

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MISSOURI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MISSOURI

BUSINESS

SUMMER 2025

pg. **5**

PROP A REFORM SIGNED INTO LAW

Legislative action brings clarity and
confidence to Missouri businesses.



MISSOURI BUSINESS

Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry
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**in every issue*



MISSOURI CHAMBER
MOMENTUM

We heard you loud and clear:

No issue in the past decade has posed a greater threat to Missouri businesses than Proposition A.

That's why the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry made Proposition A reform our top priority during the 2025 legislative session. And thanks to your support, we succeeded.

With the passage of House Bill 567, Missouri's business community has secured critical relief. From the Capitol to the courtroom, the Missouri Chamber led the charge – mobilizing a grassroots coalition of more than 550 businesses statewide to advocate for meaningful change.

On pages 5-7, you'll find more on our advocacy efforts and hear directly from business leaders impacted by this issue. I'm also proud to spotlight two of our strongest allies in the legislature: Rep. Sherri Gallick and Sen. Mike Bernskoetter. Their leadership was instrumental in passing HB 567, and you can learn more about their role on pages 8-10.

But our work doesn't stop at the Capitol.

This summer, the Missouri Chamber launched a bold new internal strategic plan: *Missouri Chamber Momentum*.

This plan channels fresh energy into our mission, guided by five key priorities:

1. Advocacy and political dominance
2. Operational excellence
3. Missouri Chamber Foundation growth
4. Membership investment and engagement
5. Non-dues revenue growth

Missouri Chamber Momentum will help us align our efforts, sharpen our advocacy, and refocus on what matters most: protecting and advancing Missouri employers.

As part of this plan, we're doubling down on efforts to pass pro-business policies and stop legislation that threatens Missouri's economic climate. The successful reform of Proposition A is a clear example of what we can accomplish when we unite around a shared goal.

To every business leader who spoke up, shared your story and stood with us – thank you.

Together, we got it done.

President and CEO

Missouri

BUSINESS LEADERS

drive Proposition A reform

During the 2025 legislative session, the Missouri General Assembly stood up for business owners burdened by Proposition A – a ballot initiative that included mandatory paid sick leave and annual wage increases.

House Bill 567, sponsored by Rep. Sherri Gallick (R-Belton) and handled by Sen. Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City), provides targeted relief by removing Proposition A's onerous paid sick leave mandate while maintaining the \$15 minimum wage. It also eliminates annual increases based on the Consumer Price Index, giving employers greater predictability in managing labor costs.

The legislation will take effect on August 28, 2025.

The Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry led the fight for HB 567, organizing a grassroots coalition of more than 550 businesses from across the state that advocated for Proposition A reform.

"Missouri employers value their employees as their greatest asset and are committed to providing competitive wages and benefits," said Kara Corches, president

**HAD [HB 567]
NOT PASSED, IT
WOULD HAVE
COST US AROUND
\$80,000 A YEAR
TO IMPLEMENT
PROPOSITION A'S
REQUIREMENTS.**



—BECKY THOMAS

and CEO of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "But from day one, our position has been clear: Business owners know best how to run their own companies, and burdensome mandates only hinder economic growth. HB 567 gives employers the flexibility to make decisions that best fit their teams, creating opportunity and strengthening Missouri's economy."

The real-world cost of Proposition A

For many employers, Proposition A's mandates created unsustainable cost burdens – especially for small manufacturers already struggling with razor-thin margins.

"Every day is more challenging to keep production running," said Becky Thomas, owner of Third Street Sportswear in Ozark.

For 39 years, Thomas' family has been cutting, sewing and decorating clothing that is primarily sold at college bookstores, such as the University of Missouri.

"HB 567 provides much-needed clarity for

business owners,” Thomas said. “Had this not passed, it would have cost us around \$80,000 a year to implement Proposition A’s requirements.”

Jeff Glassner, president of Urethane Roller Specialist in Eureka, shared similar frustrations. URS was founded in 1969 and has 31 employees making urethane and rubber rollers for industries across the country. The company already offers generous leave – including 40 hours of paid sick time a year, as well as vacation and holidays – but would have been forced to add at least 16 additional hours to comply with Proposition A.

“That’s 500 hours of lost production,” Glassner said.

Jan Haviland and Alice Andrews, leaders of Haviland Corporation in Linn – a family-owned business that manufactures products for cleaning, food processing and health care – worried about Proposition A’s impact on the overall business climate.

“What business would want to come to our state knowing the minimum wage would be raised every year to an unknown level?” asked Haviland, president of Haviland Corporation. “Where do you put that new increase? Eventually, you end up having to downgrade your product if labor costs get too high.”

Both Haviland and Andrews believe Proposition A was misaligned with actual business practices.

“Prop A was just trying to regulate business, rather than looking to see what businesses already had in place,” said Andrews, executive vice president at Haviland. “They made no inquiries to see if businesses already offered paid sick time.”

Hiring challenges compound this issue

Business owners across various industries pointed to a common challenge: worker shortages and rising benefit costs.

“Unfortunately, finding and training new workers is becoming increasingly difficult,” Thomas said.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the apparel and textile manufacturing industry lost 81% of its jobs in the U.S. between 1979 and 2019. Today, just 3% of apparel sold in the U.S.

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GOOD THING. I’VE
BEEN A LONG-TIME
MEMBER, AND I’M
GLAD TO SEE THEY
GOT THIS PUSHED
THROUGH TO
MAKE NECESSARY
CHANGES.**



—JEFF GLASSNER

is made in this country, according to the American Apparel & Footwear Association.

To compete in a mostly imported industry, Thomas said her workers must be cross-trained and strive to be more efficient than cheaper, imported competitors.

“The skills required for our jobs aren’t being taught in schools, and that requires

significant on-the-job training and investment,” Thomas said. “As wages and benefits rise without an increase in worker skill levels, it becomes harder to take a chance on people and grow our business.”

Glassner agreed with Thomas, saying finding qualified workers to fill positions has been a challenge for him for the last five years.

“The pool to pull from for our type of work is definitely a small one,” Glassner said. “It takes time to train folks, and that slows us down on getting product out, but fortunately I still have a good base of people, many who have been with us a long time.”

