

# What you're actually voting on

Four constitutional amendments, a statewide vote on the congressional map, two judges, and a slate of races. Inside Poplar Bluff, a fire department sales tax too. Read from the county's own ballot and the full legal text, not from the ads.

Independent voter guide · not an official ballot or county publication

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|                           |                         |                                      |                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Tuesday, November 3, 2026 | Polls 6:00 am – 7:00 pm | Early voting open now through Nov. 2 | Clerk: 573-686-8050 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|

THE 90-SECOND VERSION

## No party ballot to pick this time

You'll vote on **four constitutional amendments, one referendum, two judges, and a slate of races where every county office has one candidate**. If you live inside Poplar Bluff city limits, you'll also vote on **a half-cent sales tax for the fire department**.

What matters most:

- Amendment 3** repeals the abortion-rights amendment voters passed in 2024, replaces it with a ban that has limited exceptions, and also writes a ban on gender-transition treatment for minors into the constitution. Two subjects, one vote.
- Amendment 6** is a citizen petition that would make it much harder for the legislature to change or repeal laws that voters pass by petition. It moves in the opposite direction from August's Amendment 4, but it's a separate question; how you voted in August doesn't decide it.
- Proposition A** asks whether to adopt the 2025 congressional map for future elections (YES) or stay with the 2022 map now in use (NO). **It does not change Butler County's district** (we're in the 8th either way), and **it does not change this year's election**.

**4. Poplar Bluff fire tax** (city voters only). About \$3 million a year. The fire chief says it restores lost positions and could improve the city's insurance rating; the assistant city manager said about half would free up general funds for other departments.

**Amendments 7 and 8** are quieter but have fine print worth five minutes each.

STEP ONE

### Which ballot will you get?

**There's no party choice in November.** Which version of the ballot you get depends on where you live. The county's sample shows three versions:

| BALLOT    | WHAT'S DIFFERENT                                                              |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Version 1 | State Rep <b>152nd District</b> (contested)                                   |
| Version 3 | State Rep <b>150th District</b> (one candidate)                               |
| Version 5 | 152nd District <b>plus the Poplar Bluff fire sales tax</b> (city voters only) |

Everything else is identical on all three: same amendments, same proposition, same judges, same county offices.

THE BALLOT IS TWO-SIDED

Amendment 3 is on the front, at the bottom of the right-hand column. Amendments 6, 7 and 8, Prop A, the judges and (inside Poplar Bluff) the fire tax are all on the back. The back is easy to miss. Turn it over.

# 3 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

## Repeal 2024 abortion rights; ban gender-transition treatment for minors

### CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT NO. 3

Proposed by 103rd General Assembly  
(First Regular Session) HCS HJR 73

Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to:

- Repeal the 2024 voter-approved Amendment providing reproductive healthcare rights, including abortion through fetal viability;
- Allow abortions for rape and incest (under twelve-weeks' gestation), emergencies, and fetal anomalies;
- Allow legislation regulating abortion;
- Ensure parental consent for minors' abortions;
- Prohibit gender transition procedures for minors?

State governmental entities estimate no costs or savings. Greene County estimates it may experience an unknown increase in tax revenue. Other local governmental entities estimate no costs or savings.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Exact text as printed on the Butler County ballot - front side, bottom of the right-hand column.

### OFFICIAL FAIR BALLOT LANGUAGE

**YES** A "yes" vote will repeal Article I, Section 36, of the Missouri Constitution approved by the voters in 2024 which provided reproductive healthcare rights, including abortion through fetal viability; continue to ensure women's ability to access medical care for medical emergencies, ectopic pregnancies, and miscarriages; allow legislation to regulate abortion providers and facilities to ensure health and safety; require informed and voluntary consent for an abortion, including parental or judicial consent for minors; allow restriction of abortions to cases of medical emergency, rape and incest under twelve weeks gestation, and fetal anomalies; prohibit public funding of abortions except in limited circumstances; and prohibit gender transition procedures for minors including gender transition surgeries, cross-sex hormones or puberty-blocking drugs, with exceptions for specific medical conditions.

**NO** A "no" vote will leave Article I, Section 36, of the Missouri Constitution approved by voters in 2024 in place; will not limit abortion to cases of medical emergency, rape and incest under twelve weeks gestation, and fetal anomalies, but leave access to abortion available through fetal viability; will not prohibit gender transition procedures for minors.

**TAX** If passed, this measure will not increase or decrease taxes.

Word for word from the Missouri Secretary of State. For Amendment 3, the Missouri Court of Appeals wrote this language.

### In plain English

In 2024, Missouri voters passed an amendment (also numbered 3, which is confusing) creating a constitutional right to abortion up to fetal viability. It passed statewide 51.6% to 48.4%.

**Where things stand today:** On June 18, 2026, a Jackson County judge ruled that most of Missouri's remaining abortion regulations violate that 2024 amendment and can't be enforced, including the 72-hour waiting period and the admitting-privileges requirement. Planned Parenthood said it would resume medication abortions in Kansas City and St. Louis, the first since 2018. The state filed its appeal to the Missouri Supreme Court on July 10; I found no ruling on that appeal as of October 24.

