

# Missouri

Capitol City: Jefferson City

**Governor:** Eric Greitens (R). Elected Nov. 2016. Four year term.

Primary Elections: August 7, 2018

General Elections: November 6, 2018

The legislature convenes the first Wednesday after the first Monday of January. It adjourns with no consideration of bills after 6:00 p.m. on the first Friday following the second Monday in May.

All House seats are up for election in 2018; only half of the Senate is up for reelection. Senators from even-numbered districts will be up for reelection in 2018.

Governor has a two term limit. Legislators can serve eight years in each chamber.

**Senate:** 24 R + 9 D + 1 vacant = 34 total

Term 4 years

Senate President – Ron Richard (R-Joplin)

Minority Leader – Gina Walsh (D-Bellefontaine Neighbors)

Major Utility Committee – Senate Commerce Committee (11 members)

Chair – Ryan Silvey (R-Gladstone)

**House:** 117 R + 46 D = 163 total

Term 2 years

Speaker – Todd Richardson (R-Poplar Bluff)

Minority Leader – Gail McCann Beatty (D-Kansas City)

Major Utility Committee - House Utilities (11 members)

Chair – Rocky Miller (R-Lake Ozark)

**Regulatory Body:** Missouri Public Service Commission

Five-person commission appointed by the Governor. Confirmed by the Senate. Chairman is Daniel Hall.

# Missouri

Missouri session ended on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Legislators return to Jefferson City for a veto session (where they will consider any bills vetoed by the governor) in September. A new Republican Governor and Republican super-majorities in both chambers passed business-friendly policies that have been languishing for the last 8 years. However, the session was not without drama or contention.

Energy reform legislation continued its march. This year, the fight was contained within the Senate, as SB 190, the Missouri Economic Development and Infrastructure Investment Act, was easily passed by the Senate Commerce Committee. Once again, it was stopped on the Senate floor by a filibuster of 4 Senators. Overall, regulatory reform continues to trend the right way and has the support of most lawmakers in both chambers.

Utility Workers were added to Missouri's "Move Over" law. Vehicles approaching a stationary utility truck on the side of the road displaying amber or white lights will need to change lanes if possible or slow down as they approach the vehicle. This law is intended to help protect utility workers working alongside Missouri's roads and highways. The law was first put into effect for emergency responders. The change was included in a bill last session, but was vetoed by then-Governor Nixon over other items in the bill.

## Non-Utility Legislation:

Missouri lawmakers argued that the legal climate in the state was curtailing job growth and pointed to one groups labelling of Missouri as a "judicial hellhole". Lawmakers passed a group of laws aimed at restoring balance to the courts. The most controversial was SB 43, which would require employee wrongful termination lawsuits to prove that bias was a "motivating" factor and not just a contributing factor. The bill also set punitive damage limits scaled to the size of the employer.

Republicans quickly passed the long stalled Right-to-Work bill and the Governor signed it in mid-February. However, unions are seeking enough signatures to force a public referendum on the bill in 2018. Additionally, Republicans passed a bill to eliminate Project Labor Agreements or PLAs. Missouri cities and counties would lose state funding if they force nonunion contractors to pay union wages on a public project.

Missouri faced a tough budget environment as revenues declined and costs for many programs rose. Lawmakers did fully fund K-12 education for the first time in history. However, higher education and some services saw their funding curtailed. The \$27.8 billion budget was balanced, but lawmakers are already concerned about next year's budget.

Facing a January 1, 2018 deadline to comply with the federal government's "Real ID" program, Missouri finally passed a fix. At the beginning of next year, the federal government will require a compliant REAL ID to board a plane or access federal facilities like military bases (FERC already requires it). Missouri is one of only 5 states that had not complied with the requirement to make our ID's compliant.