



MISSOURI CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

2026

**LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA**





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CIVIL JUSTICE

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Increase transparency in asbestos litigation by requiring trust claim disclosure:

Asbestos litigation has caused hundreds of businesses to declare bankruptcy, with over 60 of those establishing trusts to compensate future claimants. The businesses currently being sued in asbestos litigation are increasingly peripheral defendants, who are being sued for exposures claimants also allege were caused by the bankrupt companies. The Missouri Chamber supports legislation that would require the disclosure of asbestos bankruptcy claims before trial. This would increase transparency and curtail fraudulent claims, allow businesses to fairly litigate all relevant exposures, and ensure there will be compensation for future claimants by appropriately apportioning fault.

Establish statute of repose:

Businesses that put products into the stream of commerce are required to comply with contemporary regulations. Those firms should not be exposed to liability because subsequent regulatory changes implicate previously designed and produced products. The Missouri Chamber supports a reasonable statute of repose that will bar claims against manufacturers for compliant products put into commerce that are the subject of later regulatory changes.

Update statute of limitations in certain civil cases:

Missouri should evaluate whether its statute of limitations in certain civil cases, including personal injury claims, best serves all parties in potential cases. Missouri's lengthy statute of limitations increases uncertainty for all parties and a shorter time period would promote prompt resolution to potential disputes.

Ensure the selection of Missouri judges is open and fair:

The Missouri Chamber supports common sense reforms for the selection of judges to Missouri's circuit and appellate courts that emphasize impartiality, fairness, and equitable justice for all Missourians.

Strengthen Missouri's employment arbitration climate:

Missouri's employers enter into arbitration agreements with employees to avoid costly litigation and resolve controversies rapidly. With skyrocketing court costs and a court system increasingly unfriendly to business, the employer community seeks an alternative and reliable dispute resolution structure. The Missouri Chamber supports proposals aimed at clarifying and strengthening Missouri's arbitration statute.

Eliminate joint and several liability:

Current law provides that joint and several liability is applied if a defendant is fifty-one percent or more at fault. In such circumstances the defendant is jointly and severally liable for the entire amount of the damages recoverable by the plaintiff. If a defendant is found to be less than fifty-one percent at fault, the defendant is only responsible for the percent of the damages that corresponds with that defendant's percentage of fault. The Missouri Chamber advocates for the elimination of the current joint and several liability system in favor of a fair-share system of liability in which every defendant is liable only for the amount of harm the defendant caused. Percentage of fault should be the basis for this system, considering the fault of all responsible persons, whether or not they are parties to the lawsuit.

A sub-issue of joint and several liability is the empty chair defense. Currently, there is no mandate that the jury receive an empty chair jury instruction. It is not a reversible error if the judge fails to instruct the jury to account for those defendants who settle out of the case before trial and judgment is entered. The Missouri Chamber supports policy that would require an empty chair jury instruction.

Curtail litigation lending:

Leveraging civil judgments as a means of financing lawsuits is damaging to Missouri's businesses, consumers, and the civil justice system. Litigation lending companies prey on Missouri's most vulnerable citizens by promising immediate money in exchange for an interest in any future recovery. This practice

inevitably increases the duration and expense of lawsuits, and often leaves plaintiffs in worse financial shape than when they started. Litigation lending activities are not well regulated in Missouri. The Missouri Chamber supports legislation that would provide some level of consumer protection to this type of lending practice in Missouri.

Update the expert witness evidence rule:

Recent updates have been made to the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure that applies to expert evidence testimony. The Missouri Chamber supports updates to Missouri's rule on expert testimony that would comply with the recent changes in the federal rule. Updates to the rule should focus on whether the proponent demonstrates to the court that it is more likely than not that an expert's opinion reflects a reliable application of the principles and methods to the facts of the case.

Reform Missouri's seatbelt law:

Missouri's seatbelt law prohibits courts from using evidence that a person was not wearing their seatbelt to argue comparative negligence. The law also caps its use as evidence of mitigating damages to 1%. The 1% cap on damages and civil defendants should be free to argue comparative fault.

Clarify collateral source rule:

Reforms to the collateral source rule have been passed into law, aimed at giving juries the full scope of information when determining an award for damages. Missouri law should be clarified to ensure the actual cost of care is provided, helping juries make accurate decisions regarding awards for damages.

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CIVIL JUSTICE

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Protect innovators from unfairly imposed liability:

Manufacturers producing brand-name prescription drugs should not be held liable for the actions of generic product manufacturers. Responsibility for defects in the products made by generic manufacturers should rest with those manufacturers, as they made the product having a connection to the alleged harm.

Scheduling and filing deadline certainty:

Missouri businesses face uncertainty with respect to court scheduling and filing deadlines. Because there is no firm scheduling order, cases are allowed to meander for significant amounts of time, thereby increasing litigation and settlement costs. The Missouri Chamber supports the development of predictable and reasonable standards that rein in the cost of doing business in Missouri and promote fairness for all Missourians.

Modernize recovery of medical damages to reflect actual economic loss:

Missouri's courts currently allow recovery of medical damages based on billed charges that bear little relationship to amounts actually paid or owed. These inflated figures distort settlements and create unpredictable outcomes. The Missouri Chamber supports clarifying Missouri law so that recovery of past medical damages is limited to the amounts actually paid on behalf of the plaintiff or those amounts the plaintiff remains legally responsible to pay. This reform ties damages to real economic loss, increases transparency, and promotes fairness while preventing inflated and speculative awards.

