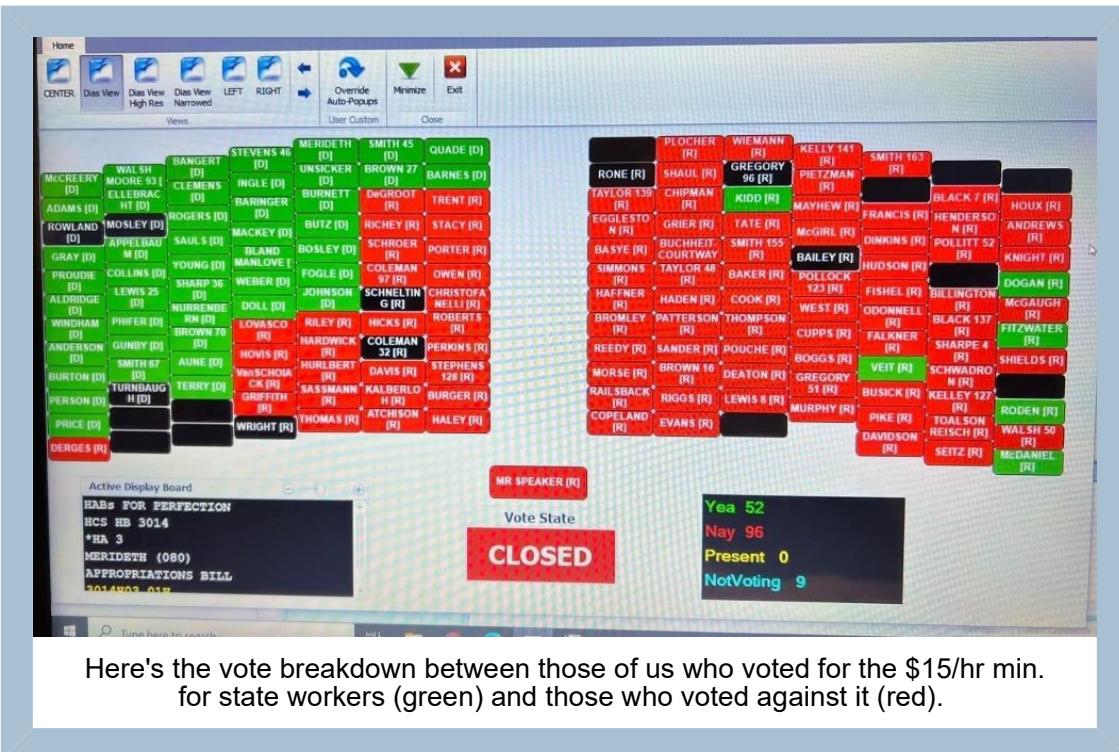


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CAPITOL REPORT

February 17, 2022



Hello Neighbor,

I hope this email finds you well! Things are moving quickly through at least *half* of the legislature this year, and **we finally passed the Emergency Supplemental Budget through the House** last week! Read more below to learn more about what's in it. For me, the biggest takeaways from the floor debate are:

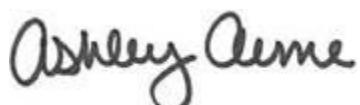
- **Gov. Parson requested the budget establish a \$15/hr base rate for state workers**, and Democrats stood up over and over to fight to keep this in the bill. Unfortunately, Budget Chair Cody Smith and **the Republicans won this one, and only included a \$12/hr base rate** for most departments—a measly \$0.66/hr raise for many state workers.
 - It's my understanding that the **Senate Appropriations Committee reconsidered the base rate** and it could come back to the House with a \$15/hr rate. I hope that's the case.
- This budget also includes a **\$75 million Close the Gap program to assist**

learning acceleration for children who have fallen behind in school. Rep. Smith's bill outlined that the program would be run by a third-party vendor. I offered an amendment to bring it under the purview of DESE so we could ensure equity and oversight, but it failed along party lines.

In other news, the Senate is slowly showing a willingness to do the work they were sent there to do rather than filibustering over a congressional map that will never happen. They perfected two bills on Wednesday, and I'm hopeful they'll continue in this manner.

