

Two Sales Tax Proposals Concerning Platte County Residents on the April 2 Ballot

On April 2, all Platte County residents will be asked "*Shall Platte County, Missouri, impose a countywide sales tax at the rate of one-half of one percent (1/2 of 1%) for a period of six and one quarter (6 and 1/4th) years from the date on which such tax is first imposed for the purpose of capital improvements, including without limitation the construction of a jail expansion and improvements to the existing jail and other county facilities?*"

Occasionally the Platte County Detention Center has reached capacity, making it necessary to have inmates sleep on the floor on temporary bunks. A study completed by a consultant hired by Platte County Commissioners indicated the capacity of the jail needs to be significantly expanded to handle the growth in the number of inmates held in the jail if current trends continue. The accuracy of this study has been questioned because a varying but not insignificant number of these beds are filled by non-Platte County inmates. Other agencies such as ICE pay Platte County for the temporary use of these beds which should not be used in the long range bed count.

Critics believe that the increase in number of beds requested is excessive because other ways to reduce the number of inmates in jail awaiting trial were not evaluated. These include changes to bail requirements and sentencing guidelines. The consultant did not take this into consideration. These methods need to be attempted first. Also, the plan for the use of the funds is too vague. The public should be provided specific projects to be completed using the funds in addition to the jail, and the size and location for the jail expansion needs to be spelled out. Finally, the commissioners need to work towards restoring the county's credit rating in order to minimize costs associated with issuing bonds to fund construction. For these reasons, it is premature to seek a tax increase to expand the jail.

Please vote NO on the 1/2% Jail tax question on the April 2 ballot.

Also on the ballot, Kansas City residents living in Platte County will be asked "*Shall the City of Kansas City impose a sales tax authorized by Section 67.1305 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri for a period of 10 years at a rate of 3/8% to be used for economic development purposes through funding Pre-K instruction for four and five year olds the year before they enter kindergarten, funding improvements to early childhood centers, and investing in the City's early childhood education workforce?*"

Pre-K instruction has been shown to be beneficial to significantly increase a child's academic success and their future economic contributions.

But the proposal before Platte County voters is not the best solution because of the following weaknesses:

1. The program would be overseen by a five member board, three appointed by the Kansas City mayor, one appointed by the 15 school districts that lie within Kansas City and one appointed by the four counties that lie within Kansas City. Of the 18 governmental entities involved in the program, it would appear that Kansas City would have overriding control of how the tax revenue would be allocated to all 15 school districts.
2. Sales tax funds would be sent to private and parochial schools. The Missouri Constitution may prohibit public funds from going to private or parochial schools.
3. The funds would be raised as a sales tax instead of from property taxes as is common for school revenue. Sales taxes are considered a regressive tax that would hurt the families that the proposal is intended to help.

Note that all 15 school districts affected by this program are opposed to the passage of this tax increase, including the Kansas City Public School district. Click [here](#) for more information.

Here is a [link](#) to the KC PRE-K PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

Please vote NO on 3/8% sales tax Question 1 on the April 2 ballot.