



Their Land, Their Legacy: Byrnes Fights for Wentzville's Century Farms

Families say developers from Omaha drafted their active century farms into a massive redevelopment plan — without ever calling them.

Linda Waller didn't find out her family's 262-acre farm along Highway N was slated for redevelopment the way most people find out about things that affect their property — through a letter, a phone call, or a visit from a county official. She found out at a town hall meeting, when she looked up at a display board and saw her land — S&W Farms, a working century farm her family has owned for generations — depicted inside a dense urban "city center" surrounded by thousands of apartments.

"First shock, then anger, then frustration — we knew nothing about it." — Linda Waller, owner, S&W Farms

Waller was not alone. Multiple landowners near the Perry Cate Boulevard and Highway N corridor in western St. Charles County walked into the same presentation and discovered their active farms, homes, and family properties had been drafted into conceptual redevelopment maps created by developers from Omaha, Nebraska — without their knowledge or consent. Rep. Tricia Byrnes (R-Wentzville) was in the room. She walked out angry.

"Families walked into this meeting and saw generations of their family legacy erased on paper. These are not vacant lots. These are active farms, homes, churches, and communities built over generations by Missouri families."
— Rep. Tricia Byrnes

See CENTURY FARMS/Page 10



Rep. Byrnes with Senator Hawley announcing that RECA expansion now includes 21 zip codes in St. Charles County.

A Mother's Fight: From Coldwater Creek to Congress

How Rep. Tricia Byrnes Helped Force America to Finally Acknowledge Missouri's Nuclear Legacy

In 2015, Tricia Byrnes was not thinking about politics. She was thinking about her son. At just 15 years old, her son Chase was diagnosed with thymoma — an extraordinarily rare pediatric cancer located between his heart and lungs. His oncologist told her he was unaware of another child in the country with the same diagnosis. The good news: Chase recovered. He is doing well today. But the fight his mother launched to find answers for

him — and for thousands of families like theirs — was only just beginning. So, she started digging for answers. Byrnes and her husband both grew up near Coldwater Creek and the Weldon Spring Site — both tied to radioactive contamination from the Manhattan Project and Cold War-era uranium processing. She attended Francis Howell High School, less than a half mile from the Weldon Spring

See CREEK TO CONGRESS/Page 2

Results That Matter



DATA CENTER, Page 4

Rep. Byrnes was tasked by Speaker Patterson to hold hearing on Data Center developments



988 CALL SYSTEM, Page 3

Byrnes Exposed 988's Deadly Failures of chatbots and transgender surveys. And in return, was told to resign or face felonies



IMMIGRATION, Page 4

A Wrong-Way Semi Exposed the CDL Loophole. Byrnes Slammed It Shut

CREEK TO CONGRESS

From Page 1

Quarry, a site contaminated with uranium, thorium, radium, TNT residue, arsenic, mercury, lead, PCBs, asbestos, vinyl chloride, and other hazardous chemicals connected to America's nuclear and explosive weapons programs.

Like many local kids, Byrnes swam in the quarry. The contaminated quarry also sat less than a half mile from the public well field supplying drinking water to much of St. Charles County.

As she researched, Byrnes began realizing that things she had accepted as normal were alarming to anyone outside the region. She once called her doctor assuming she needed to schedule a hysterectomy before age 40 — because so many women in her family had done so young that she believed it was simply routine. She also grew up around what locals grimly called the “north county necklace” — the scars from thyroid removals that had become disturbingly common in the community.

Chasing Answers

In 2018, Byrnes launched the Facebook group “Chasing Answers: Did Weldon Spring Make Us Sick?” — named after her son Chase. The goal was to achieve federal accountability, compensation, and additional testing and cleanup of contaminated sites. Thousands of former students and residents joined, sharing cancer diagnoses and memories of men in containment suits testing areas around Francis Howell during the abandonment, demolition, and remediation of what are now collectively known as the Weldon Spring Sites and Quarry.

The group now has more than 5,000 followers and continues to serve as a gathering place for affected families across the region.

When public attention began to fade, Byrnes realized that the only way to get the Missouri Legislature's sustained attention was to become one of them.

From Advocate to Lawmaker

After winning a seat in the Missouri House in 2022, Byrnes wasted no time. She spon-

sored House Concurrent Resolution 21, a formal state demand that the federal government provide compensation, health screenings, and medical care for Missourians exposed to radioactive waste. She organized a landmark 2023 Missouri House committee hearing where nearly 200 advocates and affected residents testified before lawmakers — sharing stories of rare cancers, lost loved ones, and a lifetime of unanswered questions.

“That hearing got the full support of Missouri behind us,” Byrnes has said, describing it as the turning point that galvanized the state's congressional delegation to act at the federal level. The resolution passed both chambers of the Missouri General Assembly.

House Speaker Dean Plocher recognized her leadership by appointing Byrnes to chair the newly formed Special Interim Committee on the Impact of U.S. Nuclear Weapon Programs on Missouri — tasking her with gathering testimony and developing legislative solutions.

“I’m very hopeful that we will be able to produce some results and some conversations today that will lead to some tangible action items,” Byrnes said at the committee’s inaugural hearing in October 2024. “That may not be just legislation, but also could be legislation to overall help Missourians.”

She also championed a package of state bills — House Bills 516, 290, and 778 — that gave Missouri's Department of Natural Resources new authority to obtain search warrants to investigate contamination on inaccessible government land, removed a \$150,000 annual cap on state spending for such investigations, and clarified that the federal government bears sole responsibility for cleanup costs.