As always, thanks for checking in. Please don't hesitate to reach out if there's anything I can do for you.

Take care,



Representative Ashley Aune
District 14 | (573) 751-3618

Legislative Update

HOUSE APPROVES \$4.6 BILLION EMERGENCY SPENDING BILL

The House of Representatives voted 114-11-25 on Feb. 10 to pass a nearly \$4.6 billion emergency supplemental spending bill that would distribute billions of dollars in federal pandemic relief funds to local public school districts, as well as fully fund Missouri's Medicaid program for the rest of the FY 2022 fiscal year. Gov. Mike Parson had wanted the bill finalized by Feb. 1, but **House Budget Committee Chairman Cody Smith, R-Carthage, delayed advancing it for four weeks.**

The House version of the bill authorizes significantly less spending authority than the \$5.27 billion Parson had requested, primarily by not appropriating as much federal funds. One key difference that sparked significant debate is the House plan would provide a less generous pay increase to the lowest paid state employees. **While Parson requested establishing a \$15-an-hour base wage for state workers, Smith only included a \$12-an-hour wage floor for most departments. Both plans include a 5.5 percent pay bump for all**

HOUSE ADVANCES PLAN TO SEVERELY LIMIT INITIATIVE PETITIONS

The House of Representatives voted 98-53 on Feb. 10 in favor of a proposed constitutional amendment that likely would make it impossible to use the initiative petition process to propose and enact laws and constitutional amendments independently of the General Assembly. All but a handful of majority Republicans supported the measure, which Democrats unanimously opposed.

House Joint Resolution 79 would drastically increase the number of signatures from registered voters required for an initiative petition to qualify for the ballot. **For example, the minimum signatures needed for a proposed constitutional amendment would skyrocket from about 172,000 under current law to roughly 434,000.** Also, proposals that did manage to make the ballot would need approval from at least two-thirds of voters to pass instead of the current simple majority.

HJR 79 now advances to the Senate. If it clears the General Assembly, it

state workers.

[House Bill 3014](#) now advances to the Senate. **Lawmakers must allocate about \$2 billion in federal funding that is set to expire in late March or the state will lose the money.**

SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN TWO LAWS RESTRICTING REFERENDA

The Missouri Supreme Court on Feb. 8 struck down two state laws Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft used to **block Missouri voters from having the final say on legislation enacted in 2019 to criminalize most abortions after just eight weeks of pregnancy.** The court's 5-2 decision sided with a lower court's holding that the statutes interfere with the state constitutional right to referendum.

On the last day of the 2019 legislative session, the Missouri General Assembly enacted House Bill 126, which sought tighter restrictions on abortion. Opponents of the bill quickly filed a referendum petition, which forces a statewide vote on legislation passed by lawmakers and signed by the governor. The petition's backers faced a 90-day deadline to collect the roughly 100,000 signatures from registered voters needed to put HB 126 on the ballot.

Ashcroft initially delayed the effort by declaring the petition violated constitutional procedures. To prevent Ashcroft from pulling a similar move in the future, petition supporters then challenged the constitutionality of the law allowing the secretary of state to delay the certification process and a related statute prohibiting petitions from being circulated prior to that time. Although the referendum on HB 126 didn't move forward, a federal court subsequently blocked the law from taking effect. The case is *No Bans on Choice, et al., v. Ashcroft.*

SUPREME COURT HEARS CHALLENGE TO GUN NULLIFICATION LAW

The Missouri Supreme Court heard

automatically would go on the Nov. 8 ballot for voter ratification. **The bill's sponsor included deceptive ballot language in HJR 97 that falsely tells voters the measure would "allow only citizens of the United States to qualify as legal voters."** That requirement already is part of the Missouri Constitution.

SUPREME COURT ORDERS DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA INFO

The Missouri Supreme Court unanimously ruled the state Department of Health and Senior Services must disclose **information submitted by successful applicants for medical marijuana licenses in an administrative challenge brought by an applicant who was denied a license.**

The constitutional amendment Missouri voters ratified in 2018 legalizing medical marijuana also granted the health department regulatory authority over the industry, and the agency has faced fierce criticism over how it has performed the task. Accusations that an inconsistent scoring process allowed the department to grant licenses to favored recipients while denying them to similarly situated applicants resulted in hundreds of appeals to the Administrative Hearing Commissions, which handles administrative disputes involving state agencies.