### This year's Amendment 3 would:

- **Repeal the 2024 amendment entirely**
- **Allow the state to restrict abortion to a medical emergency, a fetal anomaly, or rape or incest within the first 12 weeks** (the full text says "no later than twelve weeks"; the fair ballot language says "under twelve weeks")

### The definitions matter more than the bullets

The exceptions are defined in the full text, and the definitions are narrow:

- **Let the legislature pass abortion regulations again**, and the text names some explicitly, including the admitting-privileges and clinic-licensing rules the judge ruled unenforceable
- **Require written consent from both the minor and a parent or legal guardian** before an abortion for a minor who isn't emancipated, except in a medical emergency in which consent cannot be obtained; the legislature may also let a judge grant consent instead
- **Ban gender-transition surgery for anyone under 18, and ban prescribing them cross-sex hormones or puberty blockers for gender transition**, with exceptions for children born with a medically verifiable disorder of sex development and for treating unrelated conditions
- **Require any lawsuit** challenging a state reproductive-health law to be filed in **Cole County** (Jefferson City)

**One thing I couldn't pin down:** whether Missouri's 2019 near-total ban law, which the 2024 amendment overrode, would take effect again on its own if this passes, or whether the legislature would have to act. Reporting describes the result as a return to a near-total ban with these exceptions, but none I found spelled out the mechanics.

- **"Fetal anomaly"** means an abnormality *"that would make life outside the womb impossible."* That covers conditions incompatible with life, not survivable disabilities.

- **"Medical emergency"** means a condition requiring immediate termination *"to avert the death of the pregnant woman"* or where delay risks *"substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function."* It explicitly includes ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage treatment.
- **There is no mental-health exception.**
- **Rape and incest:** the 12-week limit is in the text. The passed version does **not** require a police report.

THE CASE FOR

For most supporters, this starts with a conviction: an unborn child is a human life, and the law should protect it. They argue the 2024 amendment reached further than many voters expected, and point to the June ruling, which struck down even the 72-hour waiting period and the admitting-privileges rule, as proof.

Supporters say this restores reasonable limits while keeping the exceptions most people say they want: rape, incest, emergencies, and fatal fetal conditions. They point out that the text explicitly says a woman's access to care for *"miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies, and other medical emergencies shall not be infringed by the state."*

They also argue parental consent for a minor's abortion is common sense, and that the 2024 amendment left it in doubt. On gender transition, supporters say most Missourians oppose these treatments for minors and want that settled permanently.

First Lady Claudia Kehoe, treasurer of the main Yes committee, called it *"a critical step toward strengthening our pro-life protections and safeguarding our state's future."*

THE CASE AGAINST

Opponents say it's a near-total ban dressed up with exceptions that are hard to use in practice. They argue "life outside the womb impossible" leaves out many serious diagnoses. A 12-week limit for rape doesn't help a victim who doesn't know she's pregnant, or can't get to a clinic, in time. And they argue emergency exceptions written this way leave doctors unsure when they're allowed to act.

They also object to the bundling: **two unrelated subjects in one yes/no question**, so a voter who wants one and not the other has no way to say so. Michael Wolff, a former chief justice of the Missouri Supreme Court advising the No campaign, said the legislature's original ballot wording appeared *"intended to deceive people into thinking that they were going to protect women having abortions."*

Follow the money

| SIDE                                    | MONEY                  | NOTES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>NO (Stop the Ban)</b>                | <b>\$25.7M+</b> raised | Largest donor The Fairness Project, a D.C. nonprofit that doesn't disclose its own donors: <b>nearly \$12M</b> . KCUR reports most of the money is from out of state, along with thousands of small Missouri donors.                                                           |
| <b>YES (Her Health, Her Future PAC)</b> | <b>\$5.3M</b> raised   | Largest donor: <b>\$2.9M</b> from <i>Her Health Her Future Missouri</i> , a nonprofit <b>not required to disclose its donors</b> . Its adviser says 99% of its money is from Missourians; there's no way to check. Missouri Right to Life PAC has raised at least \$800K more. |

Figures as reported by KCUR/Missouri Independent, October 18, 2026.

THE CATCH

- One: the legislature's wording was thrown out.** Here's the summary lawmakers originally wrote for your ballot:
- "Guarantee access to care for medical emergencies, ectopic pregnancies, and miscarriages; Ensure women's safety during abortions; Ensure parental consent for minors; Allow abortions for medical emergencies, fetal anomalies, rape, and incest; Require physicians to provide medically accurate information; and Protect children from gender transition?"*
- Notice what's missing: the word **repeal**, and the **12-week limit**. In September 2025 a Cole County judge ruled that wording failed to tell voters the measure would repeal the 2024 amendment. The Secretary of State rewrote it twice, and in December 2025 the Missouri Court of Appeals ruled the rewrite still fell short and wrote the final version itself. **The first line on your ballot ("Repeal the 2024 voter-approved Amendment...") is first because the appeals court put it there.**
- Two: the gender-transition part is mostly already law.** Missouri law already bans gender-transition surgery for minors. It also bans prescribing puberty blockers or hormones to minors for transition through **August 28, 2027**, except for minors who were prescribed or given them before August 28, 2023. Amendment 3 would make the ban permanent, put it in the constitution where only a statewide vote can change it, and drop that exception for minors prescribed or given those drugs before August 28, 2023.
- That's a real change, but it's worth asking why it was attached to an abortion question instead of being its own amendment. The same appeals court that rewrote the wording threw out a constitutional challenge to the measure, so both subjects can legally share one ballot question.
- Three: the odd line in the fiscal note.** Your ballot says *"Greene County estimates it may experience an unknown increase in tax revenue."* Greene County's explanation is in the State Auditor's fiscal note: it reasoned that fewer abortions would mean more residents and, over their working lives, more sales and property tax revenue, and it said a reliable estimate wasn't feasible in the time it had. That's Greene County's assumption, not a study. Butler County didn't send the auditor an estimate.
- Four: a NO doesn't bring back the old rules.** Missouri's pre-2024 abortion laws are already mostly out of force: the 2024 amendment overrode the ban, and the June ruling blocked most remaining regulations while the state's appeal is pending. A NO keeps abortion available through fetal viability, with most of the old regulations blocked unless the state wins its appeal. If you vote NO, that's the outcome you're choosing.

