



**CAPITOL REPORT**  
**DALE WRIGHT**  
DISTRICT 116  
MISSOURI HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES



COMMITTEES

September 2, 2022

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

Dear Friends,

**Election Integrity Law Now in Effect (HB 1878)**

It was during the 2022 legislative session that members of the House and Senate approved legislation to ensure safe, secure elections with timely, accurate results. Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft is now embarking on a statewide campaign to educate and inform Missourians of the election law changes that took place with the passage of HB 1878.

The new legislation has many components, including a Voter ID requirement. On Election Day, a voter is required to show a valid government-issued ID or cast a provisional ballot. Examples of valid photo ID include: Missouri driver license, U.S. passport or military ID. Other changes in the law will allow for two weeks of no-excuse in-person absentee voting; allow the secretary of state to audit voter rolls; require the use of hand-marked paper ballots rather than electronic voting machines; mandate the use of air-gapped election equipment that prevents the possibility of electronic manipulation, and require all election authorities or political subdivisions to have cybersecurity reviews.

Secretary of State Ashcroft said, “This law increases election security and transparency, and instills confidence that a vote will count if cast. This is about being proactive rather than reactive - we want to look at coming elections and make sure it is hard to cheat but easy to vote.”

If a registered voter in Missouri does not have a government-issued ID, the secretary of state’s office will help the individual acquire documents needed to obtain a non-driver license for voting purposes at no charge.

To avoid any misrepresentation or confusion, Ashcroft will be traveling the state talking about the new law. As well, public service announcements will begin in September to inform voters about the changes. Though several modifications were made to the voting law, the primary message of the “Go Vote Missouri” campaign will focus on the ID component, with emphasis placed on the campaign slogan - ***“If you’re registered – you can vote on Election Day.”*** If a registered voter does not have an ID, they can cast a provisional ballot on that day.

## **New Commission Working to Develop “Autism Roadmap for Missouri”**

During the 2021 legislative session, the Missouri General Assembly approved legislation meant to improve services for Missourians with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The House and Senate approved **HB 432** to create the Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Since January 2022, the commission has been meeting with a focus on its mission to produce an “Autism Roadmap for Missouri” to cover the lifespan of every person living with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The commission is housed within the Missouri Department of Mental Health and is made up of adults on the autism spectrum, parents of children on the spectrum, health care professionals, educators, and state officials from the departments of Mental Health, Health and Senior Services, Social Services and Commerce and Insurance.

This roadmap the commission is developing will discuss best practices for care and services within healthcare, education, vocational support, and community resources. The commission’s efforts will include a targeted review of existing autism resources, initiatives and funding; identify unmet needs and gaps; and provide tangible recommendations for system improvements.

Missouri currently has six autism centers located in St. Louis, Kansas City, Columbia, and Cape Girardeau. Approximately 2,500 Missourians are diagnosed with autism each year at one of the centers. The legislature has also appropriated \$10 million to help fund new centers in Springfield and Joplin.

Guided by House Bill 432, the commission’s work will be conducted in four phases for those living with ASD: 1) transitioning to adulthood; 2) early identification and intervention; 3) access to care; and 4) challenging behaviors and crisis care. The commission will submit a report to the Governor and the Director of the Department of Mental Health upon completion of each phase. A final document summarizing all completed tasks will be submitted at the completion of all the phases.

## **Recreational Marijuana to Appear on November Ballot**

This week the Missouri Secretary of State certified an initiative petition pertaining to the legalization of recreational marijuana. With this certification, the petition will now be placed on the November 8 statewide ballot for voter consideration.

To receive a Certificate of Sufficiency, a minimum number of valid signatures must be obtained in six of the eight congressional districts in Missouri. The recreational marijuana initiative petition met this statutory requirement and was issued a sufficiency certificate.

Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft said, **“I encourage Missourians to study and educate themselves on any ballot initiative.” He noted that the recreational marijuana petition that voters will see on the November ballot is “particularly lengthy and should be given careful consideration.”**

**The petition will appear on the ballot as Amendment 3** and will ask voters if they want to amend the Missouri Constitution to remove state prohibitions on the purchase, possession, consumption, use, delivery, manufacture, and sale of marijuana for personal use for adults over the age of twenty-one. The amendment would also allow individuals with certain marijuana-related offenses to petition for release from prison or parole and probation and have their records expunged; along with imposing a six percent tax on the retail price of recreational marijuana.

Additionally, the amendment would establish a lottery selection process to award licenses and certificates, and issue equally-distributed licenses to each congressional district.

State governmental entities estimate initial costs of \$3.1 million, initial revenues of at least \$7.9 million, annual costs of \$5.5 million, and annual revenues of at least \$40.8 million. Local governments are estimated to have annual costs of at least \$35,000 and annual revenues of at least \$13.8 million.

My best to all of you!

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