A unified business voice

Thomas, Glassner, Haviland and Andrews all agree that the Missouri Chamber and fellow business leaders across the state played a pivotal role in getting HB 567 across the finish line.

“I was very glad that the Missouri Chamber fought this,” Glassner said. “Any advocacy for small businesses in the state of Missouri is a good thing. I’ve been a long-time member, and I’m glad to see they got this pushed through to make necessary changes.”

“They put out multiple emails for calls to action, which was a great way to combat it,” said Andrews.

The passage of HB 567 reflects the power of a shared business voice. With more than 550 companies backing the Missouri Chamber’s campaign, this legislative win sets a precedent for how the business community can shape policy and protect Missouri’s economic future.

“We joined the Missouri Chamber in 2024, and one of the reasons we joined was because we knew this issue was coming,” Thomas said. “We knew businesses would need to pool their resources to address these issues. The Missouri Chamber did a great job communicating to us and other members the implications this could have on our businesses.” •



THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Proponents of Proposition A have filed paperwork to place a similar constitutional amendment on the ballot during the 2026 election cycle.

Join the fight to protect jobs, growth and free enterprise.

Scan the QR code to get involved.



Welcome to the Missouri Chamber!

Say hello to the **new members** we welcomed in the first half of 2025. These businesses and organizations are contributing to Missouri's vibrant economic landscape. We're proud to be your voice in the Capitol, the courtroom and beyond!

Albaugh, LLC (St. Joseph)
American Hotel and Lodging Association (Washington)
Behrle Plumbing, LLC (St. Charles)
BluEarth Renewables (Phoenix)
Bubenik Painting LLC (St. Louis)
Cardinal Elevator (Ballwin)
Central Bank of Sedalia (Sedalia)
Circle Seven LLC (St. Louis)
City of Wright City
Clario Advisors (St. Louis)
Clayco (St. Louis)
Clorox Company (Oakland)
C.L. Smith Industrial Company (Arnold)
Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates (Oklahoma City)
CommDepot (St. Louis)
efactory (Springfield)
EnerSys, Inc. (Warrensburg)
Equipment Pro, Inc. (Ste. Genevieve)
Erdman Properties and Investments (Kansas City)
Forest Park Pediatrics (St. Louis)
Governmental Services Group, Inc. (Jefferson City)
Hilton St. Louis Frontenac (St. Louis)
Kansas City Aviation Department (Kansas City)
LPL Financial, Representatives Eric Park & George Meyer (Washington)
McDonald's Corporation (Chicago)
MidAmerica Hotels Corporation (Cape Girardeau)
Missouri AfterSchool Network (Columbia)
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies/NAMIC (Indianapolis)
Ndonwi Law LLC (St. Louis)
Oz Operations LLC (Camdenton)
Postcards from BKLYN LLC (St. Louis)
Schnell Express (St. Louis)
Sentio BioSciences LLC (Maryland Heights)
Smile On Dental Studio (Richmond Heights)
Sunset Hills Dental Group (St. Louis)
Superior Transport Services LLC (O'Fallon)
Terrill Franchising Specialists (Town and Country)
The Poultry Federation (Little Rock)
Townsend Handyman Services (Cape Girardeau)
Universal Medical Resources, Inc. (Washington)
Willow Springs Chamber of Commerce (Willow Springs)

“**HB 567** was about the lady who owns the dry cleaners, the dentist down the street, the local pest control company, the neighborhood grocery store, local restaurants, local child care providers and *thousands* of other businesses.”

REP. SHERRI GALLICK (R-BELTON)



Behind the bill: How two lawmakers fought for Missouri business

Missouri businesses had a pair of legislative champions who fought to pass Proposition A reform. Rep. Sherri Gallick (R-Belton) and Sen. Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City) carried HB 567 – an effort that required extraordinary dedication.

“I filed HB 567 because I care deeply about Missouri and want to see our state continue to move forward,” Gallick said. “I firmly believed, and still believe, that the ballot measure in its original form would have had negative consequences for our economy.”

Proposition A, passed by voters last November, mandated businesses provide paid sick leave to employees and increased Missouri’s minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2026. While HB 567 preserves the minimum wage increase, it removes the sick leave

requirements and eliminates annual minimum wage increases based on the Consumer Price Index.

“The proposal on the November ballot didn’t go through the legislative process, so it wasn’t vetted like it would be in the legislature,” Bernskoetter said. “You had a one-size-fits-all plan, and I don’t think businesses should be treated like that. Decisions on wages and other benefits should be left between the employer and employee.”

“On any proposed law, proposition or policy, it is the responsibility of legislators to recognize unintended consequences and make necessary adjustments,” Gallick said. “HB 567 was about the lady who owns the dry cleaners, the dentist down the street, the local pest control company, the neighborhood grocery store, local restaurants, local child care providers and thousands of other businesses.”

Gallick added that, while well-intentioned, mandates like Proposition A can backfire.

“Mandates often come with unintended side effects,” Gallick said. “They can increase costs, limit flexibility, and reduce morale and engagement among employees. These effects, in turn, can lower productivity and increase turnover.”

Bernskoetter said the number of emails, letters and phone calls he received about Proposition A were some of the highest he’s seen while serving in office. Hundreds of employers also reached out to Gallick

to express concerns about keeping their businesses afloat.

“Sick leave benefit packages are complex due to the wide variety of business structures. Implementing a government-mandated one-size-fits-all system is not sustainable for business growth and only makes the issues more complex,” Gallick said.

Both Gallick and Bernskoetter applauded Missouri Chamber President and CEO Kara Corches for playing a key role in behind-the-scenes negotiations. Corches participated in multiple late-night sessions to try to find a solution for businesses.

Looking ahead, Bernskoetter warned that efforts to reinstate the sick leave mandate will resurface. Proponents of Proposition A have already filed paperwork to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot.

“Hopefully the business community continues their support, because there is a proposal to bring the sick leave measure back to voters,” Bernskoetter said. “It would be in the form of a constitutional amendment, which means the legislature couldn’t make fixes. The business community needs to be fully engaged to make sure they can push back on a sick leave mandate.”

