



Legislative Update

January 16, 2026

This week Governor Kehoe gave his 2026 State of the State address during which he centered his legislative agenda on a bold "Foundation for Growth" headlined by a proposal to phase out Missouri's individual income tax over the next five years. To accomplish this, Kehoe called on the General Assembly to pass a joint resolution placing the measure before voters on the 2026 ballot, a necessary step due to constitutional restrictions on taxing services. The Governor's plan seeks to modernize the state's tax code by potentially taxing "modern services" such as digital subscriptions and AI platforms while explicitly vowing to protect agriculture, healthcare, and real estate from sales tax expansion. The Governor expressed a desire to make Missouri more competitive with neighboring no-income-tax states and is paired with a slightly smaller budget that cuts over \$600 million in general revenue spending to address a looming \$2 billion projected imbalance.

Beyond tax reform, Kehoe's address reinforced a "back-to-basics" approach focused on public safety, education, and government efficiency. He highlighted Operation Relentless Pursuit as a success in crime reduction and proposed \$166 million for public safety recruitment and retention. In education, the Governor maintained record funding levels for the K-12 foundation formula while seeking to expand the MO Scholars tax credit program for private school tuition from \$50 million to \$60 million. To streamline state operations, he announced the Missouri GREAT initiative, which partners cabinet members with business leaders to apply private-sector efficiencies to state agencies. While Kehoe emphasized unity and a higher purpose in his speech, the ambitious agenda faces a potentially rocky path in the Senate where Democratic leaders have already signaled concerns over the long-term impact of income tax elimination on essential services like public schools and infrastructure.

The rocky path for this session that has been worrying many presented its first real obstacle on Thursday afternoon. The Governor's first slate of nominees for the various boards and commissions within state government was up for approval by the Senate when Democrats took the floor and expressed a desire to slow the process down and be more deliberative in reviewing these nominees...for a very long time. After two hours, the Senate leadership withdrew the nominees, and session was adjourned for the week. During the filibuster, Senate Dems signaled this is intention with other bills this session.

In Brief...

- On Wednesday, officials with the Department of Corrections fielded a range of questions from House members over concerns with the state's prison healthcare provider. Officials from DOC say they are under contract with Centurion but are exploring options for new models of care delivery.
- Ameren Corporation released a major study this Thursday showing its operations in Missouri and Illinois generated over \$20.7 billion in annual economic output. The report highlights that the utility provider supports more than 55,000 jobs in the region and contributed roughly \$920 million in state and local taxes over the last year



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Pharmacists' Scope Expansion

[Senate Bill 878](#), sponsored by Senator Travis Fitzwater, proposed an expansion of the scope of practice for pharmacists, including the authority to prescribe certain Durable Medical Equipment (DME) and to provide medication therapy services for flu, strep, and COVID-19 under rules promulgated by state boards instead of standing orders from physicians.

During the committee hearing, proponents characterized the DME provision as a way to improve patient access to care by allowing pharmacists to provide "low-level" items they already dispense, such as nebulizer masks for asthma or insulin pen needles, without the delay of waiting hours for a physician's prescription. Senator Fitzwater noted that this expansion aligns with training pharmacists already receive as Doctor of Pharmacology and builds upon the expanded roles they successfully managed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these goals, the committee heard significant concerns regarding the clinical and professional boundaries between prescribing and dispensing.

Other opposition testimony pointed out that while pharmacists are vital team members, physicians are specifically trained to review and integrate DME into a comprehensive care plan, whereas pharmacists are trained to dispense. Further concerns were raised regarding the potential for increased costs and the lack of specific accreditation standards for pharmacists to engage in this expanded scope.

Consequently, Senator Fitzwater acknowledged that the DME portion of the bill remains a turf battle that requires further collaboration with medical stakeholders to ensure proper physician oversight and comfort.

Medicaid Expansion Work Requirement

Sponsored by Representative Darin Chappell, [House Joint Resolution 154](#) proposes a constitutional amendment to implement mandatory work requirements for able-bodied individuals aged 19 to 65 who are eligible for Medicaid under the expansion. The resolution seeks to mirror federal requirements established in HR 1 (often referred to as the One Big Beautiful Bill). It mandates 80 hours per month of work, community service, or participation in an educational program. The bill specifically exempts pregnant women and individuals with diagnosed disabilities. Notably, the Missouri proposal includes a three-month look back window for employment verification and prohibits personal attestations for eligibility.

Representative Chappell testified that the goal of the legislation is to encourage a "working mindset" and move people from government dependency to self-sufficiency.

Opponents raised several concerns, particularly regarding churn, where eligible individuals including cancer survivors and rural residents might lose coverage due to administrative hurdles and the inability to navigate complex bureaucratic systems. Other opponents expressed concern that the rigid constitutional language might prevent the state from implementing necessary caregiver exemptions allowed under federal law.



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Hearings of Interest

There are no hearings of interest currently scheduled for next week.

Family Physician Advocacy Day

We hope you'll join us for Family Physician Advocacy Day February 23 & 24. This two-day event is a valuable opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the state, share your story with lawmakers, and collectively advocate for policies that support patients and the practice of family medicine. Monday is dedicated to learning how to advocate, and we will go visit with legislators on Tuesday. The MAFP Team will work to schedule your legislative appointments. Early registration is appreciated to give your MAFP Team time to coordinate appointments. Details including schedule and registration can be found at <https://www.mo-afp.org/advocacy/advocacy-day/>.

The host hotel is Courtyard by Marriott in Jefferson City. We have secured a limited number of rooms for \$154.00 + taxes and fees per night. The last day to book is January 22, 2026, at 12 midnight. MAFP has already expanded our room block, and we expect the hotel to completely sell out. If you plan on staying in the host hotel, do not delay reserving your room!

[Missouri Academy of Family Physicians Lodging Link](#) - MAFP has already added rooms to our room block, and we expect the hotel to completely sell out. If you plan on staying in the host hotel, do not delay reserving your room!

Thank you for your continued membership and for the work you do every day for your patients and communities. Your engagement through comments, advocacy, and simply staying informed strengthens our shared voice.

MAFP Bill Report

MAFP is currently tracking 138 bills on behalf of our members, which are included in the priority legislation report.

2026 Dates of Interest

- January 19 - Martin Luther King Holiday -- No Session
- February 27 - Last Day to file Senate Bills
- March 13 - Last Day to Place Senate Consent Bills on the Senate Calendar
- March 13 - Spring Break Begins
- March 23 - Return from Spring Break: Session Reconvenes
- April 6 - Easter Holiday
- April 15 - Last Day to Place House Consent Bills on the Senate Calendar
- May 8 - Last Day for Floor Action on Appropriation Bills
- May 15 - Last Day of Session
- September 16 – Veto Session



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Questions/Feedback

Contact the MAFP office at (573) 635-0830, office@mo-afp.org, or our governmental consultants:

Randy Scherr | (573) 619-7711 | rjscherr@swllc.us.com
Brian Bernskoetter | (573) 619-6040 | brianb@swllc.us.com