Reduce website-access litigation abuse and protect legitimate digital commerce:

Missouri businesses increasingly face opportunistic lawsuits alleging technical website inaccessibility or theoretical consumer harm. Such claims are often leveraged to extract settlements rather than resolve genuine accessibility concerns, imposing burdens on businesses of all sizes. The Missouri Chamber supports reforms that set clear standards for actionable website-access claims, discourage speculative or manufactured litigation, and ensure that only legitimate claims proceed. Strengthening clarity and fairness in this area will help protect Missouri enterprises, reduce unnecessary legal exposure, and support continued digital innovation and economic growth. •

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Encourage entrepreneurial and small business development:

The Missouri Chamber supports the opportunity for small businesses and entrepreneurs to develop and grow their businesses. We support programs aimed at increasing access to various types of early-stage capital, improving technological advancements, and protecting businesses from the impact of burdensome regulations. The Missouri Chamber also supports policies that encourage entrepreneurs to start their businesses in Missouri and stay in Missouri after the business is established. We also support continued funding for the Missouri Technology Corporation.

Encourage corporate growth and attraction:

The Missouri Chamber supports improving the corporate environment and removing potential barriers facing expanding new businesses in Missouri. Fully funding programs such as Missouri One Start, Missouri Works Deal Closing Fund, Credential Training Program, the Missouri Partnership, and other economic development programs will allow Missouri to attract and grow businesses across the state.

Promote tourism programs and protect tourism funding:

Promotion of Missouri as a tourism destination should continue to be a priority for this state, as it is an important economic development driver. The Missouri Chamber will promote, protect, and advocate for preservation of funding to enhance Missouri's travel and tourism industry.

Promote rural development:

Businesses and entrepreneurs in Missouri's rural and distressed communities continue to find it difficult to obtain the capital they need to expand and grow. The Missouri Chamber supports initiatives to bring capital to rural areas and the state's Opportunity Zones alike. Legislation we support should drive investment in businesses in rural Missouri and Opportunity

Zones through targeted tax credits that prioritize the creation and retention of quality jobs, transparency, accountability, and evaluation standards. High caliber job creation should also encourage economic upward mobility by providing incentives for workforce development and on-the-job training.

Support efforts to reshore manufacturing in Missouri:

The Missouri Chamber recognizes the importance of reshoring manufacturing in Missouri, which serves as a key national logistics corridor. By fostering growth in Missouri's manufacturing sector, we strengthen our state's workforce, enhance supply chain resilience, and boost overall economic vitality. The Missouri Chamber supports initiatives to incentivize new manufacturing investments in Missouri, bolster existing manufacturers, and ensure these businesses have access to a skilled, readily available workforce.

Streamline broadband deployment to spur statewide growth:

Pro-investment policies are essential to accelerate broadband deployment and adoption across the state. By aligning government processes with private sector investment, Missouri can expand connectivity that enables business activity, supports workforce participation, and strengthens economic competitiveness. The Missouri Chamber supports collaborative deployment initiatives and efficient administration of federal and state broadband resources to drive meaningful economic outcomes.

Strengthen public-private partnerships in digital infrastructure:

State and federal funding resources should be leveraged through strong partnerships with private providers to improve broadband access. Efficient deployment enhances productivity, expands economic opportunities, and supports growth in communities across Missouri. The Missouri Chamber supports policies that prioritize effective coordination, reduce government permitting delays, and provide certainty

for long-term investment to ensure Missouri remains a competitive location for business and workforce development.

Clarify residential property classification for rental housing:

Some municipalities classify residential rental homes as commercial property, creating inconsistent tax treatment and increasing costs that ultimately discourage private housing investment. Misclassification raises barriers to expanding quality rental housing stock and undermines broader efforts to support workforce mobility. The Missouri Chamber supports clarifying that rental residences should be uniformly assessed as residential property, ensuring fairness, predictability, and a stable environment for housing investment across Missouri. •



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Adequately fund all levels of education:

The Missouri Chamber believes that well-educated, competent, and capable students are the key to Missouri's long-term economic health and competitiveness. The Missouri Chamber supports efforts to provide every Missourian with access to a top-notch education. We support efforts to adequately fund all levels of education, Pre-K through 12, and post-secondary.

Support a comprehensive workforce development approach:

Workforce shortages and skills gaps limit the growth of Missouri businesses. The Missouri Chamber supports a broad-spectrum approach to upskilling and right-skilling our state's workforce. This includes adequately funding existing workforce development programs such as Fast Track, Missouri One Start job training, MoExcels, and the Credential Training Program, while advocating for new policies that are responsive and flexible to evolving workforce needs. The Missouri Chamber supports expansion of on-the-job learning through internships, externships, and apprenticeships. The Missouri Chamber recognizes the essential role of Missouri's community colleges, four-year institutions, and other post-secondary partners in providing workforce-relevant skills, certificates, and degrees.