Taking the Fight to Washington

After the success of the state resolution, Byrnes forged a direct working relationship with U.S. Senator Josh Hawley, who was pushing the expansion of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) in Washington. At the end of session, Senator Hawley stood beside Byrnes and declared RECA expansion his top federal priority.

Byrnes helped Hawley identify the precise St. Charles

County zip codes to include in the legislation, selected for their proximity to Superfund sites along Highway 94. And in a move that would open the door for thousands of former students, she personally requested that the eligibility language be written to cover people who “went to school” in the impacted areas — not just those who lived or worked there.

“We wanted to include folks that lived around the area of the Superfunds and to target those who would have gone to school at Francis Howell High School, especially prior to the cleanup,” Byrnes said.

She, herself a Francis Howell graduate, understood what that inclu-

sion meant. When the Senate vote came, Hawley had Byrnes in Washington to watch it happen.

Justice — 80 Years in the Making

On July 4, 2025, President Donald Trump signed the RECA expansion into federal law as part of the reconciliation package. The new law designated 21 Missouri zip codes — many surrounding the Coldwater Creek floodplain and Weldon Spring sites — as “affected areas,” making residents eligible for up to \$100,000 in tax-free compensation for cancers and illnesses linked to radiation exposure.

“Today, the federal government admits its responsibility — a bittersweet step toward justice,” Byrnes said when RECA passed. “While we celebrate this progress, no compensation can erase the pain. We honor our survivors and those lost by continuing to demand accountability and healing. There is more work to be done.”

See CREEK TO CONGRESS/Page 14



REAL TALK

93.3FM

MISSOURI'S VOICE OF FREEDOM

93.3FM | 104.3FM | 107.3FM

TOP SHOWS

★ The Morning Crew with Dan & Drew	★ Todd Starnes Show
★ Rick & Tracy Ellis Show	★ The Right Side with Doug Billings
★ The Kevin Jackson Show	★ On The Real with Peggy Hubbard
★ The Charlie Kirk Show	★ The Reckoning with Ryan Hite
★ Scott Jennings Show	★ Real Talk Biz
★ Miz Matter Show	★ House of GRIT

NEWS ★ COMMENTARY ★ INTERVIEWS ★ BREAKING HEADLINES

LISTEN ANYWHERE!

ON THE RADIO

ON THE APP

ONLINE

LIVE STREAMING

WWW.REALTALK933.COM

FOLLOW US

/RealTalk933 @RealTalk933 @RealTalk933 /RealTalk933

REAL PEOPLE. REAL ISSUES. REAL TRUTH.

Rep. Byrnes Filed a Bill to Fix the Crisis Hotline.

Then the Prosecutor Tried to Bury Her.

The full story of Rep. Tricia Byrnes, Missouri's broken 988 hotline, a Compass Health VP stunned by what she saw, and a prosecutor who sent three pre-written press releases before filing a single charge.

The Problem: A Hotline That Couldn't Help

State Rep. Tricia Byrnes of Wentzville started asking questions after hearing that callers to Missouri's 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline — the state and federally funded \$20-million-a-year mental health system — were not reaching live counselors during life-or-death emergencies. Instead, they got chatbots, scripted loops, and useless surveys. No human. No 911. No help.

Byrnes drove to Rolla to confront Compass Health, a major state contractor running 988 text services. She laid out the failures. She wanted changes. Compass Health and the Missouri Department of Mental Health refused. So she introduced legislation.

HB 1148: Two Questions That Could Save Lives

On January 30, 2025, Byrnes filed House Bill 1148 — built around one urgent principle: before anything else, a real human being must ask two questions:

Upon initial receipt of any 988 contact, the crisis counselor shall first ask the client what the crisis is; and whether the client requires assistance and connection to 911 or is seeking only to talk with a counselor.

Ask what's wrong. Ask if they need emergency services. Before the surveys. Before the chatbots. The cost: \$108,000-\$127,000 a year — a fraction of the \$20 million already spent on a system that couldn't get a live person on the line in a crisis.

February 20, 2025: Compass Health Walks In — and the System Fails Live

One day before the HB 1148 committee hearing, Compass Health's CEO, three vice presidents, and a lobbyist walked into Byrnes's Capitol office unannounced. The CEO was unhappy with the bill. He acknowledged that 988 text had serious, potentially fatal flaws: it can't locate a texter, can't tell if their phone died, can't know if someone harmed themselves mid-conversation. He left upset.

One person stayed.

Lauren Moyer, Compass Health's Executive Vice President of Clinical Innovation, made a suggestion: test the system right now with statements severe enough to force escalation to a live counselor. They have your cellphone number the whole time. Let's see if they call. Rep. Renee Reuter, a lawyer, witnessed everything. Byrnes picked up her phone.

What the Chatbot Actually Did

The following is documented in screenshots from Byrnes's phone — in the 988 system's own words.

~10:03 AM Byrnes texts: **I have a gun in my house** 988 does not escalate. It repeats the standard intake question. She answers A — yes, suicidal within 24 hours — and rates distress 5 out of 5. The maximum. 988 does not call. It sends a survey link:

< A crisis counselor will be with you shortly. While you wait, please do this brief survey to help them support you.

[https://domo.networkresourcecenter.org/...]

[10:03 AM]

The survey asked for zip code, name, and age — then asked: What is your gender identity? The options were not Male or Female. They were: Girl/Woman, Boy/Man, Genderqueer, Genderfluid, Third gender, Two spirit, Non-binary/Gender nonconforming, Agender, I'm not sure what my gender identity is (Questioning), Decline to answer, and A gender not listed here. It then separately asked: Do you identify as transgender? — with options Yes, No, I'm not sure, and Decline to answer.

