

Editor's Introduction

The Missouri Policy Journal has grown significantly over thirteen years. Between our 2024 and 2025 issues, for example, downloads increased by more than 3,500. In addition, in 2025, we saw downloads of our articles in Australia for the first time. All six habitable continents are reading and accessing our articles.

The current issue contains six articles covering a range of pertinent issues.

The Save Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act, passed in Missouri in August 2023, is the focus of the first article. The authors (Lange, Grin, and Crosby) compare the SAFE Act with similar laws passed in other states. The authors state, “The Missouri legislation has denied physicians’ ability to be trusted with the decision of medical appropriateness of exogenous hormones, GnRH analogs, or gender-affirming surgical procedures for transgender youth.” The authors further note that fewer than 1,200 “gender-affirming procedures” have been performed annually in the United States.

The second article (Tengelsen and Herrera) addresses the relationship of fear and the 2024 elections, in which Donald Trump was re-elected president. As the authors state, “fear-based narratives are precisely the mechanism that candidates use to motivate their bases.” The article focuses on the effect of partisanship and emotions associated with the election. The authors grew their observations from a sample of voters in a Missouri city.

The third article (Casey and Strunc) addresses whether Missouri voters vote for conservative candidates but support liberal policies, an unusual way to look at ticket-splitting. In this situation, the author looked at voting for candidates and ballot measures and concluded that, “self-interest or identity, such as local issues or personal characteristics, particularly gender, are likely to be more influential in ballot measure voting.”

The fourth article (Kastberg-Leonard) addresses exit polls from the 2022 and 2024 elections and abortion regulations. Missouri became the first state to ban abortion after the 2022 Supreme Court case of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Examining the exit polls, the author shows how both urban and rural voters respond to abortion regulations.

The fifth article on artificial intelligence (Corlee) notes that, “[Missouri’s] colleges and universities face the same uncertainty about AI’s role that national institutions do.” Is the aim to see AI as an innovative tool, a threat to academic integrity, or should it be regulated in some way? The author states, “The central problem is the absence of standardized, well-justified AI policies.”

Finally, the sixth article (Shostak and Kheang) addresses andragogy, the art and science of adult learning. The focus is on trial judges as “facilitators of adult learning.” Jurors are not “passive recipients of information but active meaning-makers who interpret, evaluate, and respond to

nuanced legal discourse.” The article focuses on Missouri trial courts and how andragogy can be used.

We hope you enjoy the articles in this issue and encourage you to submit manuscripts. We strive to respond quickly. The reach of your audience is global, which is important to bear in mind. We expect that the Missouri Policy Journal will continue to see significant growth in readers and downloads.

Submit both manuscripts and inquiries to:

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