

2015 Legislative Priorities Poll Report

The Governor's Council on Disability recently conducted its annual poll to determine the level of importance disability related issues have to Missourians impacted by disability through their personal and/or professional lives. The results will be shared with council members, state legislators, and other interested groups. The poll was available to individuals via the Governor's Council on Disability listserves, personal contacts, and other organization contacts. It was provided in a Microsoft Word document and online.

Four hundred nineteen polls were returned. Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate the group or groups to which they belonged: person with a disability, family member/friend, government agency employee, service provider, educator, employer, other. The person with a disability category was marked 129 times. Of the other respondents, 129 were a family member/friend, 43 represented a government agency, 140 were service providers, 26 were educators, 24 were employers, and 42 marked other. Individuals with disabilities were given the option to indicate what type or types of disability they have: blind/vision impairment (16), chronic health condition (49), multiple chemical sensitivity (3), cognitive (30), deaf/hard of hearing (25), developmental (27), learning (26), mobility (55), psychological (35), and other (44).

It was suggested that the results be compared in various ways: county, urban/suburban/rural and centers for independent living. For the purposes of this report, the City of St. Louis is considered a county. Of the one hundred fifteen counties, sixty-seven are represented. For the number of respondents per county see Appendix A. As indicated by self-report, 88 (21%) live in urban areas, 183 (43.68%) live in suburban areas, and 148 (35.32) live in rural areas. All twenty-two centers for independent living are represented. For the number of respondents per center for independent living see Appendix B.

The first section of the poll related to local community issues.

1. Public housing agencies and organizations should give funding priority to projects which use Universal Design elements. The majority (76.85%) answered yes, 3.58% answered no, and 19.57% answered don't know.
2. All new homes should include a safe room for tornado protection: 56.80% answered yes, 22.91% answered no, and 20.29% answered don't know.
3. Missouri should adopt a state-wide building code. The majority (55.61%) answered yes, 20.76% answered no, and 23.63% answered don't know.

State Issues

This section of the poll related to state-wide issues based on bills filed during past legislative sessions.

1. Allowing small businesses who have hired and employed someone with a disability to receive a tax credit: 50.60% strongly agree, 37.23% agree, 8.83% are neutral, 2.63% disagree, and .72% strongly disagree.
2. Eliminating the renter's portion of the Senior Citizen Property Tax Credit: 8.11% strongly agree, 12.17% agree, 42% are neutral, 19.33% disagree, and 18.38% strongly disagree.
3. Requiring a government-issued photo ID to be able to vote: 33.65% strongly agree, 16.95% agree, 13.60% are neutral, 12.17% disagree, and 23.63% strongly disagree.
4. Maintaining the helmet law requirement for all riders and drivers of motorcycles: 74.22% strongly agree, 13.13% agree, 9.07% are neutral, 2.39% disagree, and 1.19% strongly disagree.
5. Expanding MO HealthNet eligibility for the "aged, blind, and disabled" category to 133% of the federal poverty level: 59.19% strongly agree, 23.15% agree, 13.60% are neutral, 2.86% disagree, and 1.19% strongly disagree.
6. Increasing the asset limit to \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for couples to qualify for MO HealthNet: 60.62% strongly agree, 22.20% agree, 9.31% are neutral, 6.21% disagree, and 1.67% strongly disagree.
7. Private insurance plans in Missouri should be required to cover hearing aids: 59.90% strongly agree, 28.16% agree, 8.11% are neutral, 3.10% disagree, and .72% strongly disagree.
8. Missouri is doing well with promoting community living and inclusion: 5.49% strongly agree, 29.36% agree, 29.83% are neutral, 25.78% disagree, and 9.55% strongly disagree.
9. Missouri's guardianship statute should be updated to emphasize more of the individual with a disability's preferences and allow for rights to be more easily restored: 41.29% strongly agree, 35.56% agree, 18.14% are neutral, 4.06% disagree, and .95% strongly disagree.
10. Missouri should at the least maintain and possibly expand state government programs such as Money Follows the Person and special education which focus on integration in the least restrictive environment: 48.69% strongly agree, 25.78% agree, 20.53% are neutral, 3.82% disagree, and 1.19% strongly disagree.
11. Missouri should increase general revenue funding for agencies such as centers for independent living, area agencies on aging, MO Assistive Technology, the MO Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and other disability-related organizations/agencies which receive this funding: 46.78% strongly agree, 26.49% agree, 19.81% are neutral, 5.01% disagree, and 1.91% strongly disagree.
12. More money should be given to support organizations or agencies which provide services to Missouri citizens who are Deaf-Blind: 29.36% strongly agree, 35.32% agree, 29.36% are neutral, 4.77% disagree, and 1.19% strongly disagree.

Appendix A

Adair	10
Andrew	1
Bollinger	2
Boone	18
Buchanan	6
Butler	4
Caldwell	1
Callaway	6
Camden	4
Cape Girardeau	6
Cass	2
Cedar	1
Christian	2
Clay	15
Clinton	3
Cole	10
Cooper	1
Crawford	1
Dent	1
Douglas	2
Franklin	5
Gasconade	2
Greene	18
Howard	1
Howell	16

Iron	2
Jackson	38
Jasper	6
Jefferson	21
Johnson	4
Laclede	2
Lafayette	1
Lawrence	1
Lincoln	2
Livingston	1
Macon	2
Marion	2
Miller	2
Mississippi	2
Montgomery	1
Morgan	1
Newton	5
Nodaway	4
Osage	1
Perry	2
Pettis	4
Phelps	4
Platte	4
Polk	1
Pulaski	1
Randolph	2
Ray	1
St. Charles	38

St. Francois	2
St. Louis City	24
St. Louis County	80
Saline	2
Scott	2
Stoddard	1
Stone	1
Taney	1
Texas	3
Warren	6
Washington	1
Wayne	1
Webster	1

Appendix B

Access II	3
Bootheel Area Independent Living Services	1
Delta Center for Independent Living	46
Disability Resource Association	21
Disabled Citizen Alliance for Independence	5
Heartland Inc.	7
Independent Living Center of Southeast Missouri	5
Independent Living Resource Center	21
Living Independently for Everyone	3
Midland Empire Resources for Independent Living	14
North East Independent Living Services	2
On My Own Inc.	1
Ozark Independent Living	21
Paraquad Inc.	104
Rural Advocates for Independent Living	12
Services for Independent Living	26
Southeast Missouri Alliance for Disability Independence	14
Southwest Center for Independent Living	25
The Independent Living Center Inc.	11
The Whole Person Inc.	59
Tri-County Center for Independent Living	7
West-Central Independent Living Solutions	11