One unsuccessful applicant, Kings Garden Midwest, sought other applicants' information as part of its appeal, but the department argued it couldn't be compelled to disclose it because of a constitutional provision requiring such information to be kept confidential. The case is *State ex rel. Department of Health and Senior Services v. Slusher.*

HOUSE PANEL ADVANCES PROPOSAL TO SKIRT MEDICAID EXPANSION

arguments Feb. 7 in a case challenging a 2021 law that purports to declare federal gun laws unenforceable in Missouri and punishes local police departments for assisting federal authorities in criminal investigations. The arguments primarily focused on procedural questions, with little discussion of the case's merits.

The General Assembly enacted the law in question, [House Bill 85](#), last May. The following month, St. Louis city, St. Louis County and Jackson County filed a lawsuit claiming HB 85 violates the U.S. Constitution's Supremacy Clause, which prohibits individual states from invalidating federal laws. In a highly unusual move, an attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice appeared before the state high court to argue in support of striking down the new law, saying it has chilled cooperation between state and federal law enforcement officials in criminal investigations.

In addition to purporting to nullify federal gun laws, **HB 85 authorizes federal gun offenders to sue Missouri police departments for a minimum \$50,000 per occurrence, plus attorney fees, for assisting federal authorities.** The bill also subjects any local government agency to similar fines merely for hiring a former federal agent who previously enforced gun laws, regardless of whether that person is hired in a law enforcement capacity. The new law is dubiously referred to as the "Second Amendment Preservation Act." The court will issue its ruling at a later date.

The House Budget Committee voted 22-9 along straight party lines on Feb. 7 to advance a proposed constitutional amendment aimed at thwarting a voter-approved expansion of eligibility for Missouri's Medicaid program. The proposed amendment now goes to the full House of Representatives for further debate.

After Republican state lawmakers spent years blocking Medicaid expansion, supporters used the initiative petition process to put the issue directly to voters, who in 2020 ratified a constitutional amendment requiring the state to implement expansion. Republican lawmakers continued their resistance in 2021 by refusing to provide spending authority for expansion in the FY 2022 state budget. However, the state Supreme Court subsequently ruled the constitution still requires the state to provide services to the expanded population.

[House Joint Resolution 117](#) would empower the legislature to block services to the expanded population by withholding funding – the exact maneuver the Supreme Court ruled isn't currently allowed under the state constitution. If the proposal clears the legislature, it would go on the Nov. 8 statewide ballot for voter ratification.

COMMITTEE REJECTS GOP-SPONSORED 'MAKE MURDER LEGAL ACT'

A Senate committee voted 4-3 on Feb. 10 to defeat legislation that a rural prosecutor dubbed the "Make Murder Legal Act" because **it sought to create a presumption in state law that whenever one person kills another, the killer acted in self-defense.** Two Republicans joined the panel's two Democrats in opposing the bill. Three other Republicans supported it.

Current law allows a defendant to claim self-defense at trial, but the defendant has the burden of proving the use of force was justified.

Under [Senate Bill 666](#), someone who used physical or deadly force would be presumed to have acted in self-defense and “immune from criminal prosecution or civil action.” Not only could that person not be prosecuted, the bill would prohibit suspects from being arrested, detained or charged with a crime unless authorities can prove “by clear and convincing evidence” that suspect didn’t act in self-defense.

Black History Month

BOOKS TO READ DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH FROM THE INNOCENCE PROJECT

February is Black History Month, and so the Innocence Project’s staff shared books that have inspired them to reflect on Black history. The powerful books they selected below touch on everything from how the legacy of slavery in the U.S. has contributed to mass incarceration to exploring what it means to be a young Black person in America today — plus some interesting reads by talented Black authors touching on other forms of injustice. [Click here to read more suggestions and descriptions.](#)

- *The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X* by Les Payne and Tamara Payne
- *Heavy* by Kiese Laymon
- *Punching the Air* by Ibi Zoboi and activist Yusef Salaam
- *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* by Dr. Monique Morris
- *All About Love: New Visions* by bell hooks
- *Another Country* by James Baldwin



CELEBRATE 2022 BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN KANSAS CITY

Black History Month, also known as African American History Month, is a national celebration that recognizes the accomplishments of Black Americans throughout American history. Locally, this celebration recognizes the countless African Americans who shaped KC’s cultural institutions, from chronicling their participation in the Great War to the founding of the Negro National League in 1920.