Maximize business engagement:

The Missouri Chamber supports engaging businesses in the process of educating and training Missouri's students. We support initiatives to incentivize programs that partner schools and businesses together to produce learning experiences that educate the workforce of tomorrow, especially in high-demand jobs. We support policies that help streamline the process for experienced professionals and business leaders to obtain certification for teaching.

Support adequate infrastructure funding:

The Missouri Chamber recognizes that an aging and failing infrastructure in schools and higher education institutions is detrimental to the process of successfully educating Missouri's students. The Missouri Chamber supports efforts to provide adequate funding for education infrastructure maintenance and improvements. We support initiatives aimed at updating and modernizing Missouri's educational institutions both structurally and within the classroom, as well as workforce training facilities.

pharmaceutical industry projects for a minimum of one semester while gaining credit. This initiative aims to provide students with hands-on, work-ready experience, bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world application. •

Support broad-based public education reform:

The Missouri Chamber believes that market forces and individual merit help drive improved educational outcomes. We support reforms that better align educational content and programming with Missouri's workforce needs and improve educational opportunities for all students.

Address the child care crisis to help grow the workforce:

Lack of access to quality and affordable child care is a statewide economic issue that keeps many Missourians out of the workforce and costs our state over \$1.35 billion annually. We support efforts to address the complex child care crisis in a comprehensive manner. This includes enacting policies that will increase the capacity of our child care infrastructure network and help businesses support employee child care needs.

Promote a pilot on-the-job co-op program for students:

The Missouri Chamber supports the creation of a pilot cooperative education program that allows undergraduate, graduate, and PhD students to work in

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Ensure Missouri has reliable, resilient, and affordably priced energy and water:

The Missouri Chamber recognizes the advantage of reliable, resilient, and affordable natural gas, propane, electricity, water, and wastewater in retaining and attracting business to our state. The Missouri Chamber supports efforts to address Missouri's aging infrastructure while ensuring natural gas, propane, electricity, water, and wastewater remain reliable at predictable and affordable rates for consumers. We also support distribution and bulk power system grid modernization and expansion efforts that drive greater resiliency, rate affordability, and economic development opportunities. The Missouri Chamber embraces an all-of-the-above approach to electricity generation, including coal, natural gas, nuclear, and renewable sources.

Promote a balanced and modernized approach to regulation:

The Missouri Chamber supports a balanced and reasonable approach to environmental and energy regulation, along with policies that do not stifle innovation and economic growth nor add unnecessary and burdensome costs to Missouri's businesses. The Missouri Chamber opposes environmental regulations and policies for air, water, and waste that unduly raise costs for businesses or jeopardize creation, retention, or growth of Missouri jobs. In addition, the Missouri Chamber supports a modernized approach to the regulatory system that is more interactive, collaborative, and cost-effective.

Support pipeline utilization:

The Missouri Chamber strongly supports the utilization of existing supply lines and pipelines, as well as construction of new ones, as they are needed for maintaining regular business operations, powering residential homes, and protecting the health and safety of Missourians. The Missouri Chamber opposes any effort to restrict access to pipelines, which are vital energy resources. The Missouri Chamber supports approval and implementation of interstate pipeline projects that will create and support thousands of

construction and manufacturing jobs in the U.S. and Missouri. Interstate pipelines help make oil and natural gas pricing more affordable for Missourians by increasing the availability of these American resources in the energy market. Additionally, the Missouri Chamber believes implementation of these projects will aid in U.S. energy security and independence by shifting U.S. sourcing of oil to conflict-free and stable economic zones.

Implement responsible water quality standards and support Missouri-based solutions:

The Missouri Chamber supports responsible implementation of the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act without creating financial hardships for Missouri businesses. The Missouri Chamber supports adequate funding and equal access to federal grants and low-interest loans for water and wastewater system improvements, including the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, to help keep rates affordable as systems make necessary investments to replace aging infrastructure and maintain regulatory compliance. The Missouri Chamber opposes unilateral actions by the EPA and supports efforts that enable the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to create workable state plans that ensure all Missourians have access to safe, reliable, and affordable water and wastewater service.

Utilize reasonable renewable energy standards:

The Missouri Chamber believes renewable energy standards should be reasonable to ensure our grid is reliable, resilient, and flexible with predictable and affordable rates for businesses. The Missouri Chamber believes all forms of renewable energy, including biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind, solar, and

any emerging technologies, should be applicable to meeting the standards. Reasonable renewable standards encourage flexibility and innovation in the energy sector which ultimately leads to a more resilient grid and affordable rates for Missourians.

Protect Missouri's environment by supporting state regulation of coal combustion residuals (CCRs):

Missouri's energy providers safely store CCRs in our state. The Missouri Chamber supports a state-specific approach to CCR regulation instead of a federal approach. Missouri regulators have the experience and knowledge to regulate the closure of ash ponds located within the state and to provide appropriate protection for our state's environment.

Support reasonable and consistent taxation of utilities:

The Missouri Chamber supports utility tax policy that is fair, consistent, and equitable for all utility consumers and jurisdictions. •

HEALTH CARE

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Improve access to quality health care for all Missourians:

The state's poorer-than-average health coupled with a worsening health care workforce shortage is negatively impacting access to health care for many Missourians, especially those in rural communities. The Missouri Chamber supports an all-of-the-above approach to improve access to quality care, including policies to build and maintain a health care workforce that can meet the demands of today and tomorrow, utilization of telehealth, and other innovative solutions to address this serious problem.

