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Representative Steve Jordan's Capitol Report - March 21, 2025

MARCH 24TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Greetings Friends of the 151st District!

Session is halfway done as us Legislators were on Spring Break this week. We received a break from being in Jefferson City so we could work in the district with our constituents. It was great to be back in the district, but our Spring Break started off with strong winds and various tornados throughout the southern half of our state. If you need any help, please do not hesitate to contact our office. My office is always available for you.

Missouri Legislature Returns to Finalize FY 2026 Budget and Key Investments

With spring break now behind us, the Missouri Legislature returns to Jefferson City this week to begin the final eight weeks of the session. The most pressing task for lawmakers is to pass the Fiscal Year 2026 state operating budget. Over the past several months, the Missouri House Budget Committee and its appropriations staff have been working diligently on the budget recommendations presented by Governor Mike Kehoe in late January, which carries a nearly \$54 billion price tag. These recommendations prioritize strategic investments in key areas such as public safety, economic development, agriculture, education, healthcare, mental health, and services for veterans and military personnel. The goal is to strengthen Missouri's infrastructure, enhance residents' quality of life, and foster long-term growth across the state.

Among the proposals, public safety remains a top priority, with \$12.8 million allocated for a new crime lab in Cape Girardeau to improve investigative capabilities, \$10 million

dedicated to police training and equipment enhancements through the Blue Shield Program, and \$25 million set aside to support crime victims. Additionally, the legislature will consider funding on reducing crime, bolstering law enforcement, and enhancing community safety initiatives.

Economic development efforts include \$161.5 million for childcare subsidies and innovation grants aimed at expanding access for working families. Infrastructure improvements are also a focus, with \$60 million earmarked for rural road enhancements to ensure safe and efficient transportation. Missouri's role on the global stage is highlighted through a \$40.5 million investment in preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The budget proposes spending \$4 billion on the foundation formula in fiscal 2026, and also includes \$50 million to expand a scholarship program for private schools. Education funding sees a substantial boost, with \$200 million in new funding for public schools, \$33.4 million to fund increased base salaries for teachers, \$16.8 million to increase support for higher education and \$15 million to continue fully funding public school transportation needs. Additional resources will support smaller districts through small school grants, while expanded Fast Track Scholarships will provide opportunities for adults in high-demand fields to strengthen the state's workforce.

Healthcare and mental health services receive critical funding, with \$149 million allocated to eliminate waitlists for developmental disability services, \$71.6 million directed toward expanding behavioral health services statewide, and \$17.9 million set aside for early childhood intervention programs.

In the agricultural sector, \$55 million in bonding will modernize livestock facilities at the Missouri State Fair, while additional funding will expand meat and poultry inspection programs to ensure food safety and support local producers.

Missouri's commitment to veterans and military personnel is evident in the \$10 million investment to improve veterans' homes and healthcare systems, ensuring those who have served can receive the quality care they deserve.

As lawmakers return to Jefferson City, these budget proposals will take center stage, shaping the future of Missouri and advancing initiatives that benefit communities across the state. The Budget Committee is expected to move quickly and get the appropriations bills to the House floor within the next few weeks, aiming to have them passed out of the House and headed to the Senate in early April.

For updates on the committee's progress and ongoing budget discussions, visit house.mo.gov/Budget.aspx.

Governor Signs FY 2025 Supplemental Budget Bill

Governor Mike Kehoe signed the FY 2025 supplemental budget bill, HB 14, ensuring the continued operation of state government. Totalling over \$1.9 billion, including \$391.5 million in general revenue and \$1.4 billion in federal funds, the bill supports key services across Missouri. It allocates \$157.4 million for public school funding, \$20.8 million for special education services, and \$16.5 million for the First Steps program. Additionally, \$14 million will support senior services such as meals and in-home care, while law enforcement efforts receive funding for immigration enforcement training and expanded drug and crime investigations. Governor Kehoe emphasized the bill's role in sustaining education, special needs services, law enforcement, and senior care, ensuring vital resources reach communities statewide.

Governor Kehoe Requests Damage Assessments to Secure Federal Disaster Aid Following Devastating Tornadoes

A devastating outbreak of tornadoes and severe storms swept through Missouri on March 14-15, claiming 12 lives, leaving one person missing, and causing widespread destruction across more than two dozen counties. The storms leveled homes, schools, and businesses, leaving hundreds of structures damaged or destroyed. At its peak, the disaster knocked out power to over 140,000 homes and businesses, while 101 roads were closed due to debris, flooding, and structural damage.

Governor Kehoe has requested the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to conduct joint preliminary damage assessments (PDAs) in 23 affected counties. This step is crucial in securing federal disaster assistance for impacted communities.

Starting Thursday, March 20, six PDA teams—including FEMA, SEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and local emergency officials—will assess the damage to determine if Individual Assistance can be requested. This aid would provide federal support for temporary housing, home repairs, and the replacement of lost belongings and vehicles.

Initial assessments estimate 368 homes were destroyed, 356 sustained major damage, and 1,058 had minor damage. Ongoing evaluations of roads, bridges, and public infrastructure may lead to additional requests for Public Assistance.

The National Weather Service (NWS) has confirmed at least 12 tornadoes across Missouri, ranging from EF1 to EF3, impacting multiple counties, including:

- EF1: Franklin County (Elmont to Union)

- EF1: Jefferson County (Klondike Rd)
- EF1: Webster County (near Seymour)
- EF1: Oregon County (near Rover)
- EF2: Franklin/St. Louis counties (Villa Ridge to Fox Creek)
- EF2: Jefferson County (Hillsboro to Arnold)
- EF2: St. Louis County (Bridgeton)
- EF2: Phelps County (Doolittle to Rolla)
- EF2: Dunklin/Pemiscot counties
- EF3: Iron County (Des Arc)
- EF3: Butler County (Poplar Bluff)
- EF3: Ozark County (Bakersfield)

Outages continue to decrease as power has been restored, as the wake of the storm left thousands of Missourians without power. The State Emergency Operations Center remains activated to assist in the recovery process, assess ongoing needs and coordinate resources as requested by local partners and emergency management.

Volunteer and faith-based organizations, including the Red Cross, Missouri Baptist Disaster Relief, Convoy of Hope, and the Salvation Army, are providing meals, shelter, and emergency supplies. Missourians in need of assistance can contact United Way at 2-1-1 or the Red Cross at 1-800-733-2767. Additional disaster recovery resources, including housing and mental health services, are available at recovery.mo.gov.

Join Us for Missouri House of Representatives Veterans Recognition Day

The Missouri House of Representatives invites you to a special Veterans Recognition Day on Thursday, March 27, 2025, from 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM in the 1st Floor Capitol Rotunda. This event honors the bravery and sacrifices of Missouri's veterans and provides an opportunity for State Representatives to connect with their veteran constituents.

Veterans can receive assistance from a Missouri Veterans Commission Veterans Service Officer, who will be available to answer questions and provide support. Several organizations will also be present to share valuable resources, including the Missouri Department of Mental Health, The Follow-On Mission, Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital, Heroes Outreach Program, and the Columbia VET Center.

Veterans who wish to be recognized in the House Chamber will be escorted to the 4th floor gallery for a special introduction during the legislative session.

Join us as we celebrate and honor the service of Missouri's veterans. We look forward to seeing you there!

If any of you want details on legislation we pass, please email me a request to Steve.Jordan@house.mo.gov. If you ever have, any questions or concerns feel free to call me at 573-751-1494.

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