**Be fair about this:** both sides' biggest donors are nonprofits that don't disclose who funds them: The Fairness Project on the No side, Her Health Her Future Missouri on the Yes side. The No side has about four times the money (counting Right to Life's PAC with the Yes side), and most of it comes from outside Missouri. The Yes side says nearly all its money is from Missourians; because of how it's routed, there's no way to check.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- How much protection should the law give an unborn child, and from when?
- Are the exceptions written the way I'd want them applied in a real case?
- If I support one part and oppose the other, which matters more to me, since I only get one vote?
- Do I want the gender-transition ban to be permanent and constitutional, or to stay in ordinary law where the legislature can revisit it?

# 6 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

## Limits on the legislature changing laws passed by petition

### CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT NO. 6

Proposed by Initiative Petition

Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to:

- expand the initiative and referendum petition process by making it a fundamental right;
- allow courts to revise ballot summaries through lawsuits;
- prohibit the legislature from weakening initiative or referendum powers;
- prohibit the legislature from changing or repealing laws enacted through the initiative process, or passing laws similar to those rejected by referendum, without approval from at least 80% of both chambers; and
- preserve existing majority vote and signature requirements for initiative and referendum petitions?

State and local governmental entities estimate no costs or savings.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Exact text as printed on the Butler County ballot - back side.

### OFFICIAL FAIR BALLOT LANGUAGE

**YES** A "yes" vote will prohibit the people's elected representatives from directly amending or changing any law enacted through the initiative process; require that any modifications to laws enacted through the initiative process be referred to the people by a vote of at least 80% of each chamber of the General Assembly; restrict the legislature from passing laws that limit the ability to pursue initiatives and referenda; maintain the current signature requirements of five percent of the individual legal voters in each of two-thirds of Missouri's congressional districts for proposing a law; maintain the current signature requirement of eight percent of individual legal voters in each of two-thirds of Missouri's congressional districts for proposing a constitutional amendment; and maintain the current requirement that a simple statewide majority of votes cast on a measure by individual legal voters is sufficient to enact any law or constitutional amendment.

**NO** A "no" vote will not change the current constitutional provisions, which already give citizens the right to propose initiatives and referenda.

**TAX** If passed, this measure will not increase or decrease taxes.

Word for word from the Missouri Secretary of State.

### In plain English

Right now, when Missouri voters pass a law by petition, the legislature can change or repeal it the next session like any other law. That happened in 2025: voters passed a \$15 minimum wage and paid sick leave by petition in 2024, and the next year the legislature repealed the sick-leave requirement and the future inflation increases. (The \$15 wage stayed.)

**Amendment 6 would stop that.** From the full text:

- **To change a voter-passed law, 80% of the House AND 80% of the Senate would have to agree, and then it would still go back to a statewide vote.** The legislature couldn't change it on its own at all.
- **It reaches back to January 1, 2010.** Every law and amendment passed by petition since then gets the protection. That includes the \$15 minimum wage, Medicaid expansion, legal marijuana, and the 2024 abortion-rights amendment. The protection covers what the legislature does after Amendment 6 takes effect, so it wouldn't bring back the sick-leave requirement repealed in 2025.

- **Any law affecting the petition process would face "strict scrutiny"** in court, the toughest legal test there is, except where the constitution itself sets the rule. The text lists examples of what counts as weakening: raising signature thresholds, shortening collection time, adding requirements on petitioners.
- **Any legislature-proposed change that weakens petitions, proposed after January 1, 2025, is "hereby prohibited."**
- **Courts could rewrite misleading ballot summaries**, and no law could take that power away. (Courts already do this; it's how the ballot language on Amendments 3 and Prop A got fixed.)
- **Signature requirements and the simple-majority rule stay exactly as they are.**

It was put on the ballot by a group called Respect Missouri Voters, which turned in 367,741 signatures. The Secretary of State rejected it in August; the Missouri Supreme Court unanimously ordered it onto the ballot on September 3.

### THE CASE FOR

When voters decide something directly, politicians shouldn't be able to quietly undo it the next spring. The paid sick-leave repeal is the example: voters passed it, and the legislature took it out within a year. Supporters say that's exactly what Amendment 6 stops.

*"Missourians voted to pass that, and the legislature came back and overturned part of it," said Yes on 6 spokesman Jack Cardetti. "So moving forward, that would not be allowed and that vote of the people would be protected."*

They also note it doesn't make petitions easier to pass. Same signatures, same majority. It only protects what voters already decided. Former Republican U.S. Sen. John Danforth has endorsed it.

### THE CASE AGAINST

Laws passed by petition have mistakes like any other law, and opponents say this would make them nearly impossible to fix: any change would need 80% of both chambers and then another statewide election. Secretary of State Denny Hoskins said it *"would permanently handcuff lawmakers."* Attorney General Catherine Hanaway called it *"a radical proposal"* and an *"anti-democratic scheme."*

There's a structural argument too: elected legislators answer to their districts, including rural districts like ours. Critics of the petition process have long argued that it's driven by out-of-state money and lets Kansas City and St. Louis decide for everyone else.

### THE CATCH

**It's retroactive.** It's easy to read "protect laws enacted through the initiative process" as being about future laws. The text protects everything back to 2010, which means it shields what remains of the policies voters passed by petition in the last 16 years from future changes by the legislature, whether you agreed with them or not.

