

Introduction

The Missouri Policy Journal continues to establish itself as a respected professional journal that brings timely articles to the public's attention. This is the eleventh year of publication, and it is enjoyable to reflect upon its growth over more than a decade.

In the article: "In Real Time, A Crisis in Public Education: Teacher Shortages in Missouri and Kansas," authors Dong Hwa Choi and Judith McConnell Mikkelson note that while COVID-19 had an adverse effect on teacher shortages, there were other factors that continue to matter. The future does not necessarily look promising to overcome a teacher shortage, which might increase. Factors such as "culture wars," where teachers face increased hostility regarding what they are teaching, have added to the stress confronting the profession. In addition, compensation, expectations that cannot always be met or quickly achieved, and safety issues add to the problems teachers face. Furthermore, colleges and universities have seen a drop in students enrolling in education as a major. Teacher shortages could be an issue states, including Missouri and Kansas, will need to address.

In "An Overview of the Nonprofit Sector in Missouri," Ivy Shen addresses the role played by nonprofits separate from government programs or for-profit organizations. She notes that Missouri nonprofits have over \$222 billion in assets with the City of St. Louis, St. Louis and Jackson Counties, accounting for the highest levels of this amount. In addition, the IRS code 501 (c)(3) comprises 76 percent of all nonprofits in Missouri. The range of services provided by these organizations covers: education, arts and culture, health care, religious activities, and environmental protection, as well as support for foreign affairs. Over the past decade, the number of nonprofits has grown from approximately 27,000 to over 38,000. Although the growth seems impressive, the post-COVID-19 environment had an impact, and the hope is that the future of nonprofits will be strong and continue to grow.

Finally, in "Book Banning Trend Fuels Far-Reaching Effects, As Well As Challenges To Restrictions," Elizabeth MacDonald addresses an issue with culture war written all over it. Book banning has seen an increase in recent years, even though a March 2022 report by the American Library Association showed that 71 percent of voters opposed banning books. In Missouri, the legislative session in 2022 introduced Senate Bill 775 (SB775) which broadly addressed book banning, and this bill went into effect as a law in August 2022. This new law was part of a broader climate that has seen book banning activity on the rise. School districts such as Lindbergh, Wentzville, and Kirkwood, to name a few, have experienced an increase in challenges to books in school libraries. MacDonald states, "Conservatives have...[created] an environment of fear and misinformation." Furthermore, this broad effect to confront book banning is spilling over into higher education. In twenty-eight states, more than seventy bills have been introduced since January 2021 that adversely impact teaching at the college and university level.

Missouri Policy Journal continues to present articles that the public and media, as well as policymakers, will find useful and relevant. We encourage manuscript submissions and aim to respond to authors in a quick manner.

Joseph A. Cernik, Editor