“Having the support of the Missouri Chamber and its members showed me that I was doing the right thing,” Gallick said. “I had no second thoughts about this legislation, and it’s made me more driven in my goal to protect businesses.” •

By the Numbers: Proposition A Reform

Our efforts to pass HB 567:



200+

meetings with
legislators



75+

conversations with
legislative leadership



3

webinars hosted

— informing —

1,358

registrants



1,596

emails sent to
legislators through our
Policy Action Center

from

552

advocates



25

email updates
to members



2

news
conferences

76

media
appearances



POWERING MISSOURI'S FUTURE

*SB 4 lays the groundwork
for economic growth*





DATA CENTERS. ADVANCED MANUFACTURING. SEMICONDUCTOR PRODUCTION.

These high-demand industries are reshaping the U.S.'s economic landscape – and Missouri is preparing to lead the charge. But new opportunity brings new challenges, particularly when it comes to powering this next wave of growth.

“We are seeing a massive increase in energy demand that is being driven by a reshoring of projects from overseas, a boom in data centers, advanced manufacturing facilities and CHIPS Act-related projects,” said Jason Klindt, senior director of external affairs for Evergy. “In 2019, the average size of a project in Missouri was 2 megawatts. Today, we are over 100 megawatts as an average, with individual projects now reaching 1 gigawatt of power.”

While industrial demand rises, Missouri's energy supply has remained relatively flat. In response, the state's utilities, business leaders, regulators and legislators came together to find a solution.

“Years ago, policymakers started having workshops in Jefferson City because they saw an emerging issue around energy needs,” said Scott Weitzel, vice president of regulatory and governmental affairs for Spire Missouri. “One of the big catalysts of those workshops was economic development.”

The result of those efforts is Senate Bill 4 – a comprehensive package to bolster Missouri's utility infrastructure, modernize the state's regulatory framework and support long-term economic development. Sponsored by Sen. Mike Cierpiot (R-Lee's Summit) and handled by Rep. Josh Hurlbert (R-Smithville), SB 4 passed during the 2025 legislative session and was signed into law by Gov. Mike Kehoe on April 9.



“Senate Bill 4 gives us the predictability that we need to make the investments in new generation,” said Tina Shannon, senior director of government relations for Ameren Missouri. “It really just puts us in a position to say, ‘Missouri is open for business.’ It sends that signal.”

SB 4 contains several important provisions, including:

- **Future test year:** This new ratemaking standard will create more certainty for utility companies, allowing them to replace aging infrastructure and increase capacity at an aggressive pace.
- **Construction Work in Progress (CWIP):** This provision allows utility companies to recover some of the costs incurred during new plant construction, incentivizing investment in new energy generation. CWIP also saves customers money by reducing interest costs on new power plants.
- **Natural gas discount for large users:** The bill creates a 25% rate discount for four years for high-volume gas users, such as business campuses, schools, prisons, airports and large nursing homes. The discount will help communities attract major projects and support the expansion of existing businesses.

“Reliable, resilient and affordable energy is key to retaining and attracting business to the state,” said Kara Corches, president and CEO of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. “The Missouri Chamber was a strong supporter of this legislation because it addresses critical infrastructure needs. We applaud lawmakers for passing SB 4, ensuring the state has the energy capacity to power new investments and help existing businesses expand.”

Outside the utility industry, many business leaders recognize the importance of building new dispatchable power to modernize Missouri’s energy grid. When responding to the Missouri Chamber’s CEO Survey, 60% of business leaders were supportive of legislation to reduce barriers for utility companies to more quickly build new power plants in the state.

Importantly, SB 4 also includes key consumer protections to ensure growth doesn’t come at the expense of ratepayers.

“The legislation also included several measures designed to strengthen regulatory oversight,” Shannon said. “This will help ensure Missouri families continue to enjoy the region’s most affordable energy rates

while positioning us to be able to capture the new wave of economic growth.”

“It’s a thoughtful response to a problem,” Klindt added. “It balances the need to build power with the need to make sure our customers are protected.”

For Missouri’s business leaders, the passage of SB 4 is a strategic step toward long-term growth.

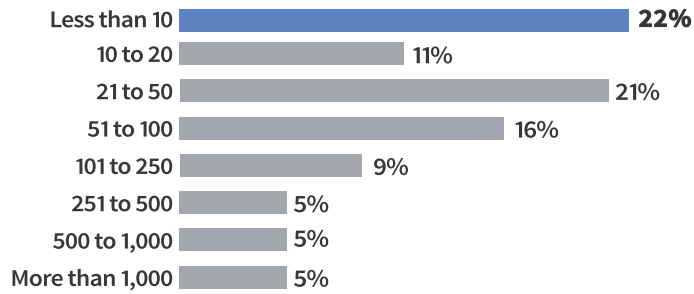
“It positions Missouri well to be aggressive,” Weitzel said. “We’re competing with Illinois. We’re competing with Kansas. When companies know we have sound infrastructure and stable energy prices, that positions us well to grow as a state.”

The Missouri Chamber worked closely with Ameren, Evergy, Spire and other stakeholders to advocate for the legislation, reinforcing the importance of a unified business voice in Jefferson City.

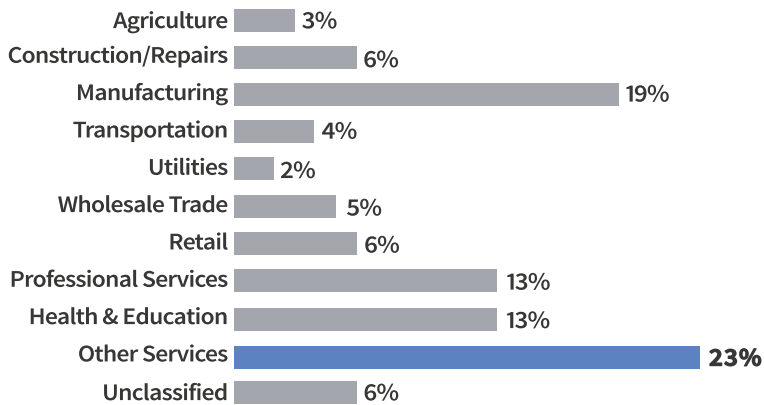
“Now more than ever, there are groups who engage on legislation who have a very different view of businesses’ role, economic development and economics. It’s important that businesses have a unified voice to balance out that perspective,” Klindt said. “Missouri stands to gain jobs and people as legislatures on the coasts run amok with job-killing rules and laws. As the people who create and sustain jobs in Missouri, our voice is vital to ensuring our state’s success.” •