Past, present and future, the African American community is vital to Kansas City's story. [Click here to see a list of special celebrations in February and ongoing exhibits that commemorate KC's rich Black history.](#)



MID-CONTINENT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Black History Month is a celebration of the accomplishments by Black and African Americans and a tribute to the adversities they face in our nation's history and present. Learn more about the contributions of Black artists and musicians, inventors and scientists, educators, athletes, and more through resources and events at Mid-Continent Public Library.



PRESERVING OUR PAST: KANSAS CITY STORIES OF BLACK HISTORY

In honor of Black History Month, Kansas City PBS has announced the premiere of [*Preserving Our Past: Kansas City Stories of Black History*](#), a new special from Mid-America Emmy-winning producer [Catherine Hoffman](#). Featuring a selection of local stories of Black excellence, sacrifice and perseverance, *Preserving Our Past* premieres Thursday, Feb. 17, at 7:30 p.m. on Channel 19.1.

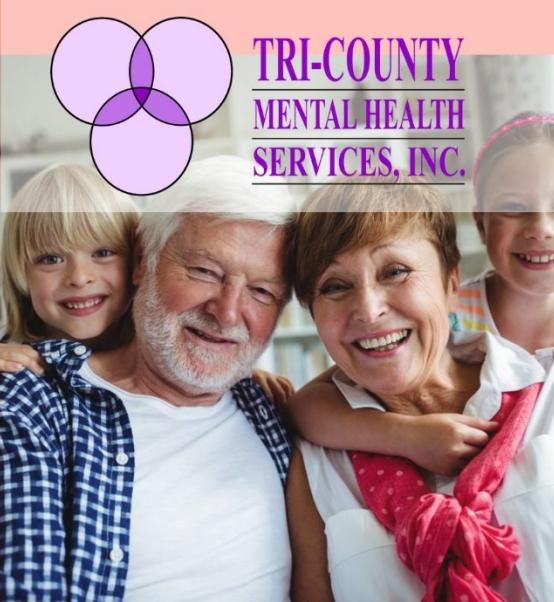
In *Preserving Our Past*, Hoffman uncovers the racial divide of midwifery, revisits the 1882 lynching of Levi Harrington in Kansas City, recounts the legacy of two women from Merriam, Kansas, who worked to integrate South Park Elementary, explores the role and influence of the Black church, and speaks with organizers of a local project focused on a systematic review of World War I veterans who were denied a Medal of Honor because of their race or religion.

Health and Wellness

FEBRUARY NORTHLAND GRANDFAMILIES SUPPORT GROUPS

**Wed, Feb 9th
6-7:30 PM**

Platte Woods United
Methodist Church
7310 NW Prairie View Rd,
Platte Woods, MO 64151



**Wed, Feb 16th
5:30 - 7 pm**

NORTH HEARTLAND
COMMUNITY CHURCH
CHILDCARE OFFERED
FOR FREE!
4800 NW 88TH ST #212,
KANSAS CITY, MO 64154

**Fri, Feb 25th
10 - 11:30 am**
Maple Woods Northland
Human Services Bldg, 2nd
floor conference room
3100 NE 83rd Street
Kansas City, MO 64119



Theme: Self-Love and Love For Others

PLATTE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Are you a grandparent or other family member caring for a youth loved one? Check out [Northland Grandfamilies](#) for support groups, tips and case management assistance.



MEANINGFUL MEALS COLLABORATION KICKOFF

Parent Up and the prevention team at Tri-County Mental Health Services invite your participation in helping to protect youth mental health by promoting meaningful family meals!

Join us on Zoom at 10am on Thursday, February 17th for a brief overview of the importance and impact that simple family meals have on the overall well-being of our youth, and leave empowered and equipped to help spread this message throughout your business, organization, school, or network!

Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83223942967>

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