



IDEAS WON IN 2020

End of Session Report

Early this year, the Show-Me Institute identified immediate and long-lasting reforms that would counter the damaging effects of the coronavirus pandemic on Missouri's health care infrastructure, education system, and economy. As you might expect, our proposals reflected our ongoing priorities: freedom for individuals and businesses to practice their trade, reform of abusive taxing districts, and reducing waste through transparency. In all of these areas significant victories were won, either by legislation (which awaits the governor's signature) or executive action.

INTERSTATE LICENSE RECIPROCITY

For years, Institute researchers have argued that Missouri needed to reform its licensing laws for all professions but especially for medical professions. In 2016, we wrote that Missouri “should be willing to accept, unilaterally, the licenses of qualified medical professionals from other states.” Now, that’s happened. HB 2046 establishes Missouri as the national leader in licensure reform, providing license reciprocity not only for medical professionals with out-of-state licenses, but also for the vast majority of non-medical professionals licensed by the state. The law also makes permanent a waiver the governor issued during the coronavirus crisis to provide interstate license reciprocity for doctors.

TAX INCENTIVE REFORMS

Finally, the legislature has begun to curb the abuses of community improvement districts (CIDs) and transportation development districts (TDDs). HB 1854 requires that the creation of CIDs and TDDs be approved by voters in the city where the district would sit—not simply by a vote of the district alone. More is needed, but this reform is an important step in the right direction.

MUNICIPAL SPENDING TRANSPARENCY

The public has the right to know where its tax dollars are spent. HB 1854 authorizes the creation of the Missouri Local Government Expenditure Database, which will show citizens what their taxes are paying for, item-by-item. This database, coupled with the Treasurer’s expanded Show-Me Checkbook Project, has Missouri well-positioned to lead the nation on spending transparency reform.

SCHOOL YEAR FLEXIBILITY

Last year, against the warnings of Institute scholars, Missouri set restrictions on school year start dates due to pressure from tourism lobbyists. When the pandemic hit, our scholars called for allowing school districts the flexibility to set their own start dates. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has now issued waivers allowing districts to begin school earlier than the statutory start date for 2020. That’s a good start, but the right of local districts to start when they see fit should be restored by statute and made permanent.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE AND TELEMEDICINE EXPANSION

To significantly expand Missourians’ access to health care providers, Institute staff pressed our state to expand telemedicine and the scope of practice for advanced practice registered nurses. Executive orders reflecting these recommendations were issued but are scheduled to sunset on June 15, 2020. Legislation is needed to make these changes permanent.

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