A person who reported being suicidal with a gun in their home was sent a transgender identity survey while waiting for help.

At Moyer's direction, Byrnes escalated:

~10:04 AM Byrnes: **I have a gun to my head**

A response arrived from someone named Sabrina — who had no context and had not read the prior exchange:

< Hello. Thank you for reaching out to 988 Lifeline.

My name is Sabrina. How may I support you today?

BYRNES VOWS TO FINISH PROPERTY TAX REFORM:

“FIVE COUNTIES, FIVE SETS OF RULES — AND SENIORS PAY THE PRICE.”

WENTZVILLE — Every year, qualifying seniors across Senate District 10 have to do something most people would find surprising: reapply to keep a property tax freeze they have already earned. The program is administered county by county, which means the rules change at every courthouse door. In St. Charles County, a renewal letter goes out after the new year and the senior must sign and return it by mail or walk it in. In Callaway County, the renewal reminder rides along with the tax bill. In Pike County, there is no renewal at all — seniors must resubmit the entire application with all the required documentation, every single year. In Lincoln County, the renewal requirement is on the books, but in its first year no one has even decided which office will run it. Montgomery County lets seniors renew online, in person, or by mail — and is weighing whether to drop the requirement entirely.

For an aging homeowner without a car, living miles from the county seat, or managing a health condition, that yearly deadline is not a formality. It is the difference between keeping the freeze and watching a tax bill jump back to full market rate over a single missed form.

State Representative Tricia Byrnes, who serves on the House Interim Committee on Property Tax Reform and is running to represent the district in the Missouri Senate, says the legislature came within inches of fixing it this year — along with a package of property tax reforms that would protect every homeowner in Missouri.

It was a productive year in Jefferson City by any measure. Lawmakers passed the born-alive abortion bill that will save babies' lives, passed truth in sentencing so criminals who do the crime do the time, and passed a balanced budget with record education funding. The property tax package was headed for the same finish line, with overwhelming support from both parties. **However, Democrats didn't want to vote against property tax reform, but they were happy to “talk” about property tax reform.** So, the calendar ran out — in a Senate where Democrats spent weeks grinding the chamber to a halt with delay tactics that squeezed the time available for everything else.

“This didn't appear to be a party-line fight — the House voted 133 to 13 and the Senate voted 31 to 2,” Byrnes said. “Republicans and Democrats all said they agreed the system is broken, but in the end the Democrats did not want to cut taxes, so they kept talking and the clock ran out. Over the last several years across St. Charles, Lincoln, Pike, Montgomery, and Callaway counties, families opened assessment notices and watched their home values jump overnight, with no inspection, no explanation, and no real way to fight back. The fix was written. The votes were there. It died on the calendar, not on the merits — and it's sad to make homeowners wait another year.”

The reapplication problem traces back to Senate Bill 190, signed into law in 2023, which allows property taxes on owner-occupied homes to be frozen for senior citizens in participating counties. It was a landmark win for retirees — but because the program is run county by county, no two counties in the district handle it the same way. Two bills, House Bill 2780 and Senate Bill 1410, contained language ending the annual reapplication requirement.

Byrnes: Missouri Must Enforce Immigration Laws and Protect Public Safety

After a wrong-way semi on Highway 61 went viral, Rep. Byrnes pulled a CDL safety bill into her committee, moved it fast — and is pushing Missouri to hold the line on immigration enforcement.

ACCORDING TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,

194,000

PEOPLE WHO ARE NEITHER
AMERICAN CITIZENS
NOR LEGAL PERMANENT
RESIDENTS

HOLD A **NON-DOMICILED**
COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE.

COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSE
NON-DOMICILED
CDL

JEFFERSON CITY — When a viral video showed an 18-wheeler traveling miles in the wrong direction on U.S. Highway 61 near Troy in Lincoln County, Rep. Tricia Byrnes (R-Wentzville) did not wait for someone else to act. As chairwoman of the House Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, she moved immediately — convening a public hearing, pulling the relevant legislation into her committee, and pushing it forward. The driver, who held a commercial driver's license issued in Minnesota, was stopped by a Missouri State Highway Patrol trooper after traveling the wrong way for several miles. During the roadside inspection, he failed an English proficiency and road-sign recognition test. **The video was shared by U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and drew national attention to a gap in commercial driver**

— Rep. Byrnes

“They need to be able to read our highway signs, and they need to be able to speak about safety with law enforcement if they’re pulled over. Whether it’s an illegal immigrant or a legal immigrant — regardless of that — if you cannot speak English, you should not be on our roads.”

licensing standards that Missouri lawmakers had not yet directly addressed.

“This hearing is about protecting Missouri families.” — Rep. Tricia Byrnes

Byrnes Moves the Bill

Rep. Don Mayhew (R-Crocker) introduced House Bill 3491 one day after the February 25 incident, and it received its first reading the same day. Within days, Byrnes — working with Rep. Mayhew and the Speaker — had the bill referred to her committee and scheduled a public hearing for March 4. The committee heard testimony from Lincoln County Prosecuting Attorney Michael Wood and trucking industry officials, and moved the bill forward.

