

2016 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, PDF document, and online.

Four hundred nine 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 140 times. Of the other respondents, 138 were a family member/friend, 65 represented a government agency, 97 were service providers, 14 were educators, 21 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 (22), chronic health condition (52), multiple chemical sensitivity (4), cognitive (28), deaf/hard of hearing (31), developmental (26), intellectual (13), learning (21), mobility (61), psychological (32), and other (48).

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, seventy-three are represented. For the number of respondents per county see Appendix A. As indicated by self-report, 70 (17.11%) live in urban areas, 163 (39.85) live in suburban areas, and 176 (43.03%) 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 (71.39%) answered yes, 7.82% answered no, and 20.78% answered don't know.
2. All new homes should include a safe room for tornado protection: 59.66% answered yes, 26.89% answered no, and 13.45% answered don't know.
3. Missouri should adopt state-wide certification or registry for service animals. The majority (67.97%) answered yes, 16.87% answered no, and 15.16% 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: 51.59% strongly agree, 31.30% agree, 12.47% are neutral, 3.42% disagree, and 1.22% strongly disagree.
2. Allowing dentists who provide services to MO HealthNet participants to receive a tax deduction: 48.66% strongly agree, 25.92% agree, 18.83% are neutral, 4.89% disagree, and 1.71% strongly disagree.
3. Eliminating the renter's portion of the Senior Citizen Property Tax Credit: 13.20% strongly agree, 14.43% agree, 42.79% are neutral, 12.47% disagree, and 17.11% strongly disagree.
4. Maintaining the helmet law requirement for all riders and drivers of motorcycles: 73.35% strongly agree, 12.47% agree, 7.33% are neutral, 3.91% disagree, and 2.93% strongly disagree.
5. Expanding MO HealthNet eligibility for the "aged, blind, and disabled" category to cover more individuals: 54.28% strongly agree, 23.23% agree, 12.96% are neutral, 7.33% disagree, and 2.20% strongly disagree.
6. Creating an assistance program with scholarship accounts to help parents of students with disabilities pay for education expenses at preschools for students with disabilities or private schools: 42.30% strongly agree, 30.07% agree, 18.83% are neutral, 5.62% disagree, and 3.18% strongly disagree.
7. Private insurance plans in Missouri should be required to cover hearing aids: 57.70% strongly agree, 32.76% agree, 6.36% are neutral, 1.47% disagree, and 1.71% strongly disagree.
8. Expanding MO HealthNet coverage to include hearing aids for adults: 56.90% strongly agree, 32.51% agree, 7.39% are neutral, 1.48% disagree, and 1.72% strongly disagree.
9. Missouri is doing well with promoting community living and inclusion: 4.65% strongly agree, 22.00% agree, 39.61% are neutral, 25.43% disagree, and 8.31% strongly disagree.
10. 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: 37.65% strongly agree, 38.63% agree, 19.07% are neutral, 4.65% disagree, and 0.00% strongly disagree.
11. The Secretary of State should establish an automatic voter registration system: 25.68% strongly agree, 27.90% agree, 26.17% are neutral, 13.33% disagree, and 6.91% strongly disagree.
12. 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: 41.32% strongly agree, 24.21% agree, 25.67% are neutral, 6.36% disagree, and 2.44% strongly disagree.
13. 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: 46.94% strongly agree, 27.87% agree, 18.83% are neutral, 4.40% disagree, and 1.96% strongly disagree.

14. More money should be given to support organizations or agencies which provide services to Missouri citizens who are Deaf-Blind: 24.94% strongly agree, 38.63% agree, 31.30% are neutral, 3.67% disagree, and 1.47% strongly disagree.

Appendix A

Adair	5
Andrew	2
Atchison	1
Boone	17
Buchanan	3
Butler	1
Caldwell	2
Callaway	10
Camden	5
Cape Girardeau	7
Carroll	1
Cass	4
Cedar	1
Chariton	1
Christian	3
Clay	16
Clinton	1
Cole	28
Crawford	2
Dade	1
Dallas	2
Daviess	2

DeKalb	1
Dent	1
Franklin	4
Gasconade	2
Greene	17
Grundy	4
Harrison	1
Henry	1
Hickory	1
Howell	7
Iron	2
Jackson	32
Jasper	9
Jefferson	18
Johnson	6
Laclede	2
Lafayette	2
Lawrence	2
Lincoln	1
Livingston	1
Macon	5
Madison	1
Maries	2
Marion	1
Miller	3
Montgomery	1
Morgan	3
Newton	4

Nodaway	2
Osage	3
Pemiscot	1
Pettis	2
Phelps	10
Platte	6
Polk	1
Pulaski	10
Randolph	2
Ray	1
Schuyler	2
St. Charles	32
St. Clair	1
St. Francois	6
St. Louis City	9
St. Louis County	50
Stone	1
Sullivan	1
Taney	1
Vernon	9
Warren	2
Washington	2
Webster	2
Wright	3

Appendix B

Access II	11
Bootheel Area Independent Living Services	1
Delta Center for Independent Living	35
Disability Resource Association	18
Disabled Citizen Alliance for Independence	7
Heartland Inc.	8
Independent Living Center of Southeast Missouri	1
Independent Living Resource Center	43
Living Independently for Everyone	7
Midland Empire Resources for Independent Living	10
North East Independent Living Services	1
On My Own Inc.	12
Ozark Independent Living	10
Paraquad Inc.	59
Rural Advocates for Independent Living	14
Services for Independent Living	29
Southeast Missouri Alliance for Disability Independence	7
Southwest Center for Independent Living	29
The Independent Living Center Inc.	14
The Whole Person Inc.	58
Tri-County Center for Independent Living	22
West-Central Independent Living Solutions	11