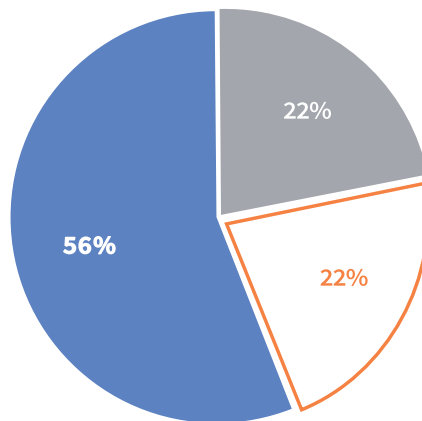
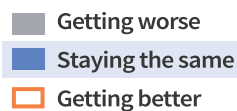
Number of employees in businesses polled:



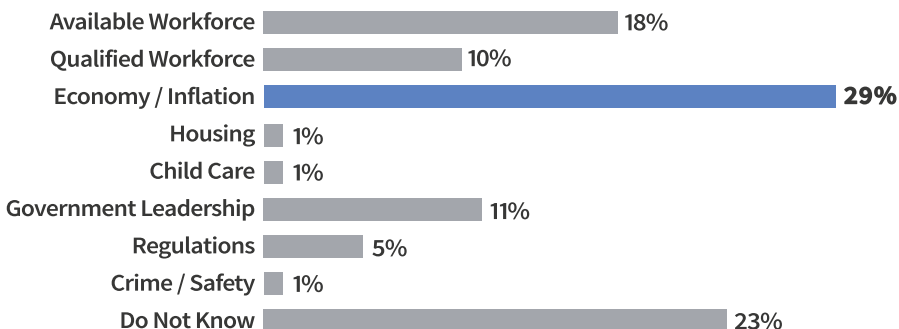
Industry groups represented:



How would you rate the overall business climate in Missouri?



Biggest obstacle to growth for your business?



CEO SURVEY RESULTS

Every year, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry asks CEOs and top business leaders at companies throughout the state to share their thoughts on the economy, the business climate, the direction of our state and more.

Conducted by an independent research firm, the Missouri Chamber CEO Survey helps determine where and how the Missouri Chamber should focus its attention in the year ahead.

Here's a snapshot of the 2025 results.

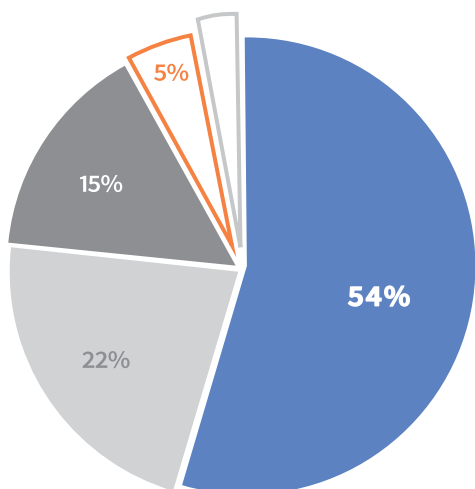


The Missouri CEO Survey was conducted by CHS & Associates in February 2025. It's a survey of over 400 business leaders across the state from every industry sector.

Greatest concern with available workforce?

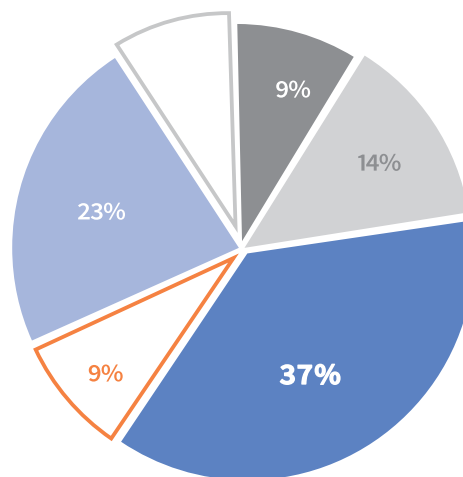
Soft skills remain the top concern when it comes to workforce.

Degree or experience
 Professional/soft skills
 Technical skills
 Passing a drug test



When retaining or attracting new talent, which quality of life factor has the greatest impact?

Crime rate
 Local schools
 Housing costs
 Cultural amenities
 Health care access



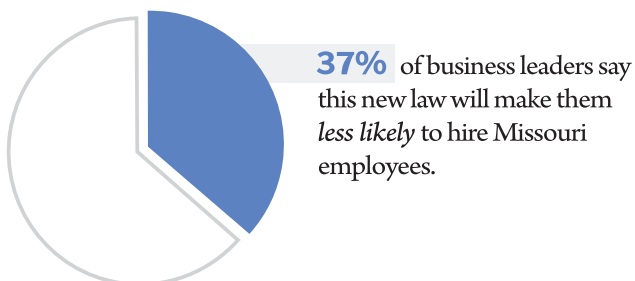
85%

of business leaders agree:

“The expense and difficulty in finding child care keeps a significant number of Missourians out of the workforce.”

PROPOSITION A

How will Proposition A’s minimum wage and paid sick leave requirements impact your company’s hiring plans?



37% of business leaders say this new law will make them *less likely* to hire Missouri employees.