HB 3491 would allow prosecutors to pursue charges against both a driver and the motor carrier if a commercial driver cannot pass an English proficiency test while operating in Missouri. Fines would reach up to

See IMMIGRATION LAWS/Page 13

54 Country

DJ FRIDAYS

★ **EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT** ★

DOORS OPEN 7:30

DANCE LESSONS 8:00

DJ STARTS 8:30

COUNTRY DANCE PLAYLIST

5912 Old US Highway 40,
Kingdom City, MO 65262

Book the space for special events
573-220-6634
54countrykyc@gmail.com

follow us on
facebook

Byrnes Racks Up Conservative Endorsements in State Senate Race

WENTZVILLE, Mo. — State Rep. Tricia Byrnes has earned endorsements from four leading conservative organizations in her campaign for Missouri Senate District 10: Freedom Principle MO, Missouri Right to Life, the Missouri Firearms Coalition, and the Independent Cattlemen of Missouri. “These groups don’t hand out endorsements for good speeches — they look at the record,” said campaign manager Peg Bottorff. “Tricia’s record earned every one of them.”

Bottorff said each endorsement reflects a different piece of that record. “Freedom Principle MO scores every vote in Jefferson City, and Tricia’s votes for taxpayers and limited government put her at the top of their list. Missouri Right to Life knows she has stood for the unborn every single time it counted — no hedging, no excuses.”



“The Missouri Firearms Coalition endorsed Tricia because she doesn’t just say she supports the Second Amendment — she votes like it,” Bottorff continued. “And the Independent Cattlemen of Missouri know she’ll fight for family farms and ranches against the regulators and the packers to implement mCOOL, because rural Missouri is the backbone of this district.”



Byrnes was endorsed by the NRA Political Victory Fund and the National Fed-

eration of Independent Business in her previous races for the Missouri House and those endorsements should be announce in the coming weeks.

“When the groups that defend life, the Second Amendment, taxpayers, and agriculture all line up behind one candidate, that tells voters everything they need to know,” Bottorff said. “District 10 deserves a proven conservative, and that’s Tricia Byrnes.”



Senate District 10 Inbox

Freedom Principle MO May 22
to me, Freedom, Roger

FREEDOM PRINCIPLE MO
MISSOURI FIRST PAC

We are pleased to inform you that the Freedom Principle MO — Missouri First PAC is proudly endorsing your campaign for State Senate District 10.

The Freedom Principle MO — Missouri First PAC is committed to supporting strong, principled candidates who prioritize constitutional values, individual liberties, and limited government. We look forward to working alongside you in the months ahead to secure your election and build on the momentum for freedom in Missouri.

Please feel free to use this endorsement in your campaign materials, on your website, and in your communications.

Congratulations again on this well-deserved recognition. We are proud to have you as a champion for Missouri values.

For freedom and Missouri first,

Byron Keelin, President
Freedom Principle MO - Missouri First PAC

Roger Jackson, Chair
Freedom Principle MO - Missouri First PAC

Letters to the EDITOR

Representative Tricia Byrnes: A Consistent Voice for Life

As a friend of Representative Tricia Byrnes and as a board member of Missouri Right to Life Eastern Region, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand her unwavering commitment to protecting and defending the dignity of every human life.

In today’s political climate, it is easy for elected officials to change positions based on public opinion or political pressure. Tricia Byrnes is not one of those politicians. Her pro-life convictions are deeply rooted and consistently reflected in both her public service and her personal character. She approaches every issue with thoughtfulness, integrity, and a genuine concern for the most vulnerable among us.

What many people may not realize is that Tricia’s commitment to life did not begin when she took office.

Long before she became a State Representative, she was actively supporting women facing difficult circumstances. As her friend, I have personally witnessed her generosity and compassion. One example

that stands out is when she helped a pregnant mother in Texas who was facing significant challenges. Tricia stepped in to help secure housing by paying the woman’s rent, provided material items needed for the baby, and helped create a foundation for long-term stability and success. She did not do this for recognition or political gain. She did it because she genuinely cared about both the mother and her child.

That experience reflects what I have always admired about Tricia. **She understands that being pro-life means more than advocating for unborn children—it means walking alongside women and families, helping meet practical needs, and offering hope during difficult seasons.** Her commitment to life has always been accompanied by compassion and action.

During her service in the Missouri House of Representatives, Tricia has demonstrated courage in standing for pro-life principles, even when doing so may not be politically convenient. She recognizes that every life has inherent worth and that government has a responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves. Her legislative efforts have consistently reflected this belief.

Beyond her work in Jefferson City, Tricia is approachable, compassionate, and deeply invested in the well-being of her community.

Continued on Page 6

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

She understands that strong families are the foundation of strong communities. Whether she is attending local events, meeting with constituents, or collaborating with organizations that serve women and children, she brings a servant's heart and a sincere desire to make a difference. As someone who has worked in the pro-life movement for many years, I have met many elected officials who claim to support life. **What distinguishes Representative Byrnes is her authenticity. Her commitment is not merely political—it is personal. She believes that every person, from conception to natural death, possesses God-given dignity and deserves protection and respect.**

Missouri is fortunate to have leaders like Tricia Byrnes who are willing to stand firm in defense of life. Her dedication, integrity, and compassion continue to make a meaningful impact on families across our state. I am grateful for her friendship, her leadership, and her steadfast commitment to creating a culture where every life is valued and protected.

Katie Lyczak
Board Member, Missouri Right to Life Eastern Region

Dear Editor-
My family first met Tricia Byrnes several years ago during COVID. My husband had just lost his job, and we were talking with her outside our polling place. She was so supportive and encouraged him to start a small accounting business. He did, and it helped our family through that difficult time. When our hometown hero, Jared Schmitz, was killed in Afghanistan, Tricia made sure our parkway was lined with American flags for miles. I had bought memorial yard signs earlier that day, but the store had sold out. Jared's mom wanted one for their yard, and Tricia reached out to me so we could make that happen. She also organized a hometown parade where we all stood with our flags to honor Jared. It was truly beautiful. She has also been so kind to my daughter—inviting her to charity events, organizing a day at the Capitol, and even showing up to cheer her on at a pageant when only our family was there. She truly believes in our youth. This photo is from my nephew's graduation at Holt High School. Tricia attended all three graduations in her district, even though she didn't have a family member graduating. She simply wanted to support the students. These are just a few of the reasons my family is proud to support Tricia Byrnes. We can't wait to vote for her again for State Senate District 10.