**"Strict scrutiny" is a big deal that the ballot doesn't mention.** It means almost any new rule about petitions, including anti-fraud rules, would face the hardest possible test in court. Supporters say that's the point. Opponents say it ties the state's hands.

### It and August's Amendment 4 point in opposite

**directions.** Amendment 4 would have made petitions harder; Butler County rejected it 81–19. Rejecting Amendment 4 doesn't automatically mean you want Amendment 6, which goes much further the other way. These are separate questions.

**If Amendments 3 and 6 both pass:** Amendment 6 protects petition-passed amendments since 2010, which includes the 2024 abortion amendment that Amendment 3 repeals. But Amendment 6 limits only what the legislature does after it takes effect, and the legislature passed Amendment 3 in 2025. How courts would sort that out is an open question; I found no analysis of it.

**A NO keeps today's rules.** Voters can still pass laws by petition, and the legislature can still change them the next session, as it did with sick leave in 2025.

### Follow the money

| SIDE                                 | MONEY           | SOURCE                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FOR (Vote Yes on Amendment 6)</b> | <b>\$4.7M+</b>  | Large contributions since Sept. 8, mostly labor unions: Missouri AFL-CIO (\$1.1M+), Mid-America Carpenters (\$500K), IBEW Local 124 (\$400K), Sheet Metal Workers Local 36 (\$300K) |
| <b>AGAINST (MO Protect PAC)</b>      | <b>\$14,870</b> | On hand Oct. 1. Later received \$10K each from committees backing state Sens. Brad Hudson and <b>Jason Bean, who represents Butler County</b>                                       |

Figures from the Missouri Independent, October 14, 2026.

Unions have an obvious stake, since the 2024 minimum-wage and sick-leave measure is one of the laws it would protect. Know that when you hear the ads. The No side has almost no money, but it has the Secretary of State and the Attorney General.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- When voters pass something by petition, who should be able to change it: the legislature, or only the voters again?
- Am I comfortable locking in every petition passed since 2010, including the ones I voted against?

## 7 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

# A state investment fund to eventually replace all state taxes

### CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT NO. 7

Proposed by 103rd General Assembly  
(Second Regular Session) SS SCS SJR 95

Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to establish a permanent public endowment fund to support state government instead of taxing Missouri residents, prohibit the General Assembly from appropriating or diverting the fund, and eliminate state-imposed taxes once the fund generates sufficient revenue to replace them?

State and local governmental entities estimate no costs or savings.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Exact text as printed on the Butler County ballot - back side.

## OFFICIAL FAIR BALLOT LANGUAGE

- YES** A “yes” vote will amend the Missouri Constitution to establish the “Show-Me Prosperity Fund,” a permanent public endowment fund to support state government with the goal of eliminating state-imposed taxes without impairing the real value of the fund’s principal; prohibit the General Assembly from appropriating or diverting monies from the fund until notification is given by the State Treasurer that the net investment earnings of the fund are sufficient to eliminate state-imposed taxes; cap the total amount of moneys that may be appropriated from the fund in a fiscal year to three percent of the average market value of the fund over the preceding five fiscal years; and prohibit the General Assembly from enacting the eliminated state-imposed taxes, provided, however, that in the event the fund is unable to meet its obligations due to insolvency, revenue shortfall, or program failure, the General Assembly shall retain full authority to appropriate funds from any lawful source and to enact legislation establishing or increasing taxes or other revenues as necessary.
- NO** A “no” vote will not amend the Missouri Constitution to establish a permanent public endowment fund to support state government with the goal of eliminating state-imposed taxes.
- TAX** **If passed, this measure will have no immediate impact on taxes but could lead to the elimination of state-imposed taxes if the net investment earnings of the fund become sufficient to support that outcome.**

Word for word from the Missouri Secretary of State.

## In plain English

Think of it as a state savings account meant to grow until its investment returns can pay for state government, so the state can stop collecting taxes. From the full text:

- **The fund starts at zero.** Money comes from whatever the legislature chooses to put in, plus any gifts, donations, grants or bequests. There is no required amount and no schedule.
- **The constitution itself would require the State Treasurer to invest it in exchange-traded funds that track the S&P 500**, or a comparable successor index set by law. In other words, stocks.
- **Nothing can be spent from it until one year's earnings are enough to replace ALL state taxes** at once: income tax, sales tax, corporate tax, and every other state tax. Then the legislature has to approve.
- **After that, spending is capped at 3% a year** of the fund's five-year average value.

### THE CASE FOR

It's a patient, long-term way to shrink what government takes from people, without cutting anything today. The money is locked: the legislature can't raid the principal. Compounding does the work over generations. Alaska has run a permanent fund for decades. Schnelting calls it *"a monumental shift in how we view government."*

### THE CASE AGAINST

Critics say every dollar the legislature puts into the fund is a dollar not spent on roads, schools or prisons that year, for a payoff the sponsor himself puts 100 years or more away. Even Tuohey, who favors lower taxes, said that on paper it's *"a very compelling idea,"* but argued it isn't realistic. A stocks-only fund can lose a third of its value in a bad year. And Alaska's fund was built on oil money; Missouri's would depend on what the legislature chooses to put in.

- **Once a tax is eliminated, it can't come back**, unless the fund can't meet its obligations because of insolvency, a revenue shortfall or program failure. Then the legislature can raise taxes again.
- **Local taxes are not touched.** County and city sales taxes and property taxes stay.