✓ HB 567 was passed to address these concerns

PUBLIC SAFETY

66% of business leaders agree:

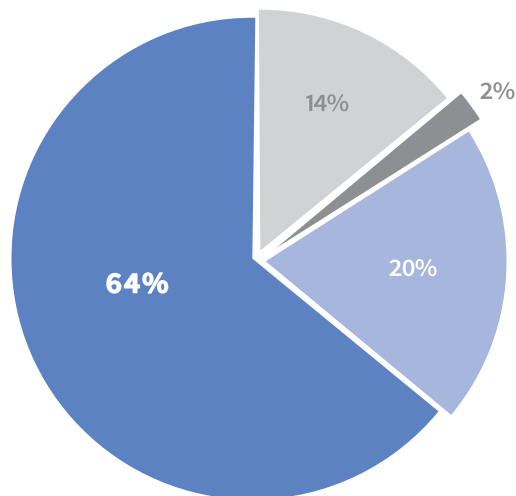
“Missouri’s rising crime rate is impacting the state’s economic competitiveness.”

ENERGY

60% of business leaders **SUPPORT**

legislation to help utility companies to build new power plants faster by reducing disincentives.

Why are additional power plants needed in Missouri?



- Improve reliability
- Help with national security
- Aid in economic growth
- All of the above



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BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING BUSINESSES:

How Missouri's Show-Me Network will Empower Entrepreneurs Statewide

In a powerful move to advance opportunities for entrepreneurs across Missouri, a new grant is expanding technical assistance and business support programs far beyond the state's southern counties. Thanks to nearly \$3 million in federal State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) funding administered through the Missouri Department of Economic Development Missouri Technical Assistance (MOTA) Grant, Missouri State University's efactory and long-time partner codefi are scaling up their innovative approach to economic development. The result? A new statewide initiative called the Show-Me Network, and it's ready to reshape the future for small businesses, tech companies, innovators and the communities they serve.

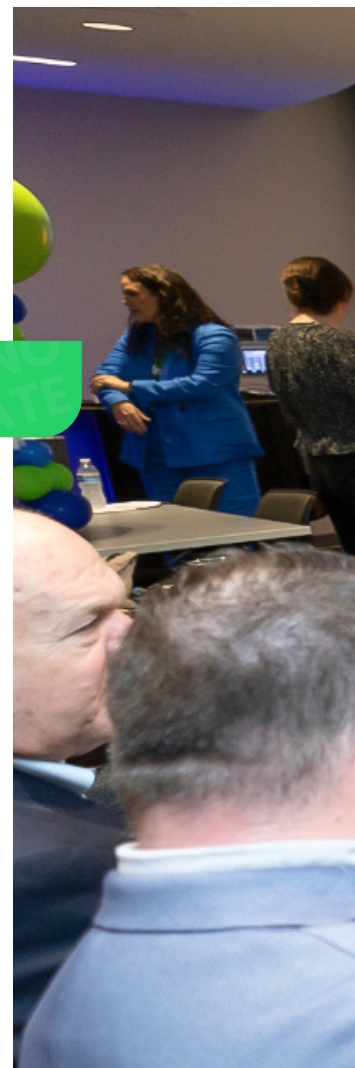
This new network builds on the remarkable momentum of Innovate SOMO, a collaboration between efactory and codefi that has spent the last three years making entrepreneurship and workforce development more accessible across 47 counties in Southern Missouri.

"Many entrepreneurs are passionate about growing their businesses while staying rooted in their communities," said Rachel Munday, executive director of efactory. "By expanding resources to all corners of the state, we can provide more assistance and connections that help small businesses thrive, no matter their location. This grant will enable us to open doors to new opportunities for many entrepreneurs and small business owners who are eager to grow and make an impact."

From Regional to Statewide Powerhouse

Missouri State's efactory, based in Springfield, was launched to support entrepreneurs, innovators and job creators and serve as the front door to the university for employers. With business consulting, coworking spaces, training programs, a growing list of partnerships, and a direct pipeline to student talent, efactory has become a regional anchor for economic development.

Meanwhile, headquartered in Cape Girardeau and with an expansion in Springfield, codefi has been tackling the rural tech gap head-on. As an innovation





“THIS GRANT WILL ENABLE US TO OPEN DOORS TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANY ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS WHO ARE EAGER TO GROW AND MAKE AN IMPACT.

Rachel Munday, executive director | efactory



hub, codefi empowers digital entrepreneurs by providing proprietary decision support tools, software and cyber engineering training, and early-stage capital that is typically scarce in non-urban areas.

Together, these two organizations created the Southern Missouri Innovation Network,

known as Innovate SOMO. Their mission was simple but ambitious: make career-building resources, tech training and entrepreneurial support more accessible across the region.

The results have been transformative. From bootstrapped startups to growing manufacturers, Innovate SOMO has

supported thousands of individuals and businesses through customized training, business consultations and mentorship, capital connections and community partnerships. Its growing network of Community Connectors and Regional Connectors has provided on-the-ground expertise and local advocacy that ensures



Community leaders gather in Cape Girardeau for the official announcement of the statewide expansion and creation of the Show-Me Network in April 2025. From left: Shad Burner, Lesley Rone, Kim Froemsdorf, Rachel Munday, James Stapleton, Emily Denniston.

each region's unique needs are met.

Welcome to the Show-Me Network

Now, with the new MOTA grant funding in hand, the team is turning that successful regional model into a statewide network for Missouri's entrepreneurs and innovators.

The Show-Me Network will expand technical assistance services, connect startups to capital and deliver workforce training statewide. It's designed to bring high-impact resources to rural communities that often face barriers to economic opportunity.

"This funding is an exciting opportunity to further support entrepreneurship in every region of our state, including rural areas," said Michelle Hataway, director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

By offering enhanced business consulting, training programs and capital-readiness support, the network will prepare startups and small businesses to apply for critical funding through programs like the IDEA Fund (administered by the Missouri

Technology Corporation) and IgniteMO (run by Justine PETERSEN). These capital access pathways are essential for entrepreneurs, especially those in early stages or operating outside major metro areas where resources are more limited.

"At codefi, we know that access to capital is one of the biggest challenges for tech entrepreneurs," said Dr. James Stapleton, founder and CEO of codefi. "This collaboration allows us to provide our proprietary tools and services to founders across Missouri to help validate their ideas and business models, acquire angel and venture capital, and achieve the traction to build successful tech ventures. We're excited to be part of a project that will create meaningful change and unlock new pathways for people across Missouri."