Jaime Kleffner, Troy, MO



Both cleared a chamber with massive bipartisan margins. Neither reached the Governor's desk before the session clock expired.

How the senior freeze works in each Senate District 10 county:

County	Collector Phone	Collector Email	County Website	Online	Mail In	In Person	Renewal Process
St. Charles	636-949-7470	collector@sccmo.org	sccmo.org	No	Yes	Yes	Renewal letter mailed each January; sign and return by mail or in person. County may seek to drop the requirement.
Callaway	573-642-0747	No public email	callawaycounty.org	No	Yes	Yes	Renewal posted online; reminder sent with the tax bill. County is keeping the requirement.
Lincoln	636-528-0316	jzumwalt@lincolncmo.gov	lincolncmo.gov	No	Yes	Yes	First year — no office assigned yet. Collector asking commissioners to take it on or eliminate it.
Pike	573-324-3281	collector@pikecounty-mo.gov	pikecountymo.net	No	Yes	Yes	No renewal process — the full application and all documents must be resubmitted every year.
Montgomery	573-564-2389	collector@mcmo.us	mcmo.us	No	Yes	Yes	Renew online, in person, or by mail. County considering dropping the requirement.

A focused effort next session, Byrnes said, could pass the provisions that already cleared one or both chambers — reforms that would:

- End the requirement that seniors reapply every year for the homestead tax freeze. Once a senior qualifies, the protection would stay automatically until they move or pass away, instead of being lost over a single missed form.
 - Put the burden of proof on the assessor, not the homeowner. When a computer-generated valuation is challenged, the assessor would have to prove the number is right.
 - Stop drive-by tax increases. Before any non-agricultural assessment could jump more than 15 percent, the assessor would have to physically inspect the property.
 - Actually cut a property tax rate, by lowering the school operating levy floor so districts with excess funding can roll back levies and return money to taxpayers.
- Byrnes has been in the middle of the fight. She serves on the House Interim Committee on Property Tax Reform — the committee that spent last year holding listening sessions across the state and built the reform package — and she voted for House Bill 2780 in the House's lopsided 133 to 13 vote. As a former Wentzville alderman, she has seen from the local side how a state program that changes shape at every county line ends up punishing the very people it was written to protect.
- "Our seniors shouldn't have to reapply year after year just to keep what they've already earned, and no family should lose a fight with a computer-generated number they were never allowed to question," Byrnes said. "I've sat in the committee rooms. I've heard from the collectors in our counties — they don't want this paperwork any more than the seniors do. A focused effort next session gets this across the finish line. The longer we wait, the more Missourians pay for a deadline we missed — not a debate we lost."
- Peg Bottorff, of Wentzville, MO, said the yearly requirement makes no sense. "I qualified. They approved me. Then they tell me to come back and prove it all over again next year. It's not like I'm getting any younger!" Bottorff said. "I don't drive the way I used to. Last year I almost didn't make it down there in time, and I'd have lost the whole thing over a deadline."**
- For Byrnes, the issue is bigger than any one office or form. "Government ought to make it easier for people to keep the help they're entitled to, not harder," she said. "Our seniors built these communities. The least we can do is stop making them prove themselves every single year."

Missouri Farmers Deserve Credit — Put American on the Label

Rep. Tricia Byrnes is fighting to make mandatory country-of-origin labeling the law — so Missouri consumers know what they're eating and the ranchers who raised it get the credit they've earned.

Missouri's cattle industry is caught between a shrinking herd, record retail prices, and a labeling system that has allowed foreign beef to wear an American flag. The U.S. cattle herd stands at 86.2 million head — its lowest level since 1951. Retail beef prices have hit record highs, with ground beef averaging \$6.54 to \$7.06 per pound. Fewer producers. Higher prices at the grocery store. **And every day, Missouri families are paying those record prices with**



no way to know if the beef in their cart was raised in America or shipped in from Brazil.

For years, four major meatpacking companies — which control roughly 80 percent of the U.S. beef market — exploited a federal loophole that let them import beef (mostly frozen ground beef) from Brazil, Uruguay or Mexico, run it through an American processing facility and mix it with U.S. beef, and label the result a "Product of the USA." That meat most certainly did not come from American soil. The Missouri producer who spent years building a quality herd received no credit. And the consumer who thought they were buying American beef had no way to know otherwise — or to make an informed choice about the food safety standards that produced their meal.

Until this year that was the business model of the four major meatpacking companies and it was perfectly legal — and it is exactly what President Trump and State Representative Tricia Byrnes are working to change.

Byrnes Grabs the Bill — and Pushes It Through

Rep. Tricia Byrnes (R-Wentzville) has been one of the most active legislative voices on this issue. As chair of a key House committee, she personally requested that House Concurrent Resolution 15 in 2025 — and its successor, HCR 29 in 2026 — be brought before her panel. Both resolutions urge Congress to reinstate mandatory country-of-origin labeling (mCOOL) for beef. Both passed her committee

unanimously, 15-0.

