



Good News

September/October 2018

Bringing the Light of Christ to Missouri

Treatment Courts Debated in Special Session

In early September, Governor Parson called a special session to focus on two bills: House Bill 2562 and Senate Bill 894, both of which Parson vetoed earlier this year. HB 2562, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Austin (R-Springfield), dealt with drug treatment courts and SB 894, sponsored by Sen. Doug Libla (R-Poplar Bluff), dealt with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs in the state.

HB 2562 (referred to as HB 2 during the special session) would establish best practices for treatment courts across the state. For counties unable to set up their own treatment court, this bill creates the ability to transfer defendants to another county. The bill also states who shall make up the treatment court team and that the court shall make the final decision regarding the appropriate incentive or sanction to be applied to the participant.

The General Assembly made quick work of the bill during the special session; the House passed it by a majority of 141-1, and the Senate voted 29-0.

Since 1993, when the first treatment court was started in Jackson County, these types of courts have become increasingly popular. As of July 31, 2018, there were 151 treatment court programs in Missouri. Of these, 99 are adult drug courts, four are juvenile treatment courts, 13 are family treatment courts, 23 are DWI courts and 12 are veterans treatment courts. Missouri continues to be a national leader with more treatment courts per capita, with treatment courts currently serving 5,000 active participants.

Treatment courts essentially operate in the same fashion as a traditional court. A defendant charged with a substance-related offense is assigned to comprehensive supervision, drug or alcohol testing and treatment services. The judge can impose sanctions or offer various incentives to the offender based on how he/she is doing in the program. Upon successful completion of the treatment court program, the charges or penalty against the offender may be dismissed, reduced or modified.

With over 20,200 graduates from the different programs since inception, treatment courts have proven to be highly successful. The graduation rate for all programs in fiscal year 2017 exceeds 61%.



The benefits of treatment courts for offenders, plus the cost-effective method for diverting offenders from incarceration in prison make them an impressive option for Missouri. With over 32,000 inmates in Missouri's prisons, treatment courts are saving valuable space for more serious offenders, thereby helping the state to avoid building costly new prisons. They also lower the recidivism rate of offenders when compared to either incarceration or probation.

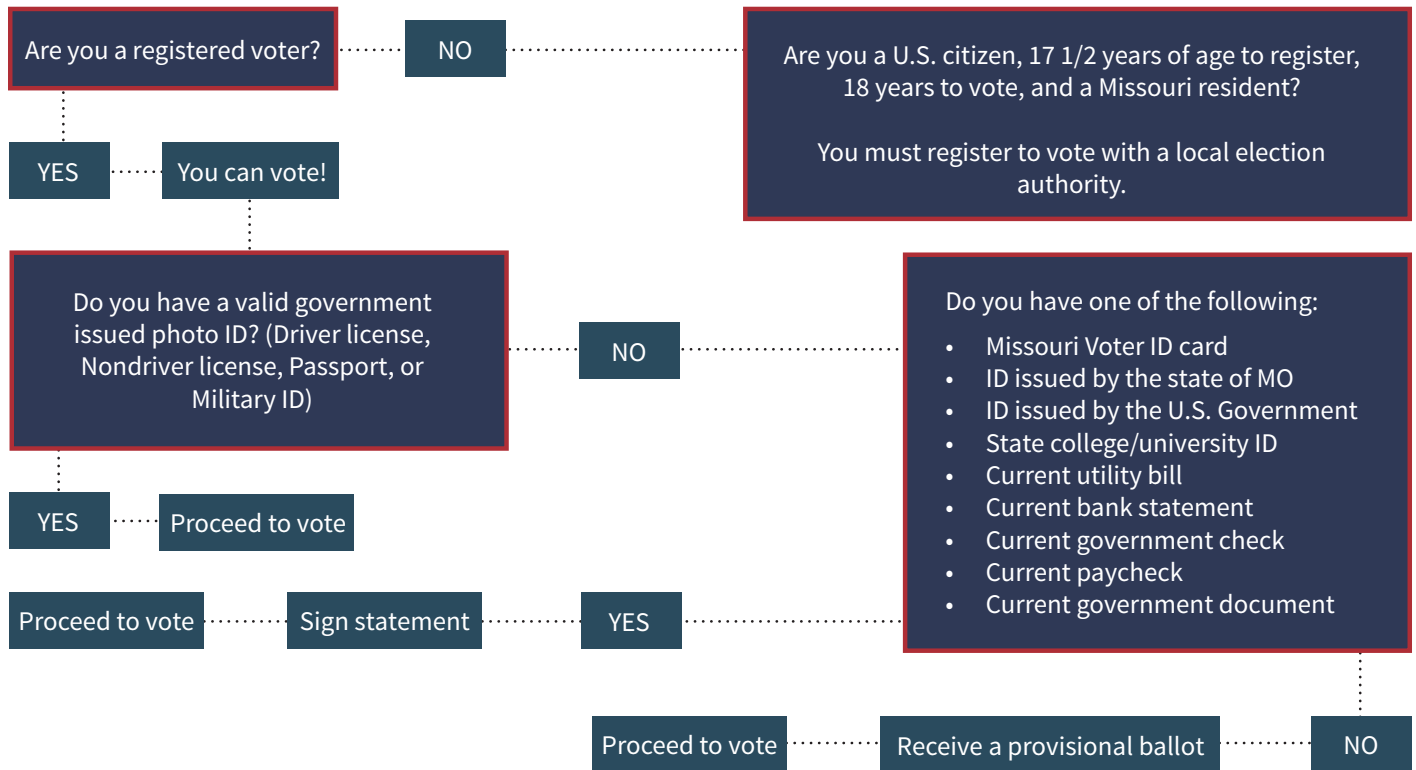
Other advantages for treatment courts are that they allow offenders to remain in their communities, to support their families, and to pay taxes. Treatment courts reduce the number of babies born addicted (871 drug-free babies since their inception) saving the state millions of dollars in lifetime costs in care for children who otherwise would have been exposed prenatally.