A Network Fueled by Collaboration

The secret behind the Show-Me Network's success will be the power of partnerships. By working alongside regional chambers of commerce, economic development groups, industry associations like the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Missouri Association of Manufacturers

(MAM), and local connectors, the network reduces silos and redundancies.

It's a model built on shared responsibility and shared vision: that everyone, regardless of ZIP code, deserves access to the resources that make entrepreneurship possible.

"This grant allows us to build on what's working in Southern Missouri and extend support to more entrepreneurs across the state," said Chrystal Irons, director of the Missouri SBDC at MSU. "We're committed to showing up in meaningful ways — offering guidance, opening doors and helping business owners grow, wherever they are."

Looking Ahead

The Show-Me Network is a movement toward opportunity in entrepreneurship. With Innovate SOMO as its foundation, this expansion represents a bold vision where innovation knows no boundaries and opportunity is truly statewide.

In the coming months, expect to see more connectors join the effort, sending a clear message across Missouri: **We believe in our people, we believe in our businesses, and we're ready to make more possible.**

JOIN US AT [SHOWMENETWORK.ORG](https://showmenetwork.org)

MEMBER MILESTONES

Congratulations to the Missouri Chamber companies and organizations celebrating significant membership anniversaries. Thank you for your continued partnership!

| 10 YEARS |

Amcor Flexible Packaging
Arkema Coating Resins
Associated Builders & Contractors
Bartlett & West, Inc.
Bluebird Network LLC
Branson Convention Center
CCR Roofing Services LLC
CertainTeed Roofing
Concordia Area Chamber of Commerce
Cottleville/Weldon Spring Chamber of Commerce
Hermann Area Chamber of Commerce
Kansas City University
Marr and Company PC
McCormick Distilling Co., Inc.
Missouri/Kansas Chapter of the American Concrete
Pavement Association
Missouri Sugars
Oak Grove Chamber of Commerce
Precision Aero Services
Rolla Regional Economic Commission
RP Lumber Company, Inc.
Schulte's Fresh Foods
Silgan Plastic Food Containers
South Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center
Veterans United Home Loans
VMLY&R
Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce
Warsaw Area Chamber of Commerce
Watco Manufacturing Company
West Plains Bank & Trust Company

| 25 YEARS |

Copeland Bus Sales LLC
Hallmark Cards, Incorporated
Hawthorn Foundation
H.E. Williams, Inc.
Macon Area Chamber of Commerce
Margaritaville Lake Resort
Menco Royal, Inc.
Perennial Energy LLC
Posty Cards, Inc.
S.M. Arnold, Inc.
Ventura Foods LLC
Winning Women

| 50 YEARS |

SMC Packaging Group

Chamber Benefit Plan.



Affordable coverage has arrived for Missouri's small businesses.

- ✓ 2-50 eligible employees enrolled in your medical plan
- ✓ Domiciled in Missouri
- ✓ In good standing with the Missouri Chamber or a local participating chamber

Find a certified broker at

mochamber.com/benefits



A healthier way to pay for care over time

How the Chamber Benefit Plan makes health care accessible for thousands of Missourians.

Health care affordability is a significant hurdle for many Missourians, and the strain from medical expenses can impact many areas of their finances, such as their credit score or ability to apply for a loan or mortgage.



More than

4 in 10

Missouri residents say they would be not able to pay off an unexpected medical bill of \$500.*



70%

of Missouri adults report that they've skipped or postponed care due to costs.*

To combat these mounting pressures, Missourians now have a healthier way to pay for care. Through the Missouri Chamber Benefit Plan, members across the Show-Me State have access to Paytient, a benefit that removes financial barriers to care — **at no cost to employer or employees.**

How Paytient Works

Instant access to health care funds.

Upon approval, members receive a spending limit of \$1,000 for individual plans and \$2,000 for families.

Use the Paytient card to pay for care.

Members can use the Paytient card to pay upfront medical and prescription expenses.

Choose a custom repayment plan.

Members can spread eligible costs over 12 months and repay using a linked bank account or HSA.

No interest, no fees, no credit impact.

Applying for a Paytient card is quick, easy, and has no credit impact.

Chamber Benefit Plan members say...

“This card is really a great card for unexpected medical copayments and my medication!”

— Charmin, Poplar Bluff

“This was the easiest to use and it was there when I needed it. Setting up my repayment was super easy as well.”

— Darlene, Forsyth



Find out more about Paytient and the Chamber Benefit Plan.

Scan the QR code or visit paytient.com/cbp-toolkit to access helpful resources and ready-to-use marketing assets about the program.



Leadership Profile with Brian Hammons

President of Hammons Black Walnuts



In 1946, Southwest Missouri grocer Ralph Hammons recognized an opportunity growing wild. With a vision for the future, he purchased a cracking machine and began buying native black walnuts from the hardworking Ozarks people who gathered them each fall.

More than 75 years later, Hammons Black Walnuts remains proudly family-owned, with Ralph's grandson, Brian Hammons, leading the company into a new era.

This fall, the Missouri Chamber will recognize Hammons Black Walnuts as the 2025 Champion of Enterprise – an award reserved for businesses that serve as cornerstones of Missouri's economy. This honor celebrates companies that stand apart as leaders, embodying the elements needed for our state's future success.

We spoke with Brian Hammons about his decades of leadership and what it means to carry on a uniquely Missouri tradition.



Q: What is it like to lead a business that has been in your family for over 75 years?

It's both a responsibility and a blessing.

I always tell our co-workers that we stand on the shoulders of some great people who have gone before us with the opportunity and responsibility to build on the foundations they laid. I also remind them that we're blessed to be able to do something nobody else in the world gets to do – provide a market for thousands of people to sell wild black walnuts they've picked up, and also provide bold-flavored black walnuts for people to enjoy in foods.

We're the only business in this unique industry, so even though we're relatively small, we have a responsibility to keep it going. In that, we live out our purpose – “to connect people and create memories with the natural goodness of black walnuts.” I always enjoy talking with people who recall picking up black walnuts in the fall or enjoying black walnut ice cream or favorite baked treats.

