



2018 Blueprint: Moving Missouri Forward

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The Show-Me Institute's [*2018 Blueprint: Moving Missouri Forward*](#) presents 16 policy ideas covering a broad range of issues—from education to health care, from public pensions to union reform, and from tax policy to transportation. Together, these policies can move Missouri forward to a brighter future.

[*Certificate of Need \(PDF\)*](#): Missouri's Certificate of Need (CON) law restricts health care competition by requiring health care providers to get state approval before entering new markets or expanding services offered in existing facilities. This restriction hampers innovative start-ups and market newcomers that would provide Missourians care and puts upward pressure on health care prices.

[*Charter School Expansion \(PDF\)*](#): Demand for charter schools in Missouri is at an all-time high. Unfortunately, charter schools are functionally limited to the Kansas City and Saint Louis School Districts. Tens of thousands of students are denied the opportunity for a better education.

[*Course Access \(PDF\)*](#): All across Missouri, students do not have access to higher-level coursework such as AP courses, calculus, or physics. A course access program would allow students to take courses outside of their traditional public school courses using a portion of their annual per-pupil funds to help pay for them.

[***Earned Income Tax Credit \(PDF\)***](#): State spending is on the rise in Missouri, led by a growth in public welfare dollars. Public welfare spending now accounts for more than 46% of total spending and 34% of spending growth. The growth in public welfare shares of total spending has eclipsed the growth of all other general expenditure functions.

[***Economic Development Subsidies \(PDF\)***](#): Excessive use of economic development subsidies has hollowed out municipal tax bases and diverted tax revenue to specific developers. In the past 15 years, Saint Louis City alone has allocated \$709 million away from municipal services through tax increment financing (TIF) and tax abatement. Studies from across the country indicate that these subsidies fail to generate promised jobs and growth.

[***Education Savings Accounts \(PDF\)***](#): Missouri students are underperforming. On the 2015 NAEP exam, only 31 percent of Missouri 8th-graders were found proficient in math and only 36 percent were found proficient in English. For the Class of 2016, only 22 percent of Missouri ACT test-takers scored “college-ready” in all four tested subjects. Education savings accounts could help students who are trapped in failing schools via residential assignment to purchase school supplies, tutoring services, or even private school tuition.

[***Higher Education \(PDF\)***](#): The University of Missouri system, and higher education in the United States in general, are at a crossroads. Tuition is rising, resulting in over \$1 trillion in student loan debt nationwide. At the same time, students who fail to secure a high-income job face serious financial consequences. As schools struggle with these crises, a rising tide of anti-free speech policy is sweeping across the higher education landscape.

[***Highways/Transportation Infrastructure \(PDF\)***](#): The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) will likely face funding shortfalls in the near future. The state will need to generate new revenue in fair and economically sound ways.

[***Income Tax Reform \(PDF\)***](#): Missouri’s economy has been stalled for almost two decades, as startup growth has slowed and entrepreneurs and taxpayers are leaving the state. Missouri is shrinking relative to other states and economies, ranking 48th out of 50 states in real GDP growth between 1997 and 2015. Individual income taxes are destructive to the state’s economic growth, productivity, and income, encouraging taxpayers to move their work or investments out of Missouri. This not only lowers economic output for the state, but also destabilizes revenue for state and local governments.

[***Open Collective Bargaining \(PDF\)***](#): Under current Sunshine Law in Missouri, government bodies may close meetings, records, and votes relating to contract negotiations until the contract is executed or rejected. This lack of transparency in negotiations between government unions and government officials can lead to contractual agreements that aren’t in the public’s best interest.

[Prevailing Wage \(PDF\)](#): Many government construction contracts dictate what potential contractors must pay workers. This can put projects out of reach financially for taxpayers, and can also hurt laborers by denying jobs to people who can do them at a more competitive price.

[Public Pension Reform \(PDF\)](#): Defined benefit (DB) pension plans promise employees annual payments for life upon retirement, but if a public plan does not have enough money to make these payments, taxpayers can be forced to fund the difference. Pension plans can come up short if they fail to make sufficient contributions or overestimate their investment returns. Nationwide, state and local public pension funds are underfunded by more than \$1 trillion dollars.

[Public Union Recertification \(PDF\)](#): Once a government union comes to power, it can stay in power indefinitely. No further elections are scheduled and no term limits are imposed. This means workers can do little to ensure their union truly represents their interests and is held accountable.

[Right to Work \(PDF\)](#): Until last year, many workers in Missouri could be forced to join unions. That was unfair not only to the employees disempowered by the law, but also to employers who had to operate under it. Governor Eric Greitens signed right to work legislation into law on February 6, 2017, but in 2018 the state will hold a referendum on that law.

[Sentencing Reform \(PDF\)](#): High crime and incarceration rates present a significant cost to taxpayers, and imprisoning minors is especially expensive. Relaxing harsh and automatic sentencing laws for minors—while still allowing judges to try minors as adults for especially serious crimes—could reduce costs while increasing public safety.

[Special Taxing Districts \(PDF\)](#): Special taxing districts are political subdivisions formed to fund specific services and improvements such as fire protection and infrastructure. In practice, however, they often allow narrow special interests to tax the public for their own private gain while allowing little or no public input or oversight.

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About the Author



Show-Me Staff

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Mission Statement

Advancing liberty with responsibility by promoting market solutions for Missouri public policy.

Show-Me Institute

5297 Washington Place 3645 Troost Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63108 Kansas City, MO 64109
Phone: (314) 454-0647 Phone: (816) 287-0370
Fax: (314) 454-0667

Email: info@showmeinstitute.org

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