senate also reached a final agreement on a new map for Missouri's congressional districts that will maintain Missouri's current congressional split with 6 Republicans and 2 Democrats. **And, more importantly, St. Francois County will remain in the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District under the leadership of our U.S. Congressman Jason Smith! A definite win for our district!**

In total, the House and Senate reached final agreement on nearly 60 bills and sent them to the governor for his approval. Legislators addressed issues such as tax relief for Missouri taxpayers, enhanced transparency and integrity for Missouri's elections process, expanded educational opportunities for Missouri young people, safeguards for the rights of Missouri's landowners, and stronger protections for victims of sex trafficking and sexual assault. During our time in Jefferson City, legislators also approved a state operating budget that makes record investments in education, infrastructure and assistance for Missouri's most vulnerable citizens.

The General Assembly officially adjourned on Friday, May 13, which concluded the portion of the legislative session when bills can be passed. The Governor will now have the opportunity to act on the various bills sent to him. He has the option to sign bills into law or veto legislation he

finds problematic. The legislature will return in September for an annual Veto Session in which members could potentially override any vetoes made by Governor Mike Parson.

### **Priority Bills Passed During the 2022 Session Include:**

**Tax Relief for Missouri Taxpayers - HB 2090** will provide substantive tax relief in the form of a one-time economic recovery tax credit for Missouri residents who paid personal income tax in the state for 2021. The plan caps the total amount of non-refundable tax credits issued at \$500 million and allows anyone filing an individual Missouri personal income tax return to receive a credit equal to their tax liability up to \$500. Married couples filing jointly would receive up to a \$1,000 credit. The credits are limited to taxpayers earning \$150,000 or less for an individual, or \$300,000 or less for a married couple.

**Election Integrity - HB 1878** contains a number of provisions designed to ensure safe, secure elections with timely, accurate results. The bill will require Missourians to present a photo ID when they go to vote, but will also allow people without a photo ID to cast a provisional ballot. In order for the provisional ballot to be counted, election officials would have to verify the voter's signature based on voter records, or the voter would need to return later that day with a valid form of identification. The bill also requires the use of hand-marked paper ballots rather than electronic voting machines, mandates the use of air-gapped election equipment that prevent the possibility of electronic manipulation, authorizes the Secretary of State to audit election results, and requires all election authorities or political subdivisions to have cybersecurity reviews. The bill also allows no-excuse absentee voting up to two weeks prior to the date of an election, bans private donations to fund elections, and eliminates the Presidential Preference Primary and establishes Missouri as a caucus state.

**Congressional Redistricting - HB 2909** will establish new boundaries for Missouri's eight congressional districts. The map approved by the General Assembly was created with input from legislators representing their constituents, public testimony from citizens across the state of Missouri, and 2020 census data. The map contains compact and contiguous districts as required by the constitution while also keeping communities of interest and like-mindedness together. Supporters say it maintains Missouri's current congressional split with 6 Republicans and 2 Democrats. **The final map approved by the General Assembly can be viewed at the following link: <https://house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills221/maps/Map.5799H.02P.pdf>**

**Protecting Property Rights - HB 2005** is designed to protect the property rights of Missouri farmers, ranchers, and landowners. The bill would protect property owners from the misuse of eminent domain when companies want to build high voltage electrical transmission lines across the state. The bill ensures such projects crossing Missouri must have a proportional public benefit for Missourians. It makes certain that landowners will be fairly compensated for their land by requiring 150% compensation for farmland involuntarily taken by eminent domain for high voltage power lines. It also specifies that if the electric company does not obtain the financial commitments to complete the project within seven years, the land must be returned to the original owner. Additionally, it ensures the interests of farmers are represented in eminent domain proceedings by requiring one of the court-appointed appraisers to be a local farmer.



**I had the privilege of meeting with Representatives of the MO Cattlemen's Association.  
It was important to pass Legislation Passed to Take Care  
of our Farmers and their Land**

**Promoting Missouri Agriculture - HB 1720** will renew key programs and create new ones to support and promote agriculture in the state. The bill would extend existing credits available under the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority, which has supported projects in 103 counties that have generated direct and indirect benefits of more than \$260 million since 2000. The bill also extends the Rolling Stock Tax Credit and the Wood Energy Tax Credit. The bill also expands the Family Farm Livestock Loan Program so that more Missouri farmers will qualify. Additionally, it creates the Ethanol Retailers Incentive, as well as a biodiesel tax credit for retail dealers selling a biodiesel blend and a credit for Missouri biodiesel producers. It also creates an Urban Farms Tax Credit and a specialty agricultural crops loan program for family farmers. All tax credits contained in the bill will sunset on December 31, 2024. The bill also ensures the soybean producers' assessment, also known as the soybean checkoff, continues at the state level even if the program is discontinued at the national level.