Ensure our health care system is prepared for times of crisis:

We support a comprehensive approach to ensuring our health care system and infrastructure are nimble and adequately prepared to meet the state's health care needs in times of crisis, including long-term policies to plan for large-scale emergencies and short-term policies that address urgent needs.

Embrace innovation and meaningful transparency initiatives:

The Missouri Chamber supports innovation in health care delivery that will improve outcomes and lower costs. We support meaningful transparency in pricing and quality of health care services and insurance products so businesses and individual consumers can make informed decisions.

Maximize health care funding:

The Missouri Chamber recognizes the need for the state to leverage state and federal investment to maximize the quality of health care, improve the health of populations, and reduce the per capita costs of health care for the benefit of citizens, employers, and sponsored populations. The Missouri Chamber believes this leveraged funding should be utilized for its specific intended purpose. Fully funding health care programs, like Medicaid and the newly enrolled expansion population, supports the state's ability to maximize federal funding of our health care programs.

Evaluate and refine mandates on health care coverage to mitigate burdens on employers:

Government mandates on providers can increase costs for employers and limit plan flexibility. While employers seek to offer competitive benefits to recruit and retain talent, unnecessary mandates can undermine affordability. The Missouri Chamber supports evaluating proposed mandates to ensure cost-effectiveness and value for employers and employees.

Support reauthorization of the federal reimbursement allowance (FRA) program:

The Missouri Chamber supports the continued reauthorization of Missouri's federal reimbursement allowance (FRA) program. This public/private partnership is one of the top sources of revenue for the state, allowing Missouri to receive billions in matching federal funds, and frees up general revenue to be spent on other state priorities. Without the program's reauthorization, Missouri would face an insurmountable budget deficit that would devastate the state's financial outlook, severely impact the delivery of quality health care, and slow economic development.

Support health care workforce development and recognize employer-provided benefits as a key retention tool:

Persistent and worsening health care profession shortages endanger timely access to services for an employer's workforce and can inhibit business recruitment. The Missouri Chamber supports policies that develop Missouri's health care workforce, attract new employers, and help to retain businesses currently calling Missouri home. The Missouri Chamber supports policies that enhance employer flexibility to recruit, train, and retain top talent which ensure Missouri remains an attractive environment for the health care workforce.

Support targeted rural health care funding initiatives:

Rural communities face disproportionate workforce shortages and access challenges. The Missouri Chamber supports targeted state funding mechanisms that improve access to quality health care in rural regions, ensure sustainable staffing, and strengthen clinical capacity statewide. •

LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Protect and strengthen workers' compensation reforms:

The workers' compensation system serves as a mechanism to ensure employees are fairly and quickly compensated for workplace injuries. The Missouri Chamber supports reforms to the system to help reduce workers' compensation insurance rates. These reforms should include proper validation of all claims and fairness in the system, clarifying the law where it has been subjected to inconsistent judicial decisions.

Reform the workers' compensation administrative law judge (ALJ) selection process:

Too often, Missouri employers feel the scales of justice are tipped against them in a workers' compensation administrative hearing. The Missouri Chamber supports legislative efforts to inject fairness and accountability into the selection and retention of workers' compensation ALJs.

Provide state-level safeguards for joint employers:

The Missouri Chamber supports legislation to protect franchisors from unwarranted lawsuits claiming the franchisor is a "joint employer" with its franchisees. Further, the Missouri Chamber supports legislation to clarify the employment relationship between a franchisor and franchisee in state-level disputes should only apply where the franchisor exercises direct and immediate control.

Strengthen employers' property rights:

Cybersecurity is of paramount importance in the information age, creating new challenges for employers throughout the world. In an effort to stay ahead of the curve, the Missouri Chamber supports efforts to strengthen civil penalties against employees who illegally obtain and disclose an employer's proprietary information.

Implement right-to-work:

The Missouri Chamber continues to support right-to-work because employees should not be compelled to join a labor union or pay labor union dues as a condition of employment. Right-to-work remains a long-term priority for the Missouri Chamber.

Clarify the treatment of arbitration clauses in employment contracts:

The Missouri Chamber supports abrogating the holding in *Baker v. Bristol Care, Inc.*, which overturned years of precedent regarding what constitutes consideration in an arbitration agreement. While at-will employment and continued employment had been considered sufficient consideration to support enforcement of arbitration agreements, the court in *Baker* disagreed and refused to enforce the arbitration agreement for insufficient consideration. For certainty in employment contracts moving forward, the Missouri Chamber supports abrogating *Baker* and returning to a clear standard for sufficient consideration in employment-related agreements.

Reform Missouri's prevailing wage law:

Prevailing wage laws add unnecessary costs to taxpayer-funded construction projects. Employers who do not comply with prevailing wage laws can be prosecuted and heavily fined. Positive reforms to the system have been made, and going forward, the Missouri Chamber should work to amend the law to ensure that prevailing wage is not required for maintenance work.

Bring clarity to independent contractor agreements:

Businesses face an increasing amount of rules and regulations from all levels of government. Often, there are several layers of red tape surrounding how businesses hire, compensate and work with employers and independent contractors. To eliminate confusion in this area, the Missouri Chamber supports implementing

flexible yet objective standards to determine independent contractor status. All state agencies should use the same information in classifying independent contractors, providing businesses with greater clarity.

