

MISSOURI STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

FISCAL NOTE (26-106)

Subject

Initiative Petition from Jamie Howard regarding a proposed constitutional amendment to Article III. (Received July 21, 2025)

Date

August 08, 2025

Description

This proposal would amend Article III of the Missouri Constitution.

The amendment is to be voted on in November 2026.

Public comments and other input

The State Auditor's office requested input from the **Attorney General's Office**, the **Department of Agriculture**, the **Department of Commerce and Insurance**, the **Department of Conservation**, the **Department of Corrections**, the **Department of Economic Development**, the **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**, the **Department of Health and Senior Services**, the **Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development**, the **Department of Labor and Industrial Relations**, the **Department of Mental Health**, the **Department of National Guard**, the **Department of Natural Resources**, the **Department of Public Safety**, the **Department of Revenue**, the **Department of Social Services**, the **Department of Transportation**, the **Governor's Office**, the **Missouri House of Representatives**, the **Missouri Senate**, the **Office of Administration**, the **Office of State Courts Administrator**, the **Office of the State Public Defender**, the **Secretary of State's Office**, the **State Treasurer's Office**, **Adair County**, **Andrew County**, **Atchison County**, **Audrain County**, **Barry County**, **Barton County**, **Bates County**, **Benton County**, **Bollinger County**, **Boone County**, **Buchanan County**, **Butler County**, **Caldwell County**, **Callaway County**, **Camden County**, **Cape Girardeau County**, **Carroll County**, **Carter County**, **Cass County**, **Cedar County**, **Chariton County**, **Christian County**, **Clark County**, **Clay County**, **Clinton County**, **Cole County**, **Cooper County**, **Crawford County**, **Dade County**, **Dallas County**, **Daviess County**, **DeKalb County**, **Dent County**, **Douglas County**, **Dunklin County**, **Franklin County**, **Gasconade County**, **Gentry County**, **Greene County**, **Grundy County**, **Harrison County**, **Henry County**, **Hickory County**, **Holt County**, **Howard County**, **Howell County**, **Iron County**, **Jackson County**, **Jasper County**, **Jefferson County**, **Johnson County**, **Knox County**, **Laclede County**, **Lafayette County**, **Lawrence County**, **Lewis County**, **Lincoln County**, **Linn County**, **Livingston County**, **Macon County**, **Madison County**, **Maries County**, **Marion County**, **McDonald County**, **Mercer County**, **Miller County**, **Mississippi County**, **Moniteau County**, **Monroe County**, **Montgomery County**, **Morgan County**, **New Madrid County**, **Newton County**, **Nodaway County**, **Oregon County**, **Osage County**, **Ozark County**, **Pemiscot County**, **Perry County**, **Pettis County**, **Phelps County**, **Pike County**, **Platte County**, **Polk County**, **Pulaski County**, **Putnam County**, **Ralls County**, **Randolph County**, **Ray County**, **Reynolds County**, **Ripley County**, **Saline County**, **Schuyler County**, **Scotland County**, **Scott County**, **Shannon County**, **Shelby County**, **St. Charles County**, **St. Clair County**, **St. Francois County**, **St. Louis County**, **Ste. Genevieve County**, **Stoddard County**, **Stone County**, **Sullivan County**, **Taney County**, **Texas County**, **Vernon County**, **Warren County**, **Washington County**, **Wayne County**, **Webster County**, **Worth County**, **Wright County**, the **City of Cape Girardeau**, the **City of Columbia**, the **City of Jefferson City**, the **City of Joplin**, the **City of Kansas City**, the **City of Kirksville**, the **City of Mexico**, the **City of Raymore**, the **City of Springfield**, the **City of St. Joseph**, the **City of St. Louis**, the **City of Union**, the **City of Wentzville**, the **City of West Plains**, **Cape Girardeau 63 School District**, **Hannibal School District #60**, **Jennings School District**, **Malta Bend R-V School District**, **Mehlville School District**, **Wellsville-Middletown R-1 School District**, **Metropolitan Community College**, **St. Louis Community College**, **State Technical College of Missouri**, **University of Missouri**, the **Board of Election Commissioners City of St. Louis**, the **Clay County Board of Election Commissioners**, the **Jackson County Election Board**, the **Kansas City Board of Election Commissioners**, the **Platte County Board of Elections**, the **St. Charles County Election Authority**, the **St. Louis County Board of Elections**, and the **State Auditor's Office**.

