



2018 Policy Priorities and Related Work of Interest

Policy Priorities

I. Support state policy which allocates sufficient revenue to fund necessary programs for vulnerable people in our state, including those provided by our agencies

Missouri's tax code has become regressive in nature and state general revenue has declined to a nearly 35-year low relative to the size of the economy, eroding Missouri's ability to meet the needs of its residents. Programs that our clients and vulnerable people across the state depend upon have been eliminated and others are in jeopardy.

II. Protect Medicaid benefits and pursue access to health care for all

"... health care is not a privilege, but a right and a requirement to protect the life and dignity of every person," Letter by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to the U.S. Congress, March 8, 2017

Ninety percent of the cost of Missouri's Medicaid program is for care for seniors, people with disabilities, and children; cuts to the program impact the most vulnerable among us. Many other low-income people in Missouri lack health insurance entirely. Non-disabled adults who are not custodial parents or caregivers are generally not eligible for Medicaid and eligibility for custodial parents is among the most restrictive in the country: approximately 22% of federal poverty level or, for instance, annual income of less than \$4620 for a family of three.

III. Support incentives for low-income housing

The Missouri Housing Development Commission, comprised of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Treasurer, Attorney General and six persons appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, is charged with providing financing for the construction of affordable housing in the state. In December of 2017, the Commission voted against issuing state low-income housing tax credits for 2018.

There is some question as to whether the Commission has the authority to make this determination outside of the legislative process. It is also unclear how this move is related to a recommendation contained in the report issued in June by the Governor's Committee on Simple, Fair, and Low Taxes that the state tax credits be replaced with a low-interest loan program. What is clear is that these tax credits have been critically important to the development of low-income housing in our state.

Related Work of Interest

- I. Respond to the opiate crisis in our state
- II. Increase access to psychiatric care for children
- III. Ensure that government assistance is designed to promote long-term independence and stability