

## Editor's Note

With this issue a more complete picture is presented of why Missouri's economic growth lags behind many other states. The two previous issues of the *Missouri Policy Journal* included articles addressing education and labor markets; this issue contains articles on demographics. All three of these topics help to explain problems associated with economic growth and will, hopefully, have an impact on state policymaking.

Mark Tranel's article notes that slow economic growth dates back several decades and also states that "high poverty is more often a rural issue than an urban one." Adriano Udani's article addresses, in a timely way, that immigrants have played an important role in Missouri's economy—particularly immigrants who receive an H1-b visa. Udani states, "it appears that policymakers relax immigration rules and increase noncitizen employment as labor markets tighten over time."

The issue of consolidation of the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County has received a great deal of attention associated with the plan presented by *Better Together*. This is a project of the Missouri Council for a Better Economy, a non-profit organization. The website for *Better Together* states, "When Better Together began exploring the issue [of consolidation], they discovered very little data existed to help inform any decisions." Hopefully, the article by Joshua Hall and Josh Matti in this issue can add to the debate. This article notes that St. Louis County is among the most fragmented counties in the country. While the article points to some of the benefits of consolidation, the authors also note that, "the result [of consolidation] for the St. Louis region would be even greater inequality." In addition, the authors add, "City-county consolidations have not been a panacea to the underlying problem that motivated consolidation efforts."

We hope that the *Missouri Policy Journal* continues to add to the public debate on issues important to Missouri.

**Joseph A. Cernik, Editor**