Protect employers from new liabilities and unfair standards:

The Missouri Chamber will protect against federal and state workplace rules and mandates such as exposing employers to new liabilities based on how they classify their employees, expanding or adding new classes to FMLA that do not exist in federal law, raising the minimum wage, and placing additional regulations upon an employer during the hiring process.

Further, the Missouri Chamber supports state preemption legislation to prohibit local governments from enacting their own labor standards. Uniform state standards for employment law will bring clarity to businesses that must navigate multiple layers of government regulation every day.

Unemployment insurance reform:

Missouri's fiscally unstable unemployment compensation system has been a hindrance to economic growth. During the Great Recession, Missouri took on substantial debt from the federal government to fund the system. Employers paid expensive penalties to repay the federal government, resulting in additional costs to employers.

Implement paycheck protection:

Employees should not be forced to forfeit a portion of their paychecks for political causes they may not support. The Missouri Chamber supports paycheck protection legislation that would require labor unions to give employees an opportunity each year to opt out of contributing a portion of their wages to union political activities.

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LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Oppose governmental mandates on workplace policies:

The longstanding ability for business owners to establish their own workplace policies is a bedrock of our free enterprise system. The Missouri Chamber opposes government overreach into business decisions and believes the state should let business decide any workplace policy or business practice.

Workplace marijuana policies:

Recreational marijuana use in Missouri was legalized through the ballot initiative process. To protect the well-being and safety of employees and customers, the Missouri Chamber supports providing employers with protections and flexibility, under current or future marijuana laws, to institute workplace policy exceptions for safety-sensitive positions. To provide better clarity for employers, the Missouri Chamber supports adding language to Missouri's workers' compensation law to allow employers to test employees for marijuana use for workers' compensation purposes. •



PUBLIC SAFETY

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Deploy evidence-based and hot spot approaches to crime reduction:

The Missouri Chamber supports policies that give prosecutors and law enforcement officers the tools they need to keep our communities safe. This includes approaches to ensure repeat and violent offenders are kept off the streets and deploying more resources to known hot spots for criminal activity.

Increase and protect tools to support policing:

Law enforcement officers need the proper resources to reduce crime. The Missouri Chamber supports policies and funding efforts to provide law enforcement all the tools they need, from databases to new forms of technology, which will help to combat crime.

Address substance misuse and mental health:

Substance misuse and mental health are related to crime in multiple ways. Missouri has already made significant strides in addressing this and we support continued efforts to divert some cases from law enforcement through mental health and drug rehabilitation programs. We support continuing these efforts through funding and policies to address substance abuse and improve access to mental health resources.

Reduce recidivism:

We support a broad-spectrum approach to reducing recidivism. This includes ensuring parole officer caseloads are workable and barriers to re-entry into society and the workforce for formerly incarcerated individuals are removed.

Improve training and employment opportunities for incarcerated individuals:

Risk of recidivism is lower when individuals have employment opportunities. This is why the Missouri

Chamber supports a wide array of policies to help prepare currently and formerly incarcerated individuals for the workforce.

Increase public safety staffing:

Almost every law enforcement agency around the state has a workforce shortage. We support efforts to increase public safety staffing by innovative efforts and investment to recruit and retain our state's vital law enforcement workforce.

Increase prosecutorial consistency and transparency:

Prosecutors are the gatekeepers of the criminal legal system. Inconsistency in how cases are prosecuted, especially drug cases, was cited as a serious problem impacting Missouri's rising crime rates. We support policies to ensure greater consistency and transparency in prosecution across the state.

Strengthen behavioral health systems to protect workplace safety:

Behavioral health challenges are increasingly affecting workplace safety, particularly in health care settings, where facilities are often forced to manage crises they are not designed to handle. The Missouri Chamber supports policies that expand access to appropriate, in-state behavioral health treatment, strengthen service capacity, and improve continuity of care. A coordinated system that diverts behavioral health cases to suitable treatment environments – rather than emergency departments – will reduce workplace violence, prevent unnecessary out-of-state patient displacement, support families, and create safer conditions for patients, providers, and employees while easing strain on Missouri's health care infrastructure. •

TAXATION AND FISCAL POLICY

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Reform tax policy:

The Missouri Chamber supports efforts in the General Assembly to enact meaningful, comprehensive reform in Missouri's tax system. The Missouri Chamber strongly believes that any tax reform, whether in the realm of corporate/individual income taxes, real/personal property taxes or sales/use taxes, should achieve the following objectives:

- **Provide revenue neutrality:** Tax reform should not be used, directly or indirectly, to increase state tax revenues, whether in short-term or long-range projections.
- **Eliminate/avoid double taxation:** Double taxation occurs when the same economic activity is used as a measure for more than one taxable event. Any revision to the tax code should avoid even the risk of double taxation.
- **Minimize shifting the ultimate tax burden:** Tax reform can shift the economic burden from one group of taxpayers to another. Any proposed tax reform should avoid economic burden shifts among groups of taxpayers to the greatest extent possible. When economic burden shifts cannot be avoided to achieve other goals, such as equity or neutrality, they should be made gradually over an extended period of time.
- **Provide horizontal equity:** Horizontal equalization is the practice of treating taxpayers of similar incomes but differing circumstances in a similar way by making modest alterations to the tax code to account for such disparities. Horizontal equity assists economic growth by minimizing the impact of the tax code on business decisions, thereby promoting a free marketplace. Horizontal equity should be considered with regard to any tax reform proposal.
- **Provide administrative simplicity:** Administrative complexity causes economic losses because businesses are required to spend additional resources just to comply with the tax code. Administrative complexity also reduces the efficiency of a tax system by making the state spend additional resources to process the more complicated tax

returns and reduces the state's revenue collections because taxpayers are unable to fully comply with the increased administrative burdens. Reform should always have the objective of moving toward a tax code that caters to administrative simplicity in order to avoid economic loss and increase the tax system's efficiency.

- **Provide a broad base:** A broad tax base encourages economic growth by minimizing the tax burden on any one specific group of taxpayers and lowering the tax burdens of all taxpayers by spreading the tax burden among more taxpayers. Each tax reform measure should have the goal of moving toward the broadest possible tax base.
- **Eliminate multiple fees and surcharges:** Missouri's businesses are faced with many state and local fees and surcharges, including access fees, license fees, business license taxes, unemployment insurance fees and surcharges, and workers' compensation fees. Missouri has a duty to reduce the number and dollar amount of these fees and surcharges in addition to its duty to minimize the overall tax burden imposed on its residents. A burdensomely high effective state tax rate can negatively impact the state's economy.

Reform tax administration:

Taxpayers need stable and predictable rules that promote taxpayer fairness. The Missouri Chamber supports state tax administration reform that will improve transparency and enhance early taxpayer input on policies.

Phase in full deduction for the federal income tax:

In 1993, Missouri taxpayers suffered the largest tax increase in Missouri history. This legislative change forced Missouri corporations and many small business owners to pay state income taxes on part of the federal income tax dollars they had already paid. This tax policy is particularly burdensome because businesses are required to pay an income tax on an income

tax. The double tax occurs because businesses are prohibited from making use of the portion of money they pay to the federal government in taxes, yet they must pay tax on the same money again at the state level. Current law only permits C corporations to deduct one-half of the tax paid to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Those businesses choosing to be taxed as a pass-through entity are even more limited on their deduction for taxes paid to the IRS. The Missouri Chamber supports legislation to phase in the full deductibility of the federal income tax.

Expand state sales tax exemptions:

Missouri's sales tax exemptions provide Missouri's taxpayers with economic incentives to attract business to Missouri and to promote economic development. In addition, many of Missouri's sales tax exemptions enhance Missouri's social and environmental objectives. The Missouri Chamber is in favor of all sales tax exemptions that promote economic development activity and create jobs in Missouri. The Missouri Chamber opposes removing or imposing limitations on any sales tax exemptions if doing so could hinder Missouri's economic development initiatives.

Prohibit corporate tax information disclosures:

Taxpayers have an expectation of confidentiality and a right to privacy. Missouri's tax system is based on voluntary compliance. Corporations furnish and are required by law to provide extensive information under penalties of fine or imprisonment. Studies have shown that the degree of compliance with tax laws is impacted directly by the degree of confidentiality of information that taxpayers are required to provide to the Department of Revenue (DOR) and the IRS. If the DOR were permitted to make public such returns and/or return information, it would invite a variety of intrusions into the taxpayers' privacy. Business competitors of a taxpayer could use this information to gain economic

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TAXATION AND FISCAL POLICY

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

advantages over the unfortunate taxpayer. A lack of confidentiality could also facilitate the use of one taxpayer's return information for the political or other gain of its competitors. Because of the serious nature of the problems caused by such "transparency," the Missouri Chamber opposes public disclosure of all otherwise proprietary and tax information for any and all taxpayers.

Maintain appropriate state tax add-back list:

The DOR has historically proposed promulgating rules that relate to the requirement of state tax add-backs that are in violation of existing Missouri law. The proposed rules have exceeded the current statutory provisions by limiting the current legal definition of "income tax" and by expanding the list of state taxes that must be added back to Missouri taxable income. The Missouri Chamber strongly opposes any proposed or amended rule change or any administrative action by the DOR that would expand the legally permissible types of other states' taxes that must be added back to Missouri taxable income.

Adjust property taxes:

Current law allows for a reduction or elimination of property taxes for damaged or destroyed residential property due to a natural disaster. However, this benefit does not apply to commercial, agricultural or business personal property, leaving business owners with an unfair tax burden. The Missouri Chamber supports expanding the natural disaster property tax adjustment to apply to commercial, agricultural, and business personal property damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster.

Equalize local tax treatment:

Currently, the Missouri state tax code mirrors the federal tax code in the treatment of statutes of limitation and penalties assessed. However, local jurisdictions impose their own rules, creating complicated and confusing tax policies that treat taxpayers in similar situations differently across local jurisdictions. The Missouri Chamber supports equalizing the treatment of statutes of limitation and penalties among local, state, and federal tax policies, utilizing common guidelines for all taxes and fees.