Assumptions

Officials from the **Attorney General's Office** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Agriculture** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Commerce and Insurance** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Conservation** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Corrections** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Economic Development** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Health and Senior Services** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Labor and Industrial Relations** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Mental Health** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of National Guard** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Natural Resources** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Public Safety** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Revenue** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Social Services** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Department of Transportation** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Governor's Office** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Missouri House of Representatives** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Missouri Senate** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Office of Administration** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Office of State Courts Administrator** indicated:

There may be some impact but there is no way to quantify that currently. Any significant changes will be reflected in future budget requests. *

Officials from the **Office of the State Public Defender** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Secretary of State's Office** indicated:

Each year, a number of joint resolutions that would refer to a vote of the people a constitutional amendment and bills that would refer to a vote of the people the statutory issue in the legislation may be considered by the General Assembly.

Unless a special election is called for the purpose, Referendums are submitted to the people at the next general election. Article III section 52(b) of the Missouri Constitution authorizes the general assembly to order a special election for measures referred to the people. If a special election is called to submit a Referendum to a vote of the people, Section 115.063.2 RSMo. requires the state to pay the costs. The cost of the special election has been estimated to be \$8 million based on the cost of the 2024 primary and general election reimbursements.

The Secretary of State's office is required to pay for publishing in local newspapers the full text of each statewide ballot measure as directed by Article XII, Section 2(b) of the Missouri Constitution and Section 116.230-116.290, RSMo. Funding for this item is adjusted each year depending upon the election cycle. A new decision item is requested in odd numbered fiscal years and the amount requested is dependent upon the estimated number of ballot measures that will be approved by the General Assembly and the initiative petitions certified for the ballot. In FY 2014, the General Assembly changed the appropriation so that it was no longer an estimated appropriation.

For the FY24 petitions cycle, the SOS estimates publication costs at \$60,000 per page. This amount is subject to change based on number of petitions received, length of those petitions and rates charged by newspaper publishers.

The Secretary of State's office will continue to assume, for the purposes of this fiscal note, that it should have the full appropriation authority it needs to meet the publishing requirements. Because these requirements are mandatory, we reserve the right to request funding to meet the cost of our publishing requirements if the Governor and the General Assembly again change the amount or continue to not designate it as an estimated appropriation.

If you have any questions, please contact Scott Pauley 573-526-0703.

Officials from the **State Treasurer's Office** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Carter County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Clay County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Greene County** indicated: *

In assessing Initiative Petition 2026-105 and 2026-106 it is essential to consider the potential additional costs to Greene County should voters choose to amend Article III. This projection is informed by historical data and anticipated future declines in state revenue. The relevant costs and rationale underpinning this estimate are detailed in the subsequent analysis.

The proposed language permits the legislature to call for a special election. Should this date coincide with a general municipal election in April, statewide primary in August, general election in November of any even-numbered year or a standalone election in August or November of an odd-numbered year, the State of Missouri would assume responsibility for reimbursing the county for the expenses incurred in administering the election. Accordingly, this estimate delineates the costs associated with administering an election during April, incorporating proportional cost-sharing among the various political subdivisions. It also includes the costs of administering a special election solely featuring a question from the State of Missouri on the ballot.

It is crucial to note that each scenario presented does not presuppose the legislature allocating funding for any election. Although [RSMo 115.063](#) mandates that the state compensates its proportional or full share in elections where an issue, candidate, or both are on the ballot, such funding should not be assumed until an appropriation is made. Historically, the Missouri General Assembly has opted not to disburse its complete proportional share for statewide primary and/or general elections despite statutory obligations.

A recent instance of the state failing to meet its proportional cost obligations as outlined in [RSMo 115.063](#) occurred during the 2020 statewide primary and general elections, when the legislature did not provide funding at the time. Subsequently, in 2022, the legislature appropriated partial funds to reimburse a portion of the state's outstanding costs for both elections. As mandated by [RSMo 115.065](#) for the August 2020 Primary Election, the proportional state share cost amounted to **\$126,017.37**, while the November 2020 General Election totaled \$197,453.16. Collectively, these costs reached **\$323,470.53**, but the County of Greene received a total reimbursement of **\$83,566.92** in 2022 from the State of Missouri, equating to approximately 26 percent of the actual amount owed according to statutory requirements.