"Missouri ranchers raise some of the finest beef in the world. They deserve to be able to tell consumers that. Mandatory country-of-origin labeling is not protectionism — it is basic transparency, and it is something consumers have consistently said they want." — Rep. Tricia Byrnes

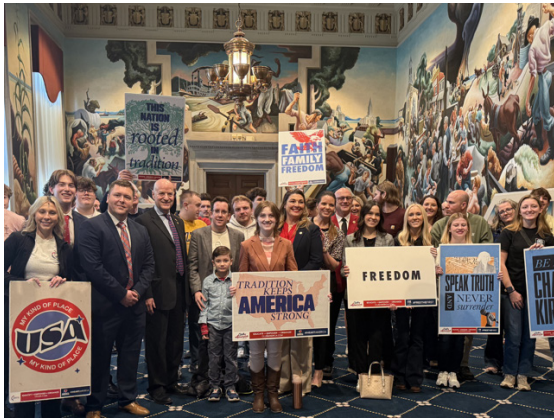
President Trump has also gone after the foreign meatpacker monopoly. A new USDA rule,

enforced by the Trump administration under Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins, began closing the loophole on January 1, 2026. Under the new standard, the "Product of USA" label may only be used for animals that were born, raised, slaughtered, and processed entirely within U.S. borders. Byrnes supports going further. The new rule is still voluntary — packers are not required to label their beef at all, only prohibited from misusing the USA label. That is not enough. Mandatory labeling would require packers to disclose where their beef actually comes from, giving consumers the information they deserve and giving American producers the market differentiation their product has earned.

The Opposition — and What It Reveals

The Missouri Cattlemen's Association and its executive vice president Mike Deering have testified against reinstating mandatory COOL, even as the resolutions passed with broad support. Deering's objections center on cost burdens, the risk of WTO trade sanctions, concerns about electronic ID tracking mandates for cattle, and arguments that previous labeling requirements did little to boost demand for domestic beef.

The MCA's preferred alternative is voluntary, market-driven labeling programs. But independent producers argue that voluntary labeling does not go far enough — because companies simply choose not to disclose origin when it isn't advantageous, leaving consumers in the dark and cheaper imported beef

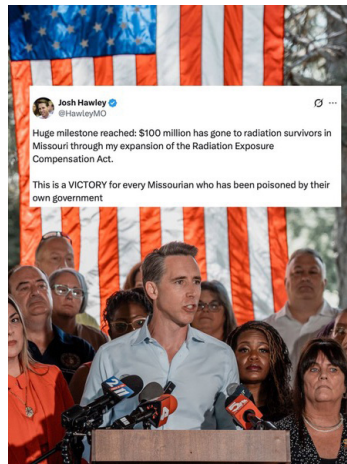
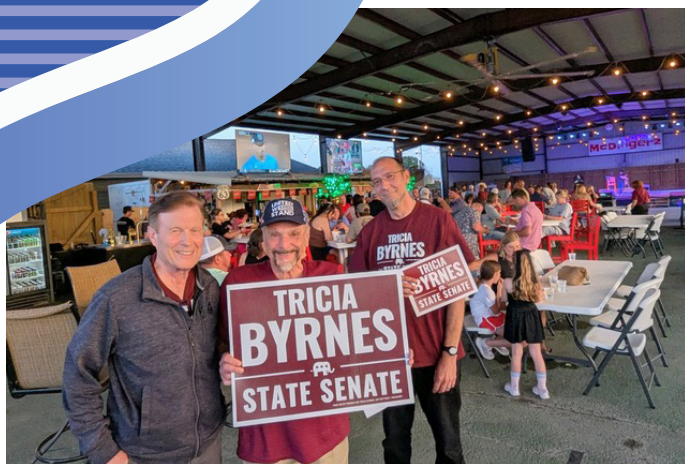


most family in Callaway





Tricia Byrnes for USA 2026



Put Down the Tablet:

Byrnes Fights to Put Pencils & Cursive Writing Back in Missouri Classrooms



HB 2230 passed the House 143-10 but died in the Senate — Byrnes vows to bring it back.

Over the past decade, Missouri schools embraced classroom technology with enthusiasm and significant public investment. Tablets, laptops, and interactive screens were purchased at scale. Digital platforms replaced traditional textbooks. Students spent growing portions of their school days staring at screens rather than working with teachers, paper, and pencils. **The vision was a modernized education. The results have been disappointing — and the science is starting to explain why.**

Rep. Tricia Byrnes (R-Wentzville) spent the 2026 legislative session fighting to reverse that trend. Her bill, House Bill 2230 — the Hands-On Learning Restoration Act — passed the House in a landslide. Then the Senate ran out the clock.

“Missouri kids are really struggling right now, and we’re at a crisis,” Byrnes said during House debate. “The goal really is to eliminate as much screen time as possible.”

HB 2230 targeted kindergarten through fifth grade — the years researchers identify as most critical for foundational brain development. Under the bill, at least 70 percent of elementary assignments would have to be completed with pen or pencil on paper. Schools would be required to use print-

ed textbooks, restore cursive handwriting instruction, and ban tablets from being sent home as homework tools. Districts would be prohibited from replacing library time with digital reading labs or using tablets for classroom management and entertainment. The House passed the bill 143-10 on March 30. It was referred to the Senate Education Committee on April 8 — and went no further before the session ended.