**No Patient Left Alone Act – HBs 2116, 2097, 1690, & 2221** will create the No Patient Left Alone Act to protect the rights of patients to have their loved ones present during their stay at a hospital or long-term care facility. The legislation allows patients at health care facilities to have at least two compassionate care visitors, which could be a friend, family member, or other requested visitor who provides mental or physical support. The bill says a health care facility must allow a resident to permit at least two compassionate care visitors simultaneously to have in-person contact with the resident during visitation hours. Visitation hours include evenings, weekends, and holidays, and will be no less than six hours daily. The bill would allow 24-hour visitation when reasonably appropriate. The bill also allows a patient to designate an essential caregiver who would be allowed in-person contact during a governor-declared state of emergency.



**Representative Rick Francis of Perry County and myself thanking Ste. Genevieve Sheriff Gary Stolzer for his excellent work and service he provides for Ste. Genevieve County.**

**Preventing Efforts to Defund Law Enforcement - SB 678** is designed to ensure the Kansas City Police Department receives the funding it needs. The bill is a response to efforts by the city to remove \$42 million from a previously-agreed-upon budget for the department. The goal of the bill is to ensure the city is not able to artificially manipulate its general fund in order to cut the budget for the Kansas City Police Department. The bill requires the city of Kansas City to provide one-fourth of its general revenue per fiscal year to fund the Kansas City Board of Police.

**Protections for Victims of Sex Trafficking – SBs 775, 751, & 640** will provide greater protections to children who have been victimized by sex trafficking. This bill puts into state law the process by which a child located by law enforcement and who is suspected to have been a victim of sex trafficking is to receive help from the Division of Social Services, the Juvenile Court system, child advocacy centers and law enforcement. The bill also provides that a person will not be certified as an adult or adjudicated for the offense of prostitution if the person was under the age of 18 at the time when the offense occurred. Such person will be classified as a victim of abuse and reported immediately to the Children's Division and to the juvenile officer for appropriate services. The bill also enacts the crime of facilitating or enabling the sexual exploitation of a child. The offense is a class E felony for the first offense and a class C felony for a second or subsequent offense. The bill also establishes the "Statewide Council on Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children", which will analyze data relating to sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and will collect feedback from stakeholders, practitioners, and leadership throughout the state.

**Creating a New Tool to Fight Trafficking - HB 1472** will provide another tool for law enforcement to combat human trafficking. The bill will modify the offense of money laundering to include when a person conducts a financial transaction with the purpose to promote or aid criminal activity, to disguise criminal activity, to avoid reporting requirements under federal law, or to aid any terrorist threat. The bill specifies that a "financial transaction" includes a transaction involving the movement of funds by wire; a transaction involving monetary instruments such as cryptocurrency, personal checks, bank orders, or money orders; the transfer of title to any real property; or a transfer involving the use of a financial institution as defined in federal law. By updating the definition, law enforcement will be better able to track and trace the movement of funds.

**Strengthened Rights for Sexual Assault Survivors – SBs 775, 751, & 640** will create the Sexual Assault Survivors Bill of Rights, which would make it inadmissible for a victim's previous sexual history to be used during a trial, establish procedures for medical care, and

protect survivors' identifiable information in public records. It would also ensure a sexual assault victim has the right to consult with a representative of a rape crisis center, be offered a shower and fresh set of clothing, have an interpreter help communicate, as well as provide other protections. The bill was created from recommendations made by the Missouri Rights of Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force.

**Expanding Virtual Education – HB 1552** will give parents the final say on whether their children can enroll in Missouri's virtual education program. Currently, school districts must give that approval. Supporters say it will give more educational choice and opportunity for Missouri school students. The bill requires a full-time virtual school program to participate in the statewide assessment system with the results to be assigned to the designated attendance center for the program. The bill also requires programs to monitor individual student success and engagement and provide regular progress reports for each student at least four times per school year to the school district or charter school. Additionally, the bill clarifies the amount virtual providers would be paid for full-time students.

**Improving Reading Outcomes for Young People - SB 681 & 662** will help address Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data showing more than half of Missouri students don't reach reading proficiency by eighth grade. The bill will require schools to assess students for their level of reading or reading readiness each year beginning in kindergarten. Students with a reading deficiency will be given additional support in the form of a reading success plan. The bill also calls for the establishment of a statewide literacy plan to establish a comprehensive system of services for reading instruction, and directs the State Board of Education to create an Office of Literacy.

**Addressing the Substitute Teacher Shortage - SB 681 & 662** addresses the substitute teacher shortage that is causing major problems for schools around the state. The bill is meant to create opportunities to increase the number of substitutes that are available to schools. It will provide a four-year certificate for individuals who want to substitute teach. Under the bill, applicants for certification must complete a background check and also have at least 36 college hours or have completed a 20 hour online training. The bill also requires individuals to have a high school diploma or equivalence. Additionally, the bill provides an alternative route to certification for qualified individuals with technical or business expertise or Armed Forces experience and a superintendent sponsorship.