The following scenarios do not presume that the State of Missouri will fulfill its proportional cost obligations or cover total costs, particularly in light of historical precedents and projections from the Office of Administration's Division of Budget and Planning, which anticipates a nearly \$1 billion shortfall in general revenue beginning in fiscal year 2027.

Scenario 1 – State Proportional Share of Costs – April General Municipal Election

The proportional share of costs for the April election varies annually based on the number of local entities submitting questions for the ballot. This estimate is based on the costs associated with the April 2024 election. The total expense for administering the April 2024 election across all entities is projected to be **\$343,180.21**, with the State of Missouri's estimated proportional share calculated at **\$115,053.52**.

Scenario 2 – State-Only Cost

In the event of a countywide special election where the State of Missouri is the sole entity on the ballot presenting a question to voters, the estimated cost is **\$278,467.80**.

Officials from **Johnson County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Macon County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Madison County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Pike County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Schuyler County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **St. Clair County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **St. Louis County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Texas County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Wayne County** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **City of Kansas City** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **City of Wentzville** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **Metropolitan Community College** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **St. Louis Community College** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from **University of Missouri** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Board of Election Commissioners City of St. Louis** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Jackson County Election Board** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Kansas City Board of Election Commissioners** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **Platte County Board of Elections** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **St. Louis County Board of Elections** indicated no fiscal impact.

Officials from the **State Auditor's Office** indicated no fiscal impact.

The State Auditor's office did not receive a response from **Adair County, Andrew County, Atchison County, Audrain County, Barry County, Barton County, Bates County, Benton County, Bollinger County, Boone County, Buchanan County, Butler County, Caldwell County, Callaway County, Camden County, Cape Girardeau County, Carroll County, Cass County, Cedar County, Chariton County, Christian County, Clark County, Clinton County, Cole County, Cooper County, Crawford County, Dade County, Dallas County, Daviess County, DeKalb County, Dent County, Douglas County, Dunklin County, Franklin County, Gasconade County, Gentry County, Grundy County, Harrison County, Henry County, Hickory County, Holt County, Howard County, Howell County, Iron County, Jackson County, Jasper County, Jefferson County, Knox County, Laclede County, Lafayette County, Lawrence County, Lewis County, Lincoln County, Linn County, Livingston County, Maries County, Marion County, McDonald County, Mercer County, Miller County, Mississippi County, Moniteau County, Monroe County, Montgomery County, Morgan County, New Madrid County, Newton County, Nodaway County, Oregon County, Osage County, Ozark County, Pemiscot County, Perry County, Pettis County, Phelps County, Platte County, Polk County, Pulaski County, Putnam County, Ralls County, Randolph County, Ray County, Reynolds County, Ripley County, Saline County, Scotland County, Scott County, Shannon County, Shelby County, St. Charles County, St. Francois County, Ste. Genevieve County, Stoddard County, Stone County, Sullivan County, Taney County, Vernon County, Warren County, Washington County, Webster County, Worth County, Wright County, the City of Cape Girardeau, the City of Columbia, the City of Jefferson City, the City of Joplin, the City of Kirksville, the City of Mexico, the City of Raymore, the City of Springfield, the City of St. Joseph, the City of St. Louis, the City of Union, the City of West Plains, Cape Girardeau 63 School District, Hannibal School District #60, Jennings School District, Malta Bend R-V School District, Mehlville School District, Wellsville-Middletown R-1 School District, State Technical College of Missouri, the Clay County Board of Election Commissioners, and the St. Charles County Election Authority.**

*** Explanation of Exclusion of Fiscal Note Information From the Fiscal Note Summary**

The State Auditor's Office is excluding the response from the Office of State Courts Administrator. The information provided does not include enough detail to properly evaluate it.

The State Auditor's Office is excluding the response from Greene County. The costs reported by Greene County to administer an election during an April election, with proportional cost sharing by each political subdivision, are existing costs. For a countywide special election where the State of Missouri is the only entity on the ballot with a question for voters, the state's share of the election costs is 100%. Expenses for a special election or any other election under the new requirements would not create election expenses that cannot already occur, regardless of whether or not the state reimburses its share of the costs, and it is not clear the provisions in this proposal would make elections of any kind more common or more costly.

Fiscal Note Summary

State and local governmental entities estimate no costs or savings.