The Science Is Clear

A Harvard Medical School report describes screen-based learning as offering “impoverished” stimulation compared to physical reality. Real-world problem-solving requires the tactile, three-dimensional engagement a flat screen cannot replicate. The growing brain builds complex neural connections through hands-on experience — blocks, pencils, clay, peer interaction — and when screens crowd those experiences out, the connections that form are less rich. Studies published in the *Cureus Journal of Medical Science* link high screen exposure to measurable reductions in children’s self-regulation and executive functioning — their ability to plan, prioritize,

and resist impulses. The American Academy of Pediatrics has found that individual devices increase media multitasking, raising distraction and lowering academic performance. **A landmark UCLA study found that after just five days without screens, students showed measurable improvements in reading emotional cues and empathy. Five days.**

Perhaps most consequential is what researchers call the “crowding out” effect. When screens dominate classroom time, they displace the activities most critical to development: paper-and-pencil math that builds working memory and number sense; handwriting that develops fine motor skills tied to cognitive function; and peer interaction that teaches language and conflict resolution. These are not supplementary activities. They are how children’s brains learn to work. Screens do not replace them — they push them out.

The Fight Continues

Several states have already moved to restrict smartphone and screen use in classrooms, citing both the research and the practical reality that teachers report spending significant class time managing device-related distraction rather than teaching. Post-pandemic learning loss data rein-

forces Byrnes’ case. The students who struggled most during device-based remote learning were often the same students most dependent on screens before the pandemic. The technology did not save them. In many cases it set them back.

Wentzville teachers report the school district plans to provide iPads for all students beginning next school year and elementary students will be expected to use the on-screen keyboard. At a time when many students are already struggling with foundational skills, this raises important concerns. Year after year, we continue to see declines in basic reading, writing, handwriting, and other essential academic skills such as focus and comprehension.

Byrnes is not finished. She has made clear she intends to bring HB 2230 back in the 2027 session, and the 143-10 House vote signals strong appetite among Missouri lawmakers to act. Her message to parents, teachers, and school boards in the meantime is direct: don’t wait.

“Any school board member, parent, teacher or administrator — they should know they don’t have to wait for us to pass this bill,” she said. “They can act now.”

Technology has a role in education. But that role should be determined by evidence — not by what technology companies sell to school districts, not by the assumption that newer is better, and not by administrators unwilling to admit a significant investment produced underwhelming results. A child who leaves third grade reading fluently, doing math without a calculator, writing legibly, and able to focus for thirty minutes has the foundation to learn anything. A child who can’t sit through difficult paragraph is behind — and catching up gets harder every year.

“Getting back to the basics that we know work is not backwards,” Byrnes said. “It is honest.”

Lincoln County
Missouri Republican Club

THE LINCOLN COUNTY,
MISSOURI REPUBLICAN CLUB

**HOLDS ITS MONTHLY
MEETINGS ON THE
SECOND TUESDAY**
* of every month *

AT 7:00 PM

MEETING DETAILS:

WHEN: Second Tuesday of each month

TIME: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE: Promoting Republican events, political issues, and local fundraisers.

Join fellow Republicans as we work together to strengthen our community and support conservative values!

For dynamic location updates or specific monthly agendas, check the official Lincoln County Missouri Republican Club Facebook Page.

Fiscal Discipline: How Missouri Republicans Cut Spending and Proved Tax Cuts Work

Rep. Tricia Byrnes helped hold the line on spending — proving tax cuts and balanced budgets can go hand in hand.

Tax cuts get the headlines. Spending discipline gets the results. Missouri Republicans have delivered both — but the spending side of that equation rarely gets the credit it deserves.

The uncomfortable truth is this: between fiscal years 2020 and 2025, Missouri's general revenue grew by 45.8 percent — a remarkable run fueled by a growing economy and the supply-side effects of successive tax cuts. But over that same period, state spending grew by 53.4 percent, outpacing revenue by 7.6 percentage points. Part of that was COVID — federal relief funds temporarily inflated Missouri's budget footprint, and the large reserve the state built in 2023 has been drawn down as those one-time dollars ran out. But not all of it. Spending grew faster than it needed to, and someone had to put on the brakes.

Starting in FY2025, Republican leaders did exactly that.

“Cutting taxes only works if government controls its appetite. You cannot put money back in families’ pockets with one hand while taking it with the other. We have to mean it on both sides of the ledger.” — Rep. Tricia Byrnes

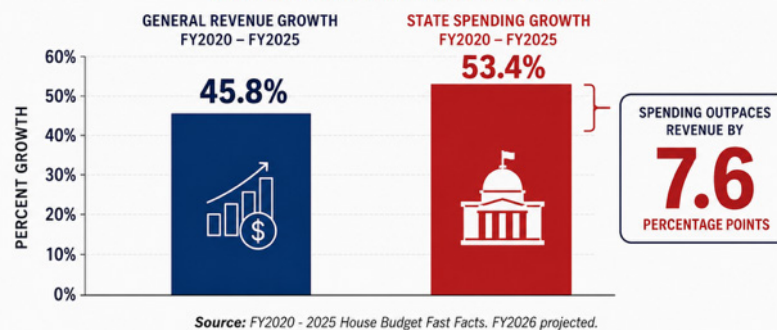
Three Years of Doing What Hadn't Been Done in Over a Decade

Three years ago, the Missouri House led an effort that had not happened in twelve years: they actually cut state spending. House budget leaders Cody Smith and Dirk Deaton, working alongside Speaker Dean Plocher and strong conservative voices including Rep. Byrnes, pushed through a budget that reduced total state spending in FY2025 — the first genuine spending cut since 2013. Senate leaders Cindy O’Laughlin and Curtis Trent held the line on the Senate side, ensuring the discipline that started in the House made it to the finish line.

