

MISSOURI NEEDS A SPECIAL SESSION NOW

Thanks to COVID-19, Missouri policymakers still have legislative work to do before the year is out. From protecting patients to protecting students and entrepreneurs, state leaders should call a special session—and soon—to pass reforms that will ensure Missouri is on firm economic and educational footing heading into the fall. Below are the most important items they need to address:

LEARN SAFELY SCHOLARSHIPS

All Missouri students should be able to learn safely. As the pandemic has revealed, many students need educational options their local districts don't provide. Some need virtual options, others need in-person instruction; some want public schools, others want private schools. Access to those educational options needs to be funded now through Learn Safely Scholarships.

SEAMLESS ACCESS TO ONLINE LEARNING

Missouri students should be able to enroll directly in the Missouri Course Access Program (MOCAP) without district approval. State funding for such students also should directly follow the student without going through a district first.

PERMANENT HEALTH CARE WAIVERS

The governor waived restrictions on telemedicine and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to help address the coronavirus pandemic—increasing access to care by maximizing the state's supply of these services. Legislators should return and make waivers permanent.

PERMANENT REGULATORY WAIVERS

Missouri grocers pride themselves on carefully trimming their steaks, which reduces fat and delivers leaner beef. Faced with a pandemic, the state undertook a similar fat-cutting exercise, temporarily striking rules and regulations across the board. The state should make those waivers permanent. If these rules weren't necessary during a pandemic, they're simply not necessary, and now's the time to cut that fat.

ESSENTIAL THERE, ESSENTIAL EVERYWHERE

Local governments need flexibility to meet unique public health challenges, but they should not be allowed to discriminate against small proprietors. If Walmart can stay open and sell an item, local bureaucrats shouldn't be able to shut down their local competition. The state should immediately prohibit such unequal and unfair treatment. If it's good enough for Walmart, it's good enough for everyone.



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