Allow single remittance of local taxes and fees:

Every year, businesses – both large and small – make thousands of payments to state and local jurisdictions in order to comply with regulations. These payments drive up the cost of doing business in Missouri. Compliance costs reduce the resources of private businesses and can be considered a waste of economic resources. The Missouri Chamber supports the implementation of a voluntary program to allow businesses to submit a single remittance each month to one entity in order to eliminate the compliance costs.

Support tax modernization that sustains essential services and strengthens Missouri's competitiveness:

The Missouri Chamber supports maintaining a tax climate that makes Missouri as competitive as possible while ensuring the continued funding of essential services that underpin economic growth. We evaluate tax proposals through the lens of long-term competitiveness and economic stability. The Missouri Chamber believes tax policies should promote fairness and balance and should not put a disproportionate or inequitable burden on Missouri employers. A tax structure that encourages investment, job creation, and innovation is essential to sustaining the state's economic stability and promoting future growth. •

TECHNOLOGY

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

Maximize Missouri's emerging tech hub position with strategic assets:

Missouri's growing technology ecosystem, infrastructure capacity, and national standing create opportunities to accelerate innovation and investment. The Missouri Chamber supports forward-looking strategies to enhance Missouri's position as an emerging national tech hub, including future discussions around data center competitiveness and related infrastructure assets.

Expand and strengthen Missouri's long-term tech talent pipeline:

Tech occupations across every Missouri region require a growing number of skilled workers. The Missouri Chamber supports an all-of-the-above approach to workforce development focused on increasing participation in tech fields and strengthening both foundational and advanced training pathways. This includes sustained alignment with community colleges, four-year universities, and other post-secondary partners to deliver industry-relevant skills, certificates, and degrees.

Encourage activation of Missouri's cybersecurity advisory capacity:

Missouri established a statewide cybersecurity structure, but it has never been utilized or staffed. The Missouri Chamber supports standing up the Missouri Cybersecurity Commission through gubernatorial appointments and expert representation to strengthen statewide preparedness, accelerate best practices, and coordinate cybersecurity strategies across sectors.

Support investment opportunities:

In order to maintain tech sector growth, Missouri should increase funding opportunities for tech-related businesses and innovation. The Missouri Chamber supports a wide array of policies and efforts to drive investment, including adequately funding the Missouri Technology Corporation (MTC) and establishment of other programs that spur funding opportunities for research/development, startups, and business expansion in Missouri.

Promote broadband investment to support technological competitiveness:

Broadband expansion remains essential to innovation, digital participation, and business connectivity. The Missouri Chamber supports policies that encourage state and local governments to help facilitate broadband deployment and adoption, enabling private investment and improving economic performance statewide.

Leverage high-tech manufacturing advantage to bolster national security:

Missouri has a unique opportunity to bolster national security by investing in high-tech manufacturing infrastructure for critical products, like semiconductors and active pharmaceutical ingredients. The Missouri Chamber supports policies and forward-thinking statewide investments that leverage our ranking as a top state for technology manufacturing to help onshore critical supply chains.

Oppose patchwork privacy standards:

Conflicting data privacy standards across the nation create a patchwork of laws that is costly and stifles innovation. We support a national data privacy standard that protects individual privacy and transparency while ensuring businesses can continue to innovate and flourish. In the absence of federal action, policies should mirror reasonable standards enacted in other states to ensure uniformity and interoperability.

Increase access to STEM education:

Skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are vital for individuals of all ages and across all sectors of business in a modern economy. The Chamber supports efforts to integrate STEM education in our K-12 education system and maximize real-world learning opportunities for students in businesses in these types of industries. We also support access to robust computer science education and training in computer programming for all ages.

Modernize public sector IT systems:

As Missouri's public sector relies more than ever on information technology (IT) systems in its daily operations, modernization is needed to realize greater efficiencies. The Chamber supports efforts to modernize the state's IT procurement processes as well as policies that provide state decision makers greater flexibility in obtaining cost-effective and sophisticated IT systems. We also support efforts to recruit and retain a robust tech-focused workforce within state government.

Support smart infrastructure projects:

Missouri's businesses and residents rely upon natural gas, electricity, and water in a modern economy. These vital services can be made more reliable, safe, and affordable through the integration of technology within our critical infrastructure systems. We support efforts to integrate technology within these systems to ensure reliable service for businesses and residents and greater safety for communities in the event of a natural disaster.

Encourage the development and implementation of AI technology:

The Missouri Chamber fully supports businesses' innovation efforts. AI technology provides an unprecedented opportunity for businesses to scale operations, maximize efficiencies, and modernize processes. The Chamber supports a regulatory environment that empowers Missouri's business community to harness the full potential of this transformative technology. •

TRANSPORTATION/ INFRASTRUCTURE

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

In October of 2020, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry released a report titled *Transportation2030: Making Missouri a Leading Logistics Hub*.

