

# JONES ADVOCACY GROUP

RESULTS ORIENTED ADVOCACY



## Debt Free Justice Weekly Legislative Report

Tracking List: <https://govwatch.net/report/yMWXXkMWGQ>

03/10/2025

Day of Empa

01/27/2025

The legislature started very slowly, but more than made up for it last week. Every committee received bills and began scheduling committee hearings. There are lots of theories about why this is the case, but both the House and the Senate went from limited activity to a full schedule overnight. This means that there could be bills on the floor for debate very soon.

We are still waiting to see our language fully introduced. The primary goal for next week is to follow up with the legislators who have said they will introduce it and find out what the hold up is.

Please don't forget to register for the Day of Empathy on March 5. Angie and I are working with the organizers to make sure we can fold our efforts into theirs. This group usually has a good turnout of 50-75 folks who are focused on decarceration. Many of the attendees are family members of incarcerated people, others are formerly incarcerated themselves. I think it would be a great opportunity to expand our reach and raise awareness for what we are doing.

1/20/2025

Week 2 is behind us here in Missouri. It was another week of mostly pomp and circumstance with the Governor's inauguration, formal appointment of committee chairs, and adoption of permanent rules for the House. The Senate committees are completely filled out, but the House Democrats have still not named their members of the House Committees. We did see a few bill referrals this week, but expect many more next week. As a reminder, the Senate has to refer bills in the order they were filed, but the House may refer any bill the Speaker chooses.

Here are some of the Committees of Interest in the House and Senate

[Senate Judiciary](#)

[Senate Transportation and Public Safety](#)

[House Judiciary](#)

[House Crime and Public Safety](#)

[House Corrections and Public Institutions](#)

We have already been reaching out to most of these committee members, but will make targeted contact next week to discuss the bills we expect to go to each committee.

#### Elimination of Fines and Fees

We are working with the ALEC Chairs in both the House and Senate to try to get more sponsors for the elimination bill. We have at least one House member who is filing this week and a couple of others that are on the radar. In the Senate, we are looking at amending the omnibus crime bill with the legislation in Committee to prevent the backlog from killing a stand alone bill. We have not found any opposition; so success is just a matter of getting energy and attention focused.

#### Calls to Action

March 5th Day of Empathy: <https://www.mobilize.us/dream/event/745831/>

This is a national day of legislative advocacy around issues of criminal justice. The link below will plug you in with the organizers here in Missouri. The Jones Advocacy Group is working with the organizers on this event and will be sure to emphasize Juvenile Fines and Fees in your visits that day.

#### Governor's Executive Order 25-07

In other criminal justice news, the Governor issued an executive order last week that requires the Department of Corrections and the Parole Board to create a working group to review the rules and regulations around parole including the frequency and demographics of people released. I have reached out to the Department and the Parole board and will push to have one or more impacted people involved in the process. If you know someone who has the time and talent to put into this kind of effort, please let me know.

This coming week will be the last slow week before things speed up dramatically. We have friends in the House leadership; so I am optimistic that we will be able to make progress at least on that side of the building.

01/13/2025

#### The 2025 Legislative Session Has Begun

The 103rd General Assembly began this last Wednesday. It was fairly unremarkable as the time was used for mostly ceremonial purposes including the swearing in of new members in both chambers, the official votes taken to elect the leadership positions, and a lot of speeches lining out the priorities of leadership and party positions. The week was a bit of a slow start due in part to the hazardous winter weather conditions facing the vast majority of the state. This upcoming week we do not expect much work to be done as the Inauguration of state officials will take place on Monday. The remainder of the week will be likely marked by the assigning of committees, committee chairs, committee schedules, and potential bills being referred to their respective committees. We do not expect any relevant committee hearings until the following week at the earliest.

The Senate

In the Senate, they elected Senator Cindy O'Laughlin (R-Shelbina) as the first female Senate President Pro Tempore in Missouri history. She then gave a speech lining out her priorities as the new Senate President including a focus on childcare, public safety, and education. Senator Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Platte Co.) was elected as the Majority Floor Leader. On the Democrat side, Senator Doug Beck (D-Afton) was elected to be the Minority Floor Leader. With term limits in full effect, there are a large number of new Senators this year. They are as follows: Sen. Jamie Burger (R-27), Sen. David Gregory (R-15), Sen. Kurtis Gregory (R-21), Sen. Mike Henderson (R-03), Sen. Brad Hudson (R-33), Sen. Patty Lewis (D-07), Sen. Maggie Nurrenbern (D-17), Sen. Joe Nicola (R-11), Sen. Adam Schnelting (R-23), and Sen. Stephen Webber (D-19). While it is far too early to tell how these Senators will interact with each other, we anticipate that once session is in full swing the fractionalization will begin again.

### The House of Representatives

In the House, Rep. Jonathan Patterson (R-Lee's Summit) was elected as the Speaker of the House marking the first time an Asian-American has held the position and the first Rep. from Jackson Co. to hold the position in over 100 years. This election was slightly contested as Rep. Justin Sparks (R-Wildwood) attempted to challenge Patterson for the position. He was defeated by a vote of 10-152. Speaker Patterson then lined out his legislative priorities in the House focusing a lot on childcare, public safety, and addressing the concerns regarding Amendment 3 (Reproductive Healthcare) and Proposition A (minimum wage and sick leave). Rep. Alex Riley (R-Springfield) was elected to be the Majority Floor Leader. On the Democrat side, Rep. Ashley Aune (D-Kansas City) was elected to be the Minority Floor Leader. During the nominations for Speaker, Rep. Aune was nominated for the position but withdrew in order for the Democrats in the House to give their full support to Jon Patterson, ensuring an easy victory for the Representative. Since there are over 50 new members of the House I will not be listing them here however that information can be made available upon request. In a stark contrast to how the House has operated in previous years, we are anticipating a much more functional House with this new class of leadership. However, as the session progresses we have seen time and time again that this does not always ring true and can collapse into chaos at the drop of a hat. Please keep an eye out for any action alerts coming from Denise or MOVPC as one of our lobby team members will be under the dome every minute they are in session.

### Pre-Filed Legislation

There are already over 2,100 bills filed for this legislative session and more are added every day. We are working with a variety of legislators to get the Juvenile Fines and Fees legislation on file. All of our previous champions were either termed out or did not win their elections. We are also seeing a number of other bills related to juvenile courts getting filed. Some of these are perfect vehicles for our proposal. Others we will have to be opposed. You can see a full list of legislation we are tracking at the link below.

### Upcoming Hearings

There are no hearings of concern as of the time of writing this report.

We are expecting committee chairs, members, and schedules to be announced in the following weeks. Please keep an eye out for that information as we will send it as soon as we receive it.

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If you have any questions about any of the legislation mentioned here or the legislative program generally, please contact Sharon Geuea Jones at [sharon@jonesadvocacy.com](mailto:sharon@jonesadvocacy.com). We will get back to you as soon as we can.