**Services and Programs for Gifted Children - SB 681 & 662** will address the needs of the many exceptional students who currently do not have access to gifted programs in their schools. The bill would require school districts to establish a state-approved gifted program if 3% or more of the students in the district are identified as gifted. District schools with average daily attendance of more than 350 students would be required to have a teacher certificated to teach gifted education. In districts with an average daily attendance of 350 or less, any teacher providing gifted instruction would not be required to be certified to teach gifted education but must participate in six hours per year of professional development regarding gifted services and the expense of the training would be paid by the school district.

**Missouri Workforce Diploma Program - SB 681 & 662** will help the thousands of Missourians who do not have a high school degree. The bill establishes the Workforce Diploma Program under the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The program is designed to assist Missourians in obtaining a high school diploma and developing employability and career technical skills. Supporters say there are currently more than 445,000 adults in the state who don't have a diploma. Under the program, the department would contract with providers that can administer the program. The bill creates a "pay-for-performance" system so

providers would only be paid if they are successful in helping Missourians obtain credits toward a diploma.

**Get the Lead Out of School Drinking Water Act - SB 681 & 662** will help protect young people from toxic lead by reducing the amount of lead allowed in school drinking water. The bill requires each school to provide drinking water with a lead concentration below five parts per billion (5 ppb), which is significantly lower than the concentration allowed under federal law. Under the bill, the Department of Natural Resources, with support from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Health and Senior Services, is authorized to give schools additional funding for filtration, testing, and other remediation of drinking water systems.

**Continuing the Fast Track Program – SB 672** will expand and extend Missouri’s innovative Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant program, which addresses workforce needs by encouraging adults to pursue a certificate, degree, or industry-recognized credential in a job field designated as high need. The financial aid program fully covers tuition and fees for degrees, credentials and certificates in high-demand fields when combined with other federal and state financial aid. Individuals who are 25 or older or those who have not been enrolled in any school within the last two years and who meet certain income requirements are eligible for Fast Track. The bill extends the program until August 28, 2029 and expands Fast Track to allow it to be used toward apprenticeship programs.

**Attracting Economic Activity to Missouri - SB 652** is meant to help Kansas City be selected to host matches for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which would have a potential economic impact of nearly \$700 million for the state. The bill will provide a sales tax exemption for the sale of tickets to matches of the 2026 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament if it is held in Jackson County. The tax exemption is a qualifier called for by FIFA for participating cities.

**Encouraging Research and Development – HB 2400** will renew Missouri’s research and development tax credit program to help businesses develop new products and jobs. The tax credit will help businesses finance the research and development of new products and services, or improve existing ones. The legislation sets aside \$10 million for research and development tax credits and dedicates \$5 million to small businesses, minority-owned businesses and women-owned businesses. It provides a tax credit for 15 percent of qualified research expenses and up to 20 percent if the research is done through a Missouri university.

**Improving Broadband Internet Access – SB 820** is meant to help Missourians in all parts of the state have access to reliable broadband internet. The bill modifies the Broadband Internet Grant Program to expand broadband internet access in unserved and underserved areas of the state to include improving the reliability of broadband in such areas. It specifies that grants awarded under the program will prioritize projects providing speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload that is scalable to higher speeds, or the minimum acceptable speed established by the Federal Communications Commission. Additionally, it requires the Department of Economic Development to implement a program to increase high-speed internet access in unserved and underserved areas. It also authorizes the state to seek the return of broadband funding from any provider that defaults or breaches agreements to deploy broadband and establishes the "Vertical Real Estate Act" to allow political subdivisions to erect towers and other broadband infrastructure and to join or participate in public-private partnerships to effectuate the construction of vertical real estate and towers.

**Correctional Center Nurseries – SB 683** will create a Correctional Center Nursery Program with the goal of providing better outcomes for mothers in prison and their children. The program

is based on existing programs in other states that have helped to reduce recidivism among mothers and resulted in cost savings for the states. It will allow eligible inmates and children born to them while in the custody of the Department of Corrections to reside together in the institution for up to eighteen months post-delivery.



**On the floor presenting a bill naming portions of HWY 67 In Memory of  
“SP5 Billy Meador and WO1 Reginald Cleve**

**[SS for SCS for HB 1738](#) – Relating to State Designations. - I filed legislation to honor two of our own Service Members who died while serving our country. May these signs serve as a reminder of the sacrifice they and their families made for all of us!**

**227.814. The portion of U.S. 67 from Maple Street 2 continuing to Perrine Road through the city of Farmington in 3 St. Francois County shall be designated the "SP5 Billy J 4 Meador Memorial Highway".**

**1 227.815. The portion of U.S. 67 from Perrine Road 2 continuing to Highway H through the city of Farmington in 3 St. Francois County shall be designated the "WO1 Reginald D 4 Cleve Memorial Highway".**

The department of transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs designating such highway, with the costs to be paid by private donations.

**I am also pleased to announce that we were successful in having \$5 million dollars added to the state budget to fund the new Technical Center on the Mineral Area College Campus. This will go a long way in developing a skilled workforce in our region which will benefit our area’s economy. It is projected that Mineral Area College will be managing the Career Technical Center in Cape Girardeau. We were also successful in obtaining \$3 million dollars for that initiative as well!**

My Best to All of You!