As the third-generation leader for many years, I've had countless opportunities to proudly proclaim the origins of our unique business. It started with my grandfather and continued through my father and other relatives who worked hard to grow the business through many ups and downs. I've learned a lot by being entrusted with responsibility at a young age. I've continued to learn through challenges and succession of key leaders, and now I'm excited to have the fourth generation involved. It's especially gratifying to see my young grandchildren (G-5) excited about eating black walnuts – that's a real family tradition!



Q: How has the company evolved under your leadership? What changes were hardest to make?

Our basic product – natural black walnuts – is God-given and hasn't changed. But much has changed around us in the last 28 years, and we've had to adapt. Markets, consumer food trends, government regulations, costs, technology, communication, ways of doing business with customer consolidations – all of these changes have impacted our small business. Awareness of how black walnuts differ

from common walnuts has also declined. Yet, we've moved forward with faith in God and help from many co-workers and leaders over the years.

We've focused upon five "keys" to our success, including sales, quality and profit margin.

We also have two keys that are unique to us – nut harvest and yield of kernels.

We've communicated internally through a monthly newsletter (the "Nut News") and regular meetings.

We've completed equipment and plant facility updates – some planned and some necessitated by a devastating tornado in 2003. We've also upgraded our marketing with new branding,

packaging and an online presence, plus social media and targeted B2B messages.

The hardest changes, I think, involve people – when you have to recognize that someone is not going to do the job required and you need to "free up their future." Those are hard discussions but necessary.



Q: Walk us through a day in your work life – any routines or rituals?

I usually get up around 5:30 and head for the coffee maker. After some stretching, I spend time reading Scripture and a devotional guide, and in prayer. Then, most days I run 3-7 miles before showering and eating breakfast (cereal) with the online newspaper.

After that, I'm off to work – a short drive of five minutes. Activities there really depend upon the day, whether I'm at the plant/office all day or have a meeting or two in Springfield, Jefferson City or somewhere else. I like to check in with people at the office, walk around the plant to see for myself how things are going and check the quality of the product coming through (sampling nuts, of course). I'm usually in and out of my office, often responding to emails and an occasional phone call, or speaking with a community member that stops by. Lunch is usually at home, checking in with my wife, Kim, or a quick sandwich at a local spot where it's good to see a few folks and catch up.

Late in the afternoon, there's often a meeting or activity, like choir practice, Lions Club, men's or couple's golf, or dinner at home where my dad often joins us. I like to check the news, we sometimes watch TV and read in the evening, and I'm in bed by 9:30. Not very exciting, really, but sustainable.



Q: How would you describe your personal leadership style?

Collaborative – listening, asking questions, reflecting on experiences and objectives and moving forward. I'm not afraid of making a decision or providing specific direction, but I prefer asking questions and clarifying information that leads to better joint decisions. In delegating, I try to provide enough oversight while allowing others to accomplish objectives in their own way.

Q: Did you have a mentor or leadership role model?

First of all, my dad, Dwain Hammons, modeled business leadership, collaboration and community service. He provided counsel, talked with me about what he was doing and why, and prepared me for leading our unique business. He trusted me, even when asking insightful questions. Glenn Edmonds and Gus Rutledge also provided guidance early in my career, even while I was in school. Paul Wannenmacher and Mark Holmes provided great insight into marketing and leadership.

Faith mentors over the years include Pastor Lowell Mize and Rev. Cody Collier. Two local community leaders who encouraged and inspired me early in community service as a business leader were Darrell Johnson and Charlie Rinehart.

Really, I've learned by observing and reading about many leaders over the years – government leaders I've admired like George H.W. Bush, Christian leaders like John Wesley, and several contemporary leadership writers. Most of all, Jesus Christ continues to teach, inspire and counsel as I move through the seasons of life and leadership.

Q: What do you like most about management? What do you like least?

I really enjoy leading a team focused on a goal, developing and clarifying objectives, encouraging people in their roles and then celebrating the results. My strengths (per StrengthsFinder) are Learner, Responsibility, Strategic, Belief and Connectedness. Working within those is most enjoyable.

What I don't like is resolving conflicts, especially personal conflicts between people. That saps my energy and keeps me up at night.

Q: How do you mentor the next generation of leaders at Hammons?

In mentoring, I really look at two areas: operational leadership and governance. My nephew, Jacob Basecke, has been with us for several years, primarily in sales, and will be the next leader in operations. I work with him a lot to discuss ideas, provide insight and explain what I'm doing. In governance of the business, it's important to also involve other family members who will be future shareholders,



Above: Three generations, 2025: Dwain Hammons, Brian Hammons, Lori Basecke, Jacob Basecke. **Right:** Four generations: David Hammons, Brian Hammons, Dwain Hammons, and Faye Hammons in front. **Below:** Brian Hammons with U.S. Representative Mark Alford in 2023.



including my son David. Both Jacob and David are on our board, so they are involved in large decisions. Other members of G-4 are minority shareholders and receive updates on the business results/issues, too.

Beyond our business, I really enjoy working with younger leaders with the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce through board service and their mentoring program that matches a board member with a younger leader in their Network for Young Professionals. I also enjoy encouraging students by talking about our unique business. We often host plant tours for student groups, ranging from elementary to college students.

Q: If you weren't running Hammons Black Walnuts, what do you think you'd be doing?

Probably practicing law, maybe as a judge – I could see myself on the Supreme Court.

Or perhaps I'd be in full-time Christian ministry, pastoring a large church or teaching in a seminary. The seasons for pursuing those have passed, and now I'm committed to helping the business and my dad, along with enjoying time with Kim, our adult children and grandkids.

But I'm not finished yet – we'll see where God may lead in the next few years. I'm always an optimist, trusting and believing that the best is yet to come!



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

The Missouri Chamber hosts impactful events across the state, bringing business leaders together to learn, network and advocate. Here's a look at a few of the places we've been in 2025.

JEFFERSON CITY

GOV. KEHOE'S INAUGURATION

From left to right: Missouri Chamber staff members Jared Hankinson, Tammy Long, Becky Wekenborg, Kara Corches and Angie Hayes attend the inauguration of Missouri's 58th

Governor, Mike Kehoe. It was a pleasure welcoming many of our members to the Missouri Chamber offices for a pre-ball toast to celebrate the new administration!