The sponsor, Sen. Adam Schnelting (R-St. Charles), has been candid about the timeline: *"My hope is that in, say, 100 years from now, or 125 years from now, Missouri doesn't tax its citizens whatsoever."*

## How big would it have to be?

Policy analyst Patrick Tuohey told KOMU it would take a fund of **about \$450 billion**, and *"It may be 100 years before we ever get there."*

For scale, my arithmetic: \$450 billion is about **\$73,000 for every person in Missouri** (2020 Census: 6.15 million people). At the 3% cap, a fund that size would pay out about **\$13.5 billion a year**. The fund starts at \$0.

### THE CATCH

**Read the ballot title again: "to support state government instead of taxing Missouri residents."** Nothing in this amendment reduces anyone's taxes until the fund can replace every state tax, which the sponsor and Tuohey both put about a century away. The state's own fair ballot language says it will have *"no immediate impact on taxes."* The title describes the hoped-for end state, not what voting yes does.

**The fiscal note says "no costs or savings"** because the amendment doesn't require any deposits. Whether it ever costs anything depends entirely on what future legislatures decide to put in.

**No campaign committee on either side.** As of October 19, KOMU reported no committee for or against it. That's one more reason to read it yourself.

**A NO changes nothing today either.** The difference is long-term: without it, any money the state sets aside stays within reach of future legislatures.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Would I rather the state put spare money into a 100-year fund, or spend it now, or cut taxes now?
- Am I comfortable writing a specific investment (S&P 500 index funds) into the constitution?

# Sheriffs in the constitution

## CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT NO. 8

Proposed by 103rd General Assembly  
(Second Regular Session) CCS HCS SS SJR 87

Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to support law enforcement by preserving the right of citizens to elect a county sheriff, prohibiting the removal of a county sheriff except by a writ of quo warranto, and recognizing the office of sheriff as part of the administration of justice?

State and local governmental entities estimate no costs or savings.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Exact text as printed on the Butler County ballot - back side.

### OFFICIAL FAIR BALLOT LANGUAGE

- YES** A "yes" vote will amend the Missouri Constitution to require counties to: elect a sheriff every four years, **which is currently required by statute**; place in the Constitution provisions regarding sheriffs' duties **that are currently provided by statute**; and provide that an elected sheriff may be removed from office **only through a writ of quo warranto initiated by the Attorney General**.
- NO** A "no" vote will not amend the Missouri Constitution. Current Missouri statutes providing for the election of county sheriffs to four-year terms and governing their duties and removal will remain in effect unless changed by law.
- TAX** If passed, this measure will not increase or decrease taxes.

Word for word from the Missouri Secretary of State; the bold is mine.

### In plain English

**Butler County already elects its sheriff, and nothing about that changes.** Most of this amendment copies what's already in state law into the constitution, where only a statewide vote can change it.

There are two real changes. The sheriff's office moves into the constitution, beyond the legislature's reach. And it changes **who can start the court case to remove a sheriff**:

- **Today:** a sheriff can be removed through a court case called *quo warranto* (Latin for "by what authority"), a lawsuit challenging someone's right to hold office. Under current law (RSMo 531.010), **the attorney general or the local prosecutor** (in Butler County, the prosecuting attorney) can file it. A court decides.

- **Under Amendment 8: only the attorney general** could file it. A court would still decide. Butler County's own prosecutor would be cut out.

It also puts in the constitution that the sheriff hires and fires deputies "*at the will and pleasure of the sheriff*" and sets their pay within the county's budget, and that the sheriff must "*apprehend and commit to jail all felons and traitors.*"

It doesn't apply to St. Louis City, St. Louis County, or (by a population formula) what reporters identify as St. Charles County.

### THE CASE FOR

Supporters, including the group Missouri Sheriffs United, say the office only exists in statute today, so a future legislature could abolish elected sheriffs and replace them with appointed police. *"With the stroke of a pen, pretty much, the legislators at the capitol could do away with the office of sheriff,"* said Kevin Merritt, a former sheriff who leads Missouri Sheriffs United. *"There's no power grab there, that's just a big misunderstanding."*

*"This is a local control issue,"* said Rep. Bennie Cook (R-Houston), a 24-year law enforcement veteran.

Supporters' published arguments focus on keeping the office elected and local. I couldn't find a stated reason for limiting removal cases to the attorney general.

### THE CASE AGAINST

Opponents say it would make a bad sheriff very hard to remove. *"If Amendment 8 passes, the only way a sheriff can be removed is if a prosecutor goes to court and gets an order,"* said Rep. Mark Boyko (D), *"a process that can take months or even years to do, even if that sheriff has been convicted of a felony."* (The text specifies the attorney general as that prosecutor.)

Taking removal away from local prosecutors and giving it only to the attorney general in Jefferson City is the opposite of local control. Missouri has no recall election for sheriffs, so there'd be no local way to act at all. And the text never defines "traitors."

### THE CATCH

**The ballot wording leaves out the most important three words.** Your ballot says removal only *"by a writ of quo warranto."* The actual text says *"by writ of quo warranto initiated by the attorney general."* The legislature wrote the ballot summary, and it didn't mention who.

**"To support law enforcement"** is the legislature's framing, printed on the ballot as if it were a description. Supporting law enforcement isn't what the amendment does; it's why its sponsors say they wrote it. Both sides of this one say they support law enforcement.

**No campaign committee on either side** as of October 19, according to KOMU.

**A NO leaves the office in ordinary law.** A future legislature could change how sheriffs are chosen or removed by a simple majority vote. That's the risk supporters want closed off.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- If Butler County ever had a sheriff who needed removing, do I want our county prosecutor to be able to act, or only the attorney general?
- Is the risk of a legislature abolishing elected sheriffs real enough to lock this in?

