



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
KEITH ELLIOTT
153RD
DISTRICT



Committees
Agriculture Committee
Corrections and Public Institutions

CAPITOL REPORT
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As Missouri heads into the 2026 legislative session, the steady stream of policy activity signals changes that will be felt in rural communities across the state. From record bill filings to ongoing redistricting battles and new proposals affecting schools, families, and everyday costs, lawmakers are setting the stage for decisions that could significantly influence rural schools, local economies, and access to services.

As your Representative, I am committed to making sure the voices of our small towns and rural families are heard in Jefferson City. These decisions affect our schools, our farms, and the services our communities rely on. I will continue to fight for practical solutions that strengthen our local economy and preserve the quality of life we value here in rural Missouri.

The Missouri House began pre-filing for the 2026 session with a record **485 bills filed on December 1**, surpassing the previous high of 372. Pre-filing allows lawmakers to outline early priorities. Key issues likely to affect rural areas include education, workforce development, tax policy, land ownership, and family support programs.

Missouri's new congressional map, which removes a Democratic Kansas City seat and favors Republicans, is facing a statewide referendum effort. Over **300,000 signatures** were submitted to force a vote, but verification and ongoing lawsuits will determine whether the map goes to voters in 2026. This fight could influence rural representation in Congress and the balance of political power.

Governor Mike Kehoe will present his **2026 State of the State Address** on **Tuesday, January 13 at 3:00 p.m.**, highlighting legislative priorities and the FY27 budget. The address will be livestreamed, allowing rural constituents to stay informed about the governor's agenda.

The Missouri State Board of Education included voluntary public school open enrollment in its 2026 priorities, signaling interest in shaping legislation that allows students to attend schools in neighboring districts. Other priorities include fully funding K-12 schools and improving math instruction, which could benefit rural districts facing enrollment or resource challenges.

Rural communities can benefit from up to \$14,135 per organization in new state funding for Pregnancy Resource Centers, Maternity Homes, and Diaper Banks. This funding helps expand family support services such as prenatal referrals, parenting education, and essential supplies, directly supporting rural families.

Beginning **October 1, 2026**, Missouri SNAP benefits cannot be used to purchase candy, soda, prepared desserts, beverage mixes, or low-juice drinks. As the plan is developed in the next year, they will be getting SNAP recipients more information. This federal waiver, approved for Missouri and five other states, aims to improve nutrition for families across urban and rural areas alike.

Missouri's general revenue rose 16.2% in November compared to last year, with year-to-date collections up 4.3%. Growth in income and sales taxes could impact state programs and services in rural areas, while corporate tax collections remain down. Refunds issued by the state decreased significantly.

As your Representative, I encourage you to stay informed and engaged throughout this session. Attend local town halls, follow legislative updates, and reach out with your questions or concerns. Your voice matters in shaping policies that affect our schools, farms, businesses, and families. Together, we can ensure that rural Missouri continues to thrive and that our communities are well-represented in Jefferson City.



Missouri State Representative

Ezekiel 33:7 NLT. "Now, son of man, I am making you a watchman for the people of Israel. Therefore, listen to what I say and warn them for me."

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