

July 14, 2017



The banner features a background image of the Missouri House of Representatives chamber. On the left, there is an inset photo of Donna Pfautsch speaking at a microphone. The text on the banner reads: "State Representative Donna Pfautsch District 33 Serving parts of Cass, Jackson and Lafayette Counties" and "Capitol Report" in large white letters. On the right, it lists her committees: "COMMITTEES Chair, Consent and House Procedure Insurance Policy Health and Mental Health Policy Innovation and Technology". Below this is the Missouri House of Representatives seal and her contact information: "Rep. Donna Pfautsch 201 W. Capitol Ave., Suite 404B Jefferson City, MO 65101 573-751-9766 donna.pfautsch@house.mo.gov".



Friends,

This week I had the pleasure of attending a bill signing in Governor Eric Greitens' office as he signed SB 111, which contained language from my HB 921. This bill assists county Public Administrators in their duties as the guardians of minors. Specifically, this legislation will allow Public Administrators the freedom to serve solely as the conservators of the estates of orphaned minors, instead allowing the Department of

Social Services to decide how best to serve these minors. This was a priority for the Public Administrators' Association.

Additionally, Governor Greitens signed SB 112 into law, which includes my HB 849 on political subdivision audits. This language is an extension of HB 1418 from 2016, which was signed into law last year and has already proven to be a valuable tool for the State Auditor's Office to ensure greater accountability and transparency for your tax dollars.

### **Governor Signs State Operating Budget**

The governor also recently signed the state operating budget into law. The budget for the current fiscal year that began on July 1 includes record levels of spending for K-12 public education as it fully funds the School Foundation Formula for the first time. The budget passed by the legislature and signed by the governor also includes \$6 million for the rural school

July 14, 2017

broadband program; an additional \$12 million for Early Childhood Special Education; more than \$10 million to keep children out of dangerous and abusive situations; and over \$12 million to combat the opioid crisis.

While the governor signed the budget into law, he also announced more than \$250 million in budget restrictions. The restrictions are necessary because actual revenue growth has failed to meet the projections upon which the budget is based. Some of the restrictions include \$47 million from the Facilities Maintenance Reserve Fund that is used to maintain government buildings; \$24 million from funding for higher education; \$15 million from funding for K-12 school transportation; \$10 million from funds to promote Missouri tourism; and \$30 million from the Department of Social Services, which is working to identify efficiencies in their department.

### **Governor Signs Foster Care Bill of Rights into Law (SB 160)**

The governor recently signed into law a piece of legislation meant to help the state better care for children, including those who have been abused or trafficked.

One of the bill's provisions will prevent the destruction of some 11,000 records related to cases of children that were abused but the perpetrator could not be identified. An appeals court ruling put those records in jeopardy. Supporters say children's safety could have been at risk if the information wasn't kept in the system. They say the ability to retain such records allows investigators to detect patterns in cases of abuse or neglect.

Another key provision in the bill changes the definition of child abuse and neglect to include trafficking. Under state law, the ability for the state Children's Division to get involved in a case hinged on a perpetrator having care, custody, and control of a child. Supporters say that in trafficking cases often times that care-taking role is missing, which means the Children's Division can't provide the sort of protective interventions that are necessary. The provision also makes more federal money available to Missouri, and aids in prosecution of both state and federal cases by aligning Missouri's definition with that of federal law.

The legislation also establishes the Foster Care Bill of Rights to establish in law how foster children will be treated and how their rights will be protected. Another provision allows children entering foster care to be placed with people who are not related to, but have a close relationship with, the child or the child's family – otherwise known as “kinship placements.”

The bill also extends through 2023 the existence of the legislature's Joint Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect.

With the governor's signature, the provisions dealing with the definitions of abuse and neglect and with retention of abuse records became effective immediately.

### **Legislation Signed into Law to Establish Adult High Schools (HB 93)**

Last week the governor stopped in Kansas City to sign legislation that will give the approximately 500,000 Missourians without a high school diploma a second chance to obtain an education that will allow them to secure good-paying, family-supporting jobs. The bill signed into law by the governor will establish four adult high schools in Missouri.

The legislation is modeled after a program in Indiana that was put in place to address the needs of adults without high school diplomas, and employers seeking a qualified workforce. The program has seen tremendous success as it has grown from four schools to 11. After the 2014 school year, 88 percent of students were employed or in college six months after graduation. Supporters hope to see a similar level of success in Missouri.

July 14, 2017

Supporters note that a high school diploma is a key component to giving Missourians an opportunity to obtain gainful employment. They point to Census Bureau statistics that indicate a high school diploma can increase a person's lifetime earnings by as much as \$400,000. Proponents say a high school diploma is critical to empower people to move off of government assistance and toward self-sufficiency.