## A STATEWIDE REFERENDUM Proposition A: the congressional map

### PROPOSITION A

Proposed by Referendum Petition

Do the people of the state of Missouri approve the act of the General Assembly entitled "House Bill No. 1 (2025 Second Extraordinary Session)," which repeals Missouri's existing congressional plan, and replaces it with new congressional boundaries that keep more counties intact?

State and local governmental entities estimate no costs or savings.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Exact text as printed on the Butler County ballot - back side.

### OFFICIAL FAIR BALLOT LANGUAGE

- YES** A "yes" vote will approve the act of the General Assembly entitled "House Bill No. 1 (2025 Extraordinary Session)," which redraws the congressional district boundaries.
- NO** A "no" vote will leave in place the congressional district boundaries enacted in 2022.
- TAX** If passed, this measure will have no impact on taxes.

Word for word from the Missouri Secretary of State.

### In plain English

In September 2025, the legislature redrew Missouri's congressional map in the middle of the decade, which normally happens only after a census. Citizens gathered over 300,000 signatures to force a public vote on it. That's Prop A.

- **YES = adopt the 2025 map** for elections after this one
- **NO = stay with the 2022 map**, the one in use now

### THREE THINGS THAT ARE TRUE EITHER WAY

**1. Butler County is in the 8th District under both maps.** I checked the bill text: Section 128.478 puts all of Butler County in the 8th. Prop A does not change who represents us.

**2. This November's congressional election uses the 2022 map, no matter how Prop A turns out.** After months of lawsuits, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on September 25 that *"the 2022 map—not the 2025 map—must be used in the 2026 congressional election."* Prop A decides the map for 2028 and after.

**3. The August primary was run on the new map**, because the Secretary of State treated it as in effect. The Missouri Supreme Court later ruled the new map never took effect, because the referendum petition put it on hold until voters decide. For Butler County, it made no difference: we're in the 8th under both maps.

**What the new map actually changes:** it breaks up Kansas City's 5th District, held by Democrat Emanuel Cleaver, and divides Kansas City among three districts. The referendum's organizers say it would leave Democrats 1 of Missouri's 8 seats instead of 2.

### THE CASE FOR

Supporters say drawing maps is the legislature's job under the constitution, and a divided Missouri Supreme Court ruled in March 2026 that it could redraw mid-decade. The Secretary of State's original summary argued the new map is more compact and keeps more cities and counties whole. And they argue Missouri shouldn't sit out while other states redraw: Texas did in 2025, and California voters approved their own mid-decade redraw that November.

### THE CASE AGAINST

Opponents say the map exists to remove one Democratic seat, by splitting a single city three ways, and that redrawing mid-decade breaks the normal once-per-census practice for partisan gain. The referendum's organizers argued that Democrats win about 40% of the statewide vote but the new map would give them 12.5% of the seats. Missouri voters used the referendum process to get a say, and opponents argue the Secretary of State then fought to keep the vote off the ballot until the Supreme Court ordered it on.

### THE CATCH

**The ballot wording was fought over.** The Secretary of State's original version asked whether to repeal Missouri's *"existing gerrymandered congressional plan that protects incumbent politicians."* In January, his own lawyers told the court that wording came *"close enough to the line of being inherently argumentative and likely to create prejudice."* Those words are gone from your ballot.

**"Keep more counties intact" survived,** but there's nothing in the bill itself, which is a list of counties and precincts, that measures it. Treat it as a claim, not a fact.

**A NO keeps a map the same Republican-led legislature drew in 2022,** under which Republicans hold 6 of 8 seats. Both maps were drawn by legislators; neither came from an independent commission.

**For Butler County, this is a vote about the state, not about us.** Our district and our representative don't change either way. You're deciding what kind of map you want Missouri to have, and whether mid-decade redrawing should stand.

### Follow the money

| SIDE                                            | MONEY (AS REPORTED AUG. 10) | SOURCE OF FUNDS                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>AGAINST the map (People Not Politicians)</b> | <b>\$5.4M</b> through July  | Groups that don't disclose their donors, including American Opportunity Action (\$2M) and The Fairness Project |
| <b>FOR the map (Put Missouri First)</b>         | <b>~\$3M</b>                | Two national nonprofits that don't disclose donors: American Action Network and Securing American Greatness    |

**Both sides are funded by national groups that hide their donors.** That's the honest summary. (The Fairness Project, a funder on the No side here, is also the biggest funder against Amendment 3.)

## CITY OF POPLAR BLUFF Fire department sales tax

**This is only on ballots inside Poplar Bluff city limits.** If you live in the county outside the city, you won't see it, but you'll still pay it on taxable purchases you make in town.

### CITY OF POPLAR BLUFF PROPOSITION

Shall the City of Poplar Bluff, Missouri impose a sales tax of one-half of one percent for the purpose of providing revenues for the operation of the Poplar Bluff Fire Department?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Exact text as printed on the Butler County ballot, version 5 · back side.

### What it does

A new **half-cent city sales tax** on taxable retail sales inside the city, including groceries. The city council voted **7–0** on August 17, 2026 to put it on the ballot (Ordinance 26-43). **The ballot gives no end date.**

### What it costs you

From the Missouri Department of Revenue's current rate table (October–December 2026):

| WHAT AND WHERE YOU BUY                                         | RATE NOW | IF IT PASSES | ON \$100        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------|-----------------|
| General merchandise, most of Poplar Bluff                      | 7.975%   | 8.475%       | \$7.98 → \$8.48 |
| General merchandise, special shopping/transportation districts | 8.975%   | 9.475%       | \$8.98 → \$9.48 |
| Groceries, most of Poplar Bluff                                | 4.975%   | 5.475%       | \$4.98 → \$5.48 |
| Groceries, special shopping/transportation districts           | 5.975%   | 6.475%       | \$5.98 → \$6.48 |

Groceries carry a lower state rate, but the city's half cent applies to them the same way.