But treatment courts are not cheap. In fiscal year 2018, the state treatment court programs requested more than \$29 million in funding, while the commission had only \$6.7 million available to allocate to treatment court programs. Fortunately, the cost to operate treatment courts are often a mixture of grants and federal, state, and county funding.

With the passage of HB 2562, more offenders should be able to take advantage of the treatment court program and reap its benefits.

VOTING IN MISSOURI

It's important to exercise your right to vote in every election, whether its local or national. Do you know if you're registered to vote, or what you need to do to become a registered Missouri voter? This flow chart from showit2vote.com, by the office of the Missouri Secretary of State, will help you determine what you need to do before you head to the polls this November. **The general election is Tuesday, November 6, 2018.**



Join MOCAN today!



Become a member of the Missouri Catholic Advocacy Network (MOCAN) to ensure your voice is heard in the halls of the Missouri State Capitol! As a member of MOCAN, you'll receive our weekly legislative updates, bi-monthly *Good News*, and a digital copy of *Messenger*. You'll also be called upon to help us with legislative efforts through Action Alerts, which can be specifically tailored to your interest areas. Visit mocatolic.org or call (800) 456-1679 to sign up for MOCAN today! It's absolutely free. We're looking forward to welcoming you as the newest member of the Missouri Catholic Advocacy Network!



A Catholic voting guide from the USCCB:

We vote because we are citizens. But we vote conscientiously because we are people of faith. Our consciences are formed through studying Scripture and the teachings of the Church, examination of the facts, and prayerful reflection.

1. **Respect for the dignity of each person** is the core of Catholic social and moral teaching. This is our most basic principle.
2. **We focus on the common good**, not our own personal interests. We ask, how can we make the world a better place? Not, how can I improve my own personal situation?
3. **We have a responsibility**—a true obligation—to form our consciences and participate in the civic life of this nation.

★ **Issues that directly affect human lives**—such as abortion and euthanasia are fundamental and demand serious consideration.

★ Our Constitution heralds **religious liberty** in the First Amendment, yet increasingly people of faith are having to fight to retain this basic right.

★ There is a move in the nation to **redefine marriage**. The marriage of a man and a woman is the foundation of the family and an essential core element of a flourishing society.

★ The **growing disparity between rich and poor** means most of the world's resources are in the hands of a small percentage of its people. The federal budget is a moral document and must prioritize the poorest and most vulnerable among us.

★ The **millions of undocumented persons** living in the United States deserve our compassion. There is an immigration problem, and we need a humane solution to it.

★ War, terror, and **violence** have caused thousands of lost lives. We must work for just solutions to conflict in the Holy Land, throughout the Middle East, and beyond.

The Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) is delighted to introduce our newest staff member, Jamie Morris. Jamie joins the team as a lobbyist and legislative counsel.



Before joining the MCC, Jamie was an attorney and examiner for the Missouri Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration. There he provided legal advice, drafted and analyzed legislation, and helped monitor insurance company activities.

Jamie received his BA in Political Science from the University of Missouri – Columbia and his juris doctorate from the University of Missouri School of Law. He is a lifelong resident of the Mid-Missouri area, having grown up in Mary's Home, Missouri. He currently lives in Jefferson City with his wife Kristan and his three sons, Daniel, Nick, and Owen.

Welcome to the MCC, Jamie!



**VOTE ON
TUESDAY,
NOV. 6!**

**Register to vote
online at www.sos.mo.gov/elections/govotemissouri/register**

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MISSOURI CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



2018 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY RECAP + Q&A

The 2018 Annual Assembly was a success! It is always wonderful to have so many Catholic Missourians come together to share their faith and engage in public policy issues. We hope to see even more of our MOCAN members next year! We are very hopeful about making our return to the State Capitol building for the 2019 Annual Assembly. We have received many questions about our change of venue this year and last, and want to provide an answer in this *Good News*.

Q: Why haven't you hosted the Annual Assembly at the State Capitol the past two years?

There are a couple factors that played into choosing an alternate location for the 2017 and 2018 Annual Assemblies. In 2017, the MCC celebrated its 50th Anniversary. To commemorate this special occasion, the Missouri Bishops decided to host the event at the Cathedral of St. Joseph. In 2018, there were two big elements hindering the use and ease of access to the Capitol. The Capitol is undergoing extensive construction, which has blocked off access to the circle drive and made getting into the building more difficult, especially for those who are not able to walk for great lengths. Second, a local university hosted their homecoming parade the same morning. The parade route runs along the same route our buses take to drop riders off at the assembly, and blocks off parking spaces for our other attendees. Rather than cut our program short or start even earlier in the morning to avoid traffic and congestion, we decided it would be best to move to a different location. We hope to be back at the Capitol next year, and we will keep our MOCAN members posted as plans and locations come together for the 2019 event. We thank you for your patience and understanding as we encounter and overcome these challenges!

Look for photos from the 2018 event on our NEW website—coming soon!