Transportation2030, input from critical infrastructure stakeholders, and collaboration with state transportation leaders have led the Missouri Chamber to identify the following recommendations for Missouri's transportation and infrastructure future:

- **Continued and improved funding:** Supporting increased statewide transportation funding and finding new ways to fund transportation such as Regional Taxing Authorities, public-private partnerships, and encouraging collaboration
- **Highways:** Prioritizing interstate funding, autonomous vehicle policies, and electric vehicle charging stations for cars and semi-trucks and ensuring the \$2.8 billion allocated to I-70 between St. Louis and Kansas City stays appropriated
- **Ports and rivers:** Supporting continued funding for ports, increasing matching funds for federal grants, and supporting the Container on Vessel initiative
- **Rail:** Creating a Freight Rail economic development program to ensure rail is part of Missouri's economic development incentives
- **Air:** Supporting efforts to increase international air cargo connections and incentives to increase high-value air freight and passenger flights
- **Spur site redevelopment:** Developing environmental liability policies to promote redevelopment
- **Infrastructure workforce:** Generating multiple approaches to workforce supply and quality
- **Drones:** Supporting policies advancing drone usage across industry that preserve innovation, economic opportunity, safety, and protection of critical infrastructure.
- **Recommendations for the future:** Exploring new technologies such as Hyperloop, reusing and reinvesting in existing assets, and fostering a culture of innovation

Once implemented, these recommendations will help propel Missouri transportation forward into the future, increasing competitiveness, access to national and international markets, and our workforce supply to make Missouri a national leader.

Support primary seat belt law:

In addition to the recommendations made in Transportation2030, the Missouri Chamber supports legislation that would change Missouri's secondary seat belt law to a primary seat belt law. This would allow law enforcement officers to stop drivers for failing to wear their seat belts. Currently, a driver may only be ticketed for failing to wear a seat belt if stopped for another traffic violation. •



FEDERATION PRIORITIES

2026 Recommended Legislative Policies

The **Missouri Chamber Federation** is a partnership created to unify local and state chamber advocacy efforts in the state Capitol. The federation is a network of Missouri's strongest chambers of commerce providing grassroots support on issues that align with local priorities. Below are the federation's legislative priorities for 2026.

1. Child care is a pivotal statewide workforce and economic development issue. Parents' entry or re-entry into the workforce is often hindered by child care provider shortages. Missouri should increase the accessibility, availability, and affordability of high-quality child care.
2. We support a broad-spectrum approach to upskilling and right-skilling our state's workforce to address labor shortages and help businesses' growth. This includes adequately funding our existing workforce development programs, like Fast Track, MoExcels Workforce Initiative, Credential Training Program, and other job training programs. It is also important to advocate for new policies that are responsive and flexible to businesses' needs to recruit and retain skilled workers today while anticipating employment needs of the future. Additionally, we support increasing resources for programs that assist justice-involved individuals who are seeking to re-enter the workforce.
3. We strongly support a system of free enterprise and oppose efforts by the government to intervene in business decisions. The government should let employers decide how to run their own workplace(s). We oppose out-of-state interests and anti-business entities who use the ballot initiative process to create burdensome business mandates.
4. A strong education system is key to Missouri's long-term economic strength and competitiveness. We support efforts to adequately fund all levels of education. This includes early childhood education, K-12, higher education, apprenticeships, and short-term post-secondary training programs.

5. Economic development drives growth, creates new job opportunities, and facilitates an improved quality of life. Missouri should embrace an all-of-the-above approach in utilizing and offering innovative economic development tools and tax incentives to help its local communities and businesses thrive. We advocate for less burdensome regulations, easy-to-understand agency resources, fiscal responsibility from the state government, and similar initiatives to help retain and support existing businesses. We support continued statewide efforts to improve access to broadband, as it is vital for Missouri's economic growth.
6. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. Therefore, Missouri should increase access to funding and other resources for small businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurs to help them confidently start, grow, or expand. Local communities should have a voice when new statewide regulations are being considered, as the interests of Missouri's diverse small business community are a priority for localities.
7. Business owners recognize that accessible and affordable housing options and public transit resources are crucial to attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. We support growing access to affordable housing and transit options through increased state appropriations for key housing and community development programs as well as other state and federal incentive programs for the creation of affordable housing and transit.
8. State investment in tourism supports economic growth, job creation, and tax revenue. We support increasing funding of tourism promotion and other tourism-related programs, as it would positively impact many communities and have a positive ripple effect across the entire state.
9. We support comprehensive efforts to maximize Missouri's position as an emerging technology and advanced manufacturing hub. By enacting innovative policies, increasing investment, and training our workforce for high-tech jobs, our state can grow its global tech, innovation, and manufacturing footprint. Supporting a friendly regulatory environment for e-commerce is another essential part of creating a thriving technology environment in Missouri as the world moves into the digital age. Supporting Missouri businesses' ability to buy, sell, or trade goods and services efficiently, free of burdensome government regulations, not only supports growth of Missouri's business community, but also demonstrates the state's commitment to embracing the digital age and leading from the front as a technology hub. We also support fostering an AI-friendly and automation-friendly regulatory environment in the state to help fill in the gaps where skilled workers may be scarce.
10. We support civil justice reforms that discourage frivolous lawsuits which burden Missouri's judicial system and harm the state's business climate. We advocate for legislation that protects businesses from costly, unfounded legal claims by strengthening standards for filing civil suits and we support policies that reduce legal uncertainty and ensure fair, efficient resolution of disputes to foster a more competitive economic environment.

**Learn more about the federation at
mochamber.com/join/federation.**



MISSOURI CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

**428 E. Capitol Ave.,
Jefferson City, MO 65101**

573-634-3511

mochamber.com