**Rule of thumb (my arithmetic):** for every \$1,000 of taxable purchases in city limits, it's **\$5 more**. A household spending \$1,000 a month in town pays about **\$60 a year**.

#### THE CASE FOR

A city's fire department is the one service you can't afford to have short-staffed on the wrong night. Five positions lost since 1996 is a real gap for the department that answers every fire call in the city, and a better ISO rating can lower homeowners' insurance premiums, which could offset some of the tax for some households. A sales tax is also paid by everyone who shops in town, not just city property owners.

#### THE CASE AGAINST

Sales taxes take a bigger share from lower-income households, and this one applies to groceries. It has no sunset. And by Phelps's own description, **about half the money (\$1.5M) would effectively go to other city departments**, by freeing up general funds that currently pay for the fire department. That may be fine, but it's not what "for the operation of the Poplar Bluff Fire Department" suggests.

At the August 17 meeting, resident Jim Chrisman raised concerns that the item was introduced and voted on the same night, that it adds another tax, and about the city's budget.

#### STEP FIVE

## The judges

Missouri's appellate judges don't run against opponents. They're appointed by the governor from a list of three picked by a nonpartisan commission, then voters decide whether to **keep** them. If a majority votes **no**, the judge leaves at the end of the term and the seat is filled the same way.

Before each retention vote, a Judicial Performance Review committee (citizens and lawyers, run through the Missouri Bar) evaluates each judge. **This year it recommended keeping all of them**, including both on your ballot. Full evaluations, lawyer surveys and sample opinions: [yourmissourijudges.org](https://yourmissourijudges.org).

#### MISSOURI SUPREME COURT

##### Paul C. Wilson

Appointed 2012 by Gov. Jay Nixon (D); retained by voters 2014; chief justice 2021–23. Formerly a Cole County circuit judge and an assistant attorney general. **Committee: recommends retention.**

## What the city says the money is for

From the official minutes of the August 17 council meeting:

- Fire Chief Mike Moffitt** said the tax would be "*dedicated directly to the Fire Department*" and would let the department "*replace employees that have been lost over the past 30 years.*" He said the department has lost five positions since 1996, and that in the first year he hopes to **replace 3 firefighters and hire 1 full-time fire inspector**. He said it would position the department to replace equipment over the next 10 years and help the city's **ISO rating, which affects property insurance rates**.
- Assistant City Manager Lori Phelps** said it would raise about **\$3 million a year** and "*would basically fund the Fire Department.*" She said the department "*would still receive \$1.5 million from General Fund with the other \$1.5 million to be used for other departments.*" She said the tax "*would benefit all City departments.*"

#### THE CATCH

**Money is fungible.** A tax "for the fire department" that replaces general-fund money the fire department already gets frees that general-fund money for anything else. Phelps said so openly at the meeting. It was said in public, but the ballot title won't tell you.

**People outside the city pay it but can't vote on it.** Poplar Bluff is where much of the area shops.

**A NO doesn't cut anything.** But the three firefighter positions and the inspector the chief wants would need money from somewhere else.

**What I couldn't find:** an itemized budget for the \$3 million, and any organized opposition. Ask the city: **Poplar Bluff City Hall, 501 Vine Street, 573-785-7474** · [poplarbluff-mo.gov](https://poplarbluff-mo.gov).

#### COURT OF APPEALS, SOUTHERN DISTRICT

##### Matthew P. Hamner

Appointed 2024 by Gov. Mike Parson (R). Formerly a circuit judge in the 26th Circuit (Lake of the Ozarks area), appointed by Gov. Eric Greitens (R) in 2017. **Committee: recommends retention.** St. Louis Public Radio counted 6 of his cases since 2023 that the Missouri Supreme Court decided in published opinions; it overturned none.

#### A FAIR NOTE ON WILSON

He has ruled on three issues tied to this ballot. He dissented from the March 2026 ruling that let the legislature redraw congressional maps mid-decade, wrote the 2024 majority opinion that kept the abortion-rights amendment on the ballot, and wrote the 2023 unanimous opinion rejecting then-AG Andrew Bailey's cost estimate for that amendment. Some voters may weigh those rulings.

The performance committee's job is to judge whether he does the job well, not whether you like his conclusions. Which standard you use is up to you.

# The races

## Contested

### U.S. REPRESENTATIVE · 8TH DISTRICT

- **Jason T. Smith** (R): incumbent since 2013, chairs the House Ways & Means Committee
- **Chris Reichard** (D): Army veteran who served in Iraq and says he did three tours; communications journeyman technician and member of IBEW Local 1
- **Rebecca Sharpe Lombard** (Libertarian): I found no campaign website

### STATE AUDITOR

- **Scott Fitzpatrick** (R): incumbent; former state treasurer
- **Quentin Wilson** (D): former director of the Missouri Department of Revenue
- **Dustin Coffell** (Libertarian): his campaign site ([coffell4mo.com](http://coffell4mo.com)) centers on independent audits and fiscal transparency

### SOURCES

## Verify every bit of this yourself

**Butler County Clerk: 573-686-8050.** The ballot text above was read directly from the county's own published sample ballot (ballot types 1, 3 and 5). Fair ballot language is from the Missouri Secretary of State.



