



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
KEITH ELLIOTT
153RD
DISTRICT

Committees

Agriculture Committee
Corrections and Public Institutions
Children and Families Committee



QUICK LINKS:

www.state.mo.us
www.house.mo.gov
www.modot.org

**CAPITOL
REPORT**
April 13, 2026

As spring settles in across the 153rd District, we've been enjoying some beautiful weather—plenty of sunshine and those mild temperatures that make you want to stay outside just a little longer. Around our communities you can see the season in full swing. Folks are out in the fields and while cattle chores never really stop, things are starting to ease up just a bit compared to the heart of winter.

At the same time, there's a different kind of busy picking up pace down in Jefferson City. While life at home may be finding its spring rhythm, things at the Capitol are doing the opposite—the pace is speeding up. With the legislative session set to wrap up by May 17th, 2026, lawmakers are working to move bills across the finish line. One item seeing movement is my bill, HCR 29, which recently came up in the Missouri House Corrections Committee as part of those ongoing discussions.

Back here in the district, it's also a season of transitions. Schools, across the counties of the 153rd District, are beginning to wind down, with graduations and summer break just around the corner. It's always an exciting time for students, families, and educators alike.

With all of that in mind—from the fields to the classrooms to the Capitol—here's a look at the latest legislative updates and what they could mean for our communities.

New Laws Signed: What It Means for Our Communities (SB 888, HB 1908, HB 2273)

Governor Mike Kehoe signed three additional bills into law this week.

For communities across the 153rd District spanning these changes hit close to home:

SB 888 (Criminal Justice): Local law enforcement agencies, like county sheriffs' departments in Howell County, will see improved tools for tracking repeat offenders and sharing case information with prosecutors.

- **HB 1908 (Family Law):** Ensures courts serving towns like Naylor and Ellsinore can process divorce cases without delays tied to pregnancy status.
- **HB 2273 (Child Protection):** Strengthens penalties for crimes involving minors and addresses online exploitation—important for protecting kids in school.

Bottom line: These laws aim to strengthen safety and access to justice across rural southeastern Missouri.

Changes to SNAP & Health Benefits (HCS HB 2481)

This bill could directly impact families across the district, especially in more rural areas of Oregon county, where public assistance plays a key role.

- Requires stricter verification for SNAP and MO HealthNet
- Adjusts temporary benefit access
- Counts more household income in eligibility

Local impact: Families in communities like Alton and Greenville may see changes in how quickly they can access benefits or whether they qualify at all—something local social service offices will need to help residents navigate.

Firearm Suppressor Bill (HB 1730)

This legislation has drawn attention across the district, where Second Amendment support is strong.

- Removes certain state penalties starting in 2026
- Limits cooperation with federal enforcement

Local impact: In counties where hunting and firearm ownership are common—this bill will likely be closely followed by residents and local law enforcement alike.

Stronger Abuse Reporting (HCS HB 2292)

This bill expands how abuse and neglect are reported and investigated.

- Adds animal control officers as mandated reporters
- Requires cross-training for professionals
- Creates a new Office of Special Investigations

Closer to home: In smaller communities like Naylor, Ellsinore, and Alton, where resources are limited and agencies often overlap, better coordination could help identify abuse cases earlier—especially involving children and seniors.

Liability Protections for Teachers (HCS HBs 2913 & 3228)

This legislation supports teachers who step in during dangerous situations.

- Provides legal protection when intervening in school violence
- Prevents school policies from restricting reasonable action

Local impact: Teachers in districts like West Plains and Naylor can act more confidently in emergencies without fear of legal consequences.

Nuclear Energy Proposal (HCS HBs 2122 & 1626)

A long-term energy bill aimed at encouraging nuclear development in Missouri.

- Allows utilities to recover construction costs early
- Includes oversight and expiration provisions

Local impact: While no facilities are planned in the 153rd District, residents across Howell County could eventually see impacts in energy reliability and utility rates.

Settlement Demand Standards (HB 2927)

This bill updates how legal settlements are handled.

- Requires written, time-bound, certified settlement offers

Local impact: Provides clearer rules for individuals, farmers, and small businesses across the district when dealing with civil disputes.

Regional Planning Funding Increase (HB 2096)

Boosts funding for regional planning commissions.

- Raises funding caps
- Adjusts distribution
- Adds inflation-based increases starting in 2027

Local impact: Organizations serving southeastern Missouri—including those working with Howell and Oregon counties—could have more resources for infrastructure, economic development, and community planning projects.

Illegal Gaming Crackdown Could Shift the Debate

Missouri Attorney General Catherine Hanaway announced that Torch Electronics has shut down its gaming machines statewide after a federal investigation.

These machines have been a familiar sight in convenience stores and other locations across Missouri—including some in and around our district.

What's next: This move makes it clear the state considers these machines illegal, and it could push lawmakers to finally settle the long-running debate over video lottery terminals.

As always, it's a privilege to work with you.



State Representative
District of 153rd

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."

Please contact me at:
201 West Capitol Avenue, Room 115 B
Jefferson City, MO 65101-6806
Phone: 573-751-1066
Email: Keith.Elliott@house.mo.gov

If you would like to unsubscribe to this Capitol Report,
please contact: Denise.Leigh@house.mo.gov.
