

Editor's Note

Our first article in this issue, by Amy Estlund, Catherine Shoff and Amanda Harrod, addresses higher education response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Missouri. Considering that one-third of the faculty in higher education in Missouri are over 55, there is concern about the impact of the virus on the health of these faculty members. The authors gained access to meeting videos and related documentation that addressed the collaboration involving the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD), the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, and institutions of higher education within the state. DHEWD took the lead in addressing what can be done and the authors note that future collaboration on public health concerns can benefit from what has been learned during this pandemic.

With this issue of the Missouri Policy Journal, a new area of research (new to the MPJ, but not new to researchers) was introduced—the focus on states as laboratories of democracy, where states can learn from each other. The article on preschool education by Judith McConnell Mikkelson and Dong Hwa Choi focused on the benefits preschool children receive from the Kansas programs and, in addition, addressed the favorable impact on the pocketbooks of parents. The article notes that Missouri is low among the fifty states in preschool spending, and that is reflected in data that shows that in 2018, while 36 percent of four-year-olds in Kansas were enrolled in preschool programs, in Missouri only 2 percent were enrolled in similar programs.

In the final article, Jeanie Thies and Joseph M. Zlatic address police reform, which is always influenced by political considerations, with reforms emphasizing the tug-of-war between the Crime Control Perspective versus the Due Process Model. The term “Defund the Police” is addressed as, in many ways, a poor choice of how to focus on where funds should be allocated. In addition, the Missouri Senate introduced, in 2013, a bill (SB 162) which was designed to reduce the chances of wrongful conviction. While that bill was introduced eight years ago, the idea behind it perhaps needs to be reconsidered.

Additionally, the Guidelines for Authors has been changed to address the Laboratories of Democracy focus that has been added to the range of articles we will consider for publications. Prospective authors may want to take time to read the changes made to the guidelines.

Joseph A. Cernik, Editor