JEFFERSON CITY

HIRING ACADEMIES

The Missouri Chamber Foundation hosted its first Fair Chance Hiring Academy to help employers tap into an often-overlooked talent pool – qualified workers with previous arrest or conviction records. Building on that momentum, the Military Hiring Academy brought together business leaders to explore effective strategies for attracting and retaining top veteran talent.



LEE'S SUMMIT / HANNIBAL PROP A ROUNDTABLES

The business community played a key role in the passage of Prop A reform. At roundtables across the state, Missouri Chamber members engaged with legislative leaders and bill sponsors – asking questions, sharing real world insights and expressing their appreciation.

JEFFERSON CITY CAPITOL INSIGHT

We hit the ground running in 2025 with Capitol Insight, the Missouri Chamber's annual pre-legislative session event. Attendees got an inside look at state lawmakers' top priorities and the issues shaping Missouri's business climate.

LAKE OF THE OZARKS

PAC GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thank you to everyone who joined us at Old Kinderhook for our annual Political Action Committee Golf Tournament. It was a great day of golf, networking and support for Missouri's pro-business future.



ST. LOUIS INDUSTRY-DRIVEN IT APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

This spring, the Missouri Chamber Foundation made a bold push to promote tech apprenticeships. Billboards, bus shelter ads and train station posters throughout the St. Louis area highlighted our Industry-Driven IT Apprenticeship Program.



Heard in the halls

On signing HB 567 into law:



On working with the Missouri Chamber to pass HB 567 and deliver Proposition A reform:

“I spent much time working with the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry this past session as we worked together to help small businesses from the restrictive weight of the passage of Proposition A. I found it to be a knowledgeable and fully engaged organization that was a crucial partner in advancing the interests of Missouri businesses in the legislature.” —*Sen. Mike Bernskoetter (R-Jefferson City)*

“Partnering with the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry on legislation has given me a direct line to the needs of Missouri’s job creators across diverse industries. Their well-researched insights have been invaluable in shaping smart economic policies that help businesses stay, grow, and thrive in our state.” —*Rep. Sherri Gallick (R-Belton)*

“We must protect those who make Missouri work: job creators and small business owners.” — *Gov. Mike Kehoe on July 10*

On late Missouri Governor Kit Bond:

“Bond demonstrated his cross-party support for major issues when, after leaving the U.S. Senate, he returned

to state government on behalf of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce to support Medicaid expansion. Facing stiff statehouse GOP opposition, Bond’s efforts failed in the legislature... But it was another demonstration about how Bond could cross ideological and political boundaries for an issue he felt was important for our state.” —*Phil Brooks, Missouri statehouse reporter, shared his memories in the Missouri Independent on May 29*

On lawmakers’ failure to address Missouri’s child care crisis:

“A lot of the objections are, you know, that maybe women shouldn’t be working; women should be staying at home. I don’t know how we ever overcome that objection. But we’re going to regroup this summer, and we’re going to look at the package. We’re going to see if there is anything we can do any different that might be able to get it across the finish line.” —*Rep. Brenda Shields (R- St. Joseph) in an interview with KFEQ on May 24*



UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit mochamber.com/events to register!



OCTOBER 7-9

Seattle, WA

TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE EDUCATIONAL TRIP

The Missouri Chamber Foundation invites you to an upfront look into the leading tech companies and heart of innovation! Join the Missouri Technology Alliance and members of the Legislative Innovation and Technology Caucus on a trip to Seattle, Washington.



OCTOBER 21-22

Kansas City

WORKFORCE2030 CONFERENCE

The seventh annual Workforce2030 Conference is returning to Kansas City! Workforce2030 will explore the many strategies and programs that Missouri's employers, educators and organizations can implement leading up to the year 2030 to make our state the home of a thriving, vibrant workforce.



NOVEMBER 20

Springfield

ANNUAL MEETING

Our members are proud of their chamber and this event is designed to tap into that pride by showcasing the work and results of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Attended by the Missouri Chamber board of directors, members, associations, legislators and statewide elected officials, this meeting is the "must attend" event of the year.



JANUARY 6

Jefferson City

CAPITOL INSIGHT

Hit the ground running for the 2026 Legislative Session! Whether you're new to the Missouri Capitol or an experienced advocacy professional, you won't want to miss this gathering of your peers, industry experts and government officials. Equip yourself to achieve your advocacy goals with the latest legislative intel, updates and more to maximize your impact in Jefferson City.



Farmers, join the fight to *defend glyphosate.*



For decades, we have developed products that can be relied on to address the challenges you face on your farm and improve your bottom line.

Glyphosate has long been a foundational and safe-to-use-as-directed tool to help you fight weeds, maintain conservation farming practices, and produce the kind of yields critical to an affordable food supply. As you well know, if your costs rise, so do prices at the grocery store. Fighting food inflation starts with fighting for the American farmer.

However, legal challenges are threatening your access to this essential product.

Despite its clear scientific record, the litigation industry continues to use misleading information to challenge glyphosate's safety in pursuit of a big payday. Fighting against the litigation industry has cost more than \$10 billion to date with no resolution. One thing is clear, we cannot continue to sell an approved product and lose billions of dollars in doing so. Unfortunately, we are nearing the point where the efforts of the litigation industry will force us to stop selling this product.

And while glyphosate is the topic today, make no mistake that all crop protection products could be under attack by the litigation industry.

That's why we are actively engaged in legislative efforts at both the federal and state levels to support policies that protect your access to an essential, domestically produced crop protection product. The EPA has repeatedly affirmed glyphosate is safe to use as directed, and the legislation we support reinforces the authority of the EPA's rigorous, science-backed labeling decisions. This consistency ensures that the label is the law, helping to eliminate the unfounded premise of legal attacks by requiring uniformity in U.S. labeling.

We've successfully defended glyphosate in numerous lawsuits and continue to fight against unfounded claims. **But we need your help to save this product.**

Legislators are **making decisions NOW** and need to hear from you.

We hope you
will join us in
this critically
important fight.

***Thank you for
all you do.***

**Scan to send a letter
to your legislator.**

