



Legislative Update

February 20, 2026

The debate surrounding the legalization of Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) reached a fever pitch this week in Jefferson City, underscored by a landmark judicial blow to the state's so-called gray market machines. On February 13, a U.S. District judge issued a definitive ruling declaring that the no-chance slot machines proliferating in gas stations and bars are illegal gambling devices under Missouri law. This ruling effectively stripped away the legal ambiguity that operators have relied on for years. Against this backdrop, the Missouri House of Representatives moved with newfound urgency, narrowly passing [House Bill 2989](#) on Wednesday. The bill seeks to replace these now-illegal machines with a state-regulated system under the Missouri Lottery, promising to funnel hundreds of millions in tax revenue toward education and veterans' programs.

The legislative progress coincided with a notable email sent to the Senate by Senator Jason Bean (R-Holcomb) on Tuesday, which addressed the conduct of industry lobbyists. In the communication, Bean alerted his colleagues to what he described as aggressive intimidation tactics, alleging that lobbyists were spreading rumors of imminent federal and state investigations to discourage support for VLT regulation. Bean characterized these claims as "ridiculous" and a hindrance to the legislative process. With the federal court now providing a clear green light for law enforcement to seize unregulated machines, the combination of this internal friction and the recent judicial mandate sets the stage for a high-stakes showdown as the bills in both bodies continue to move.

In Brief...

- Bayer announced a significant \$7.25 billion proposed settlement intended to resolve tens of thousands of current and future lawsuits involving its glyphosate-based weedkiller, Roundup. Filed in the St. Louis Circuit Court, this agreement represents a major strategic shift for the company as it seeks to finally contain a decade of litigation that has seen multi-billion-dollar jury verdicts and fluctuating stock prices.
- State Auditor Scott Fitzpatrick released a scathing report on Wednesday regarding deficiencies in the state's marijuana licensing program. The audit found that missteps in the 2019 scoring process led to over \$12.5 million in litigation costs.

State Budget Update

This week, the House Budget Chairman invited committee members to prepare and submit requests for the FY 2027 state budget by next week. This cycle marks a significant shift for the General Assembly. After years of expansion, legislators must now navigate a fiscal environment defined by flat state revenue and a sharp decline in federal support. For the first time in recent memory, the conversation is shifting from managing growth to implementing strategic reductions. Programs accustomed to steady increases must now prepare for a no-growth reality and, in many cases, significant budgetary cuts

Hearings of Interest Update

[House Bill 3010](#), sponsored by Representative Melanie Stinnett, was heard on Thursday in the House Health and Mental Health Committee. This bill aims to reform Missouri's prior authorization process, primarily through a "gold carding" program. Under this provision, healthcare providers who maintain a 90% approval rate for specific services over a 12-month evaluation period would be exempt from prior authorization requirements for those services in the following period. The bill also introduces a requirement for an Application Programming



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Interface (API) to standardize electronic communication between insurers and providers, a move intended to reduce "paper shuffling" and administrative delays.

Supporters testified that current prior authorization hurdles lead to dangerous delays in patient care. They highlighted the immense administrative burden, with some hospitals employing up to 60 staff members solely to manage insurance paperwork. Conversely, opponents from the insurance industry argued that the 90% threshold is too low, potentially allowing nearly all providers to be exempt and removing a critical tool for cost control. They expressed concern that without these checks, the state's managed Medicaid population could see a significant increase in non-medically necessary spending.

In our testimony, the Academy offered full endorsement of this bill. We highlighted the staggering administrative burden of prior authorizations, which cost an average of \$11 per request. For the individual physician, this translates to over \$82,000 in annual overhead and 14 hours per week which is time that is redirected away from direct patient care

Hearings Next Week

The [Senate Emerging Issues and Professional Registration Committee](#) will hear several bills related to expanding scope of practice next Tuesday morning.

Committee: [Emerging Issues and Professional Registration, Senator Justin Brown, Chairman](#)

Date: Tuesday, February 24

Time: 10:00 AM

Room: SCR 1 - 1st Floor

[SB 1405](#) - **McCreery**

Modifies the provision relating to clinical fellowships for licensure of speech pathologists and audiologists

[SB 979](#) - **Schroer**

Modifies provisions relating to advanced practice registered nurses

[SB 1016](#) - **Lewis**

Modifies provisions relating to advanced practice registered nurses

[SB 1247](#) - **Ben Brown (26)**

Provides that certified registered nurse anesthetists may select, issue orders for, and administer certain controlled substances

[SB 1445](#) - **Lewis**

Provides that certified registered nurse anesthetists may select, issue orders for, and administer certain controlled substances

Just like last year, we will have a pivotal scope of practice hearing during Family Physician Advocacy Day, with about 65 members registered to attend this year. This is scheduled during our board meeting. We will navigate balancing providing testimony at the hearing with our board meeting. A livestream of Senate hearings is available at <https://www.senate.mo.gov/hearingsschedule/hrings.htm> if you'd like to take a break from the Winter Olympics and tune in.

This last-minute notice is indicative of the trend in the Capitol this legislative session to post hearings much closer to the deadline.



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Family Physician Advocacy Day

We look forward to a great group for Family Physician Advocacy Day next Monday and Tuesday (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.

As part of MAFP's Family Physician Advocacy Day, we invite all members, whether or not you are participating in Advocacy Day activities, to join our Virtual Legislative Briefing on **Monday, February 23 at 6:30 PM CST.**

This briefing will provide timely updates on key legislative issues impacting family physicians and your patients across Missouri. It's an opportunity to stay informed, engaged, and ready to advocate for our specialty. No registration is required. Just save the link and join us on Teams at the scheduled time.

Your voice matters in shaping the future of family medicine. We hope you'll take part in this important conversation.

[Join the Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 225 040 096 430 20

Passcode: Zj2ua3oZ

Advocacy Day details, including a full schedule can be found at <https://www.mo-afp.org/advocacy/advocacy-day/>.

MAFP Bill Report

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

2026 Dates of Interest

- 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

Questions/Feedback

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