The bill will establish four adult high schools located in Southeast Missouri, St. Louis City, Mid-Missouri, and Southwest Missouri for individuals age 21 and up who do not have a high school diploma. It will give priority to Missourians who are currently on government assistance. The schools will help these individuals complete their high school education and obtain a diploma. They will also offer skills certifications based on regional demand through partnerships with community colleges and other programs. Additionally, they will offer a child care center to remove a significant barrier for many adults who would like to participate.

### **Governor Signs Legislation to Expand Screenings of Newborns (SB 50)**

Missouri is now set to become the first state in the nation to screen newborns for two life-threatening genetic diseases. The governor recently signed legislation into law that will require newborn screening for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and mucopolysaccharidosis II (MPS II), otherwise known as Hunter syndrome.

SMA is the leading genetic cause of death for infants under the age of two. It results in a loss of physical strength that can include a lessened ability to walk, eat, or breathe. Hunter syndrome is caused by an enzyme deficiency that results in the buildup of harmful molecules that can affect a person's appearance, mental development, organ function, and physical abilities. An estimated 2,000 people have Hunter syndrome worldwide, with about 500 of those living in the U.S.

Medication to treat SMA was fast-tracked and approved in late December of 2016 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. There is no cure for Hunter syndrome, but earlier detection could improve the lives or increase the lifespan of those children who have it.

The sponsor of the bill believes early screening could save the lives of as many as 15 children per year.

### **Governor Signs Several Other Bills into Law**

The governor has been busy in recent weeks as he has signed several pieces of legislation approved by the General Assembly into law. Some of the bills signed by the governor include:

- SB 139 protects and extends the MORx program until at least 2022 so that more than 182,000 low-income Missourians will continue to receive assistance to afford their prescription medications.
- HB 190 gives community college police officers jurisdiction to enforce speed limits and issue tickets to those who break the law. This bill is meant to keep students and the public safe while they are on Missouri's community college campuses.
- SB 161 establishes the Ozark Exploration Bicentennial Commission, which is tasked with celebrating the exploration of Missouri's Ozarks. This celebration is intended to increase tourism to Missouri's Ozarks and highlight Missouri's natural beauty.
- HB 51 allows for more investment options with the goal of making more funds available for public cemetery upkeep. Many of the state's cemeteries that are falling into disrepair will benefit from a new funding source for vital maintenance projects.

July 14, 2017

- SB 248 repeals the sunset date for tax refund contributions to the Organ Donor Program Fund allowing the fund to continue to accept donations in support of a program that has helped many Missourians.
- SB 8 decreases government regulations for Missouri loggers and log haulers by giving them the freedom to haul additional forest products outside the 100-mile restriction. This bill also allows Missouri farmers to drive on state highways at night with properly lighted machinery during harvest season.
- SB 222 improves public safety for utility workers by expanding Missouri's Slow Down/Move Over law to include utility vehicles. The bill also allows for additional superior lighting on utility vehicles that will keep workers safe on the jobsite.
- SB 225 closes a loophole in Missouri's DUI laws and honors veterans by allowing those who have received the Distinguished Service Cross commendation to park at public colleges for free.
- SB 240 establishes statewide licensing for electrical contractors in order to promote competition and fairness. This bill maintains strict and high standards to ensure safety and preserve local building code enforcement.
- SB 88 gives veterinarians the same malpractice coverage as doctors, dentists, and other medical professionals.
- HB 452 says that, with certain exceptions, no health care provider shall be liable for the negligence of another entity or person who is not an employee of the health care provider.
- SB 43 brings standards for lawsuits in Missouri in line with 38 other states and the federal government.

### **Ensuring that Missourians' Private Information Remains Private**

Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft is working to ease Missourians' fears about the sharing of their personal information with the federal government.

After receiving a request from President Trump's Commission on Election Integrity for information about publicly available voter data, Secretary of State Ashcroft worked quickly to both fulfill the requests and defend his decision to the Missouri public.

In his statement following the decision Ashcroft pointed out the validity of concerns held by Missourians who value their privacy in an age of government overreach. He emphasized that this request applied only to publicly available information and said similar requests had been fulfilled by his predecessors hundreds of times.

His office is required to comply with these types of requests in compliance with Missouri's Sunshine Law. He said an important thing to note is that no voter preferences, political affiliations, or confidential information will be provided.

Please let me know if you have any questions about any of these issues by contacting my office.

Warmest regards,

Donna