



2012 Salute Coalition Legislative Priorities

Economic Development

The Salute Coalition strongly encourages lawmakers to support and protect proven tax credit programs that are critical economic development tools used to stimulate employment and leverage private investment. We oppose efforts to reduce the effectiveness of programs that significantly impact job creation and result in a positive return on investment for the state.

Capital Formation

The state and private sector should support efforts to provide access to seed and venture capital for viable projects by Missouri entrepreneurs. Likewise, the state, in conjunction with communities, must ensure that new and expanding businesses have access to competitively priced financing.

Education

Quality education at all levels is a critical component to the health of the region and a top priority of the Salute Coalition. We must invest in our future by fully funding the state's foundation formula and all related categoricals at the elementary/secondary level.

Additionally, despite the challenging economy, the coalition encourages the Missouri General Assembly to maintain funding for its public higher education institutions at the highest possible levels because of the positive impact they have on all facets of life in Missouri, including economic development and the state's future workforce.

Environment

One of the most valuable assets of southwest Missouri is the natural environment. The Salute Coalition encourages standards that provide a balance between protecting our area's natural resources while ensuring economic growth in the region. Water quantity and quality will continue to be a priority for the region, and we encourage lawmakers to consider economically feasible policies that provide sound watershed and groundwater management. Additionally, we encourage lawmakers to establish a Joint Interim Committee to create a statewide dialogue on this important issue facing our state.

Libraries and the Arts

The Salute Coalition supports the role of the arts, libraries, and cultural organizations as contributing to the economic health, educational growth and tourism of our region, and supports allocating funding from the non-resident athletes and entertainers tax to the Missouri Cultural Trust. The coalition also encourages adequate funding for MOREnet and state aid to the arts and libraries.

Local Authority

The General Assembly should refrain from actions that limit local authority to deal with problems at the local level. State-mandated solutions and preemption of local laws which remove local government's ability to deal with conditions of its own property or funding its own services unnecessarily limit the flexibility of local government. An alternative to preemption is for the State of Missouri to forge alliances with local government in the enforcement of laws, resulting in better enforcement and savings to the state.

Tourism

Tourism is vital to the region's economy. Therefore, the coalition encourages legislators to fully fund the Missouri Division of Tourism's marketing budget according to existing legislation commonly referred to as House Bill 188.

Transportation

The economic success of our region is dependent upon the transportation system in southwest Missouri and the entire state. We encourage legislators to partner and collaborate with local leaders, public officials, citizen groups and other stakeholders to ensure Missourians are aware of the significant transportation funding shortfalls. Open, comprehensive dialogue will assist in the development of a statewide transportation strategy.

We encourage lawmakers to accelerate the construction of projects when local communities are willing to assist with the financing of road improvements.

The coalition supports restored funding for public transit, including Springfield's public transit system. This request includes funds to compensate for the loss of state funds and helps to address the significant increase in costs to operate the transit system.