Scan for the full guide and clickable sources.

[butlerballotguide.com](http://butlerballotguide.com)

### STATE REPRESENTATIVE · 152ND DISTRICT

- **Jeff Shawan** (R): Poplar Bluff emergency management director; former state representative
- **Corretta Bishop** (D): her campaign site ([correttabishopforthepeople.com](http://correttabishopforthepeople.com)) describes years of community service, including tutoring and helping families in need

In the August primary in Butler County, Shawan beat Ken Davis 2,698 to 1,792; Smith beat Gordon Heslop 4,764 to 622; and Fitzpatrick beat Jerry Wistrand 4,367 to 636.

## One candidate on the ballot

**Every county office and local judgeship has one name on the ballot.** That's why the August guide said the Republican primary would likely decide these races. Missouri also counts votes for write-in candidates who file a declaration.

State Rep 150th District (Cameron Bunting Parker) · Circuit Judge, 36th Circuit (Kacey L. Proctor) · Associate Circuit Judge Div. 2 (Wade Pierce) · Associate Circuit Judge Div. 3 (John H. Shock) · Presiding Commissioner (Vince Lampe) · Circuit Clerk (Holly Lawson) · County Clerk (Donna Hillis) · Recorder of Deeds (Lisa Larmie, who won the August primary over Travis Gowen 2,994 to 2,419) · Prosecuting Attorney (Ted Liszewski) · Collector of Revenue (Emily Parks) · Treasurer (Tammy Marler)

### OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

[Butler County sample ballots \(November 2026\) — PDF](#)

[Polling locations — PDF](#)

[Missouri SOS — 2026 ballot measures, full text and fair ballot language](#)

[Missouri SOS — How to vote](#)

[Missouri SOS — Voter ID](#)

### FULL LEGAL TEXTS (READ IN FULL)

[Amendment 3 — HCS HJR 73, truly agreed text](#)

[Amendment 6 — Initiative petition 2026-106](#)

[Amendment 7 — SS SCS SJR 95](#)

[Amendment 8 — CCS HCS SS SJR 87](#)

[Proposition A — HB 1 referendum text \(2026-R004\), §128.478](#)

[RSMo 531.010 — who may bring quo warranto](#)

[RSMo 191.1720 — current law on gender-transition treatment for minors](#)

### LOCAL RECORDS

[Poplar Bluff City Council minutes, Aug. 17, 2026](#)

[Missouri DOR jurisdiction rate table, Q4 2026](#)

[Butler County unofficial August 2026 results](#)

### COURTS AND JUDGES

[Fitz-James v. Hoskins, Missouri Court of Appeals opinion WD88392 \(Dec. 4, 2025; copy hosted by the League of Women Voters\)](#)

[Jackson County judgment, June 18, 2026, case 2416-CV31931 \(copy hosted by KQ2\)](#)

[Your Missouri Judges — How the Missouri Plan works](#)

[Your Missouri Judges — Paul C. Wilson](#)

[Your Missouri Judges — Matthew P. Hamner](#)

This guide argues for no candidate and no position. It gives you the ballot text, what the full legal text actually does, the strongest case on each side, the money, and the court record, so the decision is yours and it's an informed one.

Prepared October 23, 2026; corrected October 24 after an independent fact-check.

YOUR DECISION WORKSHEET

Fill this in before you vote

Missouri lets you bring notes into the booth.

| MEASURE                                                             | MY VOTE                                                  | WHY, IN ONE SENTENCE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Amd 3 · Repeal 2024 abortion rights + minors' gender-transition ban | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                      |
| Amd 6 · Limit legislature changing petition-passed laws (80% rule)  | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                      |
| Amd 7 · State investment fund to replace taxes                      | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                      |
| Amd 8 · Sheriffs in constitution; only AG can start a removal case  | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                      |
| Prop A · Adopt the 2025 congressional map (future elections)        | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                      |
| Judge Paul C. Wilson · retain?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                      |
| Judge Matthew P. Hamner · retain?                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                      |
| Poplar Bluff fire sales tax (city only)                             | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                      |

| RACE                       | MY CHOICE |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| U.S. Rep, 8th District     |           |
| State Auditor              |           |
| State Rep (150th or 152nd) |           |

Before you vote

☐ Confirm your polling place, or vote early at the County Clerk's office (call 573-686-8050 for location and hours)

☐ Bring a photo ID

☐ Turn the ballot over. Amendments 6, 7 and 8, Prop A, the judges and the city fire tax are all on the back. Amendment 3 is on the front, bottom right.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

When, where, and what to bring

- **Election Day:** Tuesday, November 3, 2026 · Polls open **6:00 am – 7:00 pm**. If you're in line at 7:00, you can still vote.
  - **Early voting (no excuse needed):** in person, **open now through Monday, November 2**. Call the County Clerk for where and when.
  - **Mail absentee:** the deadline to request a mailed ballot passed October 21.
  - **Registration:** closed October 7, 2026.
- **Photo ID:** a Missouri driver or non-driver license, a military or veteran ID, a U.S. passport, or another photo ID issued by the U.S. or Missouri. It must be unexpired, or have expired after the most recent general election; a non-driver license or a military or veteran ID with no expiration date also counts. Without one, a registered voter can cast a provisional ballot. Under state law and the Secretary of State's guidance, it counts if you bring a photo ID back (to your polling place during voting hours on Election Day, or, if you voted early in person, to the County Clerk's office by 7 p.m. on Election Day), or if election officials match the signature on your provisional ballot envelope to your voter registration, and the ballot otherwise qualifies to be counted.
  - **Butler County Clerk:** 573-686-8050