The following year, spending did not grow. The FY2026 budget came in flat — no increase, no expansion of the baseline that future budgets would have to defend. That kind of restraint in an election year, when the pressure to spend is always highest, required real political will. Then came FY2027. With Speaker Jon Patterson and

MISSOURI: REVENUE VS. SPENDING GROWTH FY2020 – FY2025

The uncomfortable truth is this: between fiscal years 2020 and 2025, Missouri's general revenue grew by 45.8 percent — a remarkable run fueled by a growing economy and the supply-side effects of successive tax cuts. But over that same period, state spending grew by 53.4 percent, outpacing revenue by 7.6 percentage points.



Alex Riley carrying the torch in the House and Senate Republicans staying firm, the legislature passed a budget that came in at \$48.70 billion — a full \$4.1 billion less than the FY2026 budget signed into law the year before. That is not a rounding error. That is a genuine, measurable commitment to spending less of what taxpayers earn.

\$4.1 billion less than last year. Record K-12 funding. No tax increase. That is what fiscal discipline actually looks like.

Less Spending, Right Priorities

The FY2027 budget is not austerity. It is discipline. Even while cutting total spending by \$4.1 billion, Missouri Republicans delivered record funding for K-12 public education — more than \$4.28 billion for public schools, plus \$376 million for school transportation. They restored \$79.19 million for disability services to protect the most vulnerable Missourians, invested \$148 million in the Missouri Veterans Commission, and committed \$830 million for statewide disaster relief and recovery.

The difference between a government that spends responsibly and one that does not is not whether it cares about education or veterans. It is whether it can look at an entire budget, find what is working, cut what is not, and protect what matters. Missouri Republicans did that in FY2027.

“Politicians always talk about cutting spending. Most of them never do it. It is good to see some of our folks in Jefferson City like Tricia Byrnes actually following through on what they promised.” — Conor Martin, Troy, Mo

The Reserve Didn't Shrink Because of Tax Cuts

Liberal critics have blamed Missouri's drawn-down reserves on the Republican tax cuts of the past decade. The numbers tell a different story.

Since 2014, Missouri has cut taxes by nearly \$2 billion per year — and general revenue grew from \$8.9 billion to \$13.4 billion anyway. **For every \$1 cut in taxes, Missouri collected \$2.50 more in**

revenue. The reserves were not depleted by lower tax rates. They were drawn down because spending, supercharged by COVID-era federal dollars that were always temporary, grew faster than the underlying economy could sustain. When those one-time funds ran out, a spending baseline that had been built on them remained.

That is the honest diagnosis. And it is precisely why the spending cuts of FY2025, FY2026, and FY2027 matter so much. Missouri is not just managing last year's budget. It is resetting the baseline for every budget that follows.

The Work Is Not Done

Rep. Tricia Byrnes has been part of this effort and intends to keep pushing. Government always has a tendency to grow. Agencies request more than they need. Programs expand beyond their original missions. The appetite for spending is permanent; the political will to say no is not. Missouri has demonstrated over the past three years that it can be done — and Byrnes is committed to making sure it stays done.

Missouri families are the direct beneficiaries of a government that lives within its means. A state that controls spending today does not need to come back to taxpayers for more money tomorrow. That is the promise Republicans made. The past three budgets show they meant it.

CENTURY FARMS

From Page 1

What Was Presented — and What Was Left Out

The conceptual maps were part of the “Route N Great Places Study,” a regional planning effort run jointly by St. Charles County and the East-West Gateway Council of Governments — a regional planning organization whose logo appeared prominently on the presentation boards. The study is designed to examine future land use along the Highway N corridor, a stretch that county officials have described as the fastest-growing area in St. Charles County.

The renderings showed a proposed “Treehouse Commons” development — a dense, urban-style city center with large-scale apartment buildings and mixed-use commercial space — layered directly over active farmland near the two churches across from Timberland High School and Wentzville South Middle School. According to East-West Gateway, information was mailed to more than 700 residents and feedback was collected from more than 600 people during the planning process. The landowners whose property appeared in the renderings say they were not among them. St. Charles County has since stated that the sketches are conceptual and do not represent approved development plans. But for the families who showed up to find their land already written into someone else’s vision for the future, that distinction felt like cold comfort.

Byrnes Takes Action

Byrnes left the town hall and immediately recorded a Facebook Live video urging residents to review the plans, get informed, and engage before decisions moved further. Then she filed a Sunshine Law request for all planning records and communications tied to the project.

“This is exactly the time when you bring this to light and find out who’s behind it, who paid for it — and most importantly, how do we stop it.” — Rep. Byrnes

Byrnes has also pointed to what she calls a troubling pattern in the region. The Treehouse Commons controversy landed the same week Google officially announced a \$15 billion investment in a massive new hyperscale data center — known as “Project Spade” — spanning up to 934 acres in nearby Montgomery County. Attendees at the town hall began connecting the dots aloud: sudden surges in large-scale apartment proposals, farmland appearing in long-range redevelopment concepts, and the arrival of massive data infrastructure across Missouri. “No one is claiming these projects are directly connected,” Byrnes said. “But people are absolutely noticing

a pattern: massive regional growth discussions, large-scale apartment density, data center expansion, and farmland suddenly appearing inside long-term redevelopment concepts.”

A Community on Alert

The Highway N corridor has already seen extraordinary growth pressure. Since December 2023, five subdivisions have been built or are under construction along a two-mile stretch of the road, adding more than 1,700 homes to a stretch that was recently rolling pastures and cornfields. The Trailside Farms subdivision alone — approved in February 2026 and located directly across from Wentzville South Middle School — will add nearly 480 homes on more than 250 acres. Residents say traffic is already a serious problem, and that pace of development has left many feeling like the community is being reshaped faster than residents can respond.

For Waller and the other landowners whose properties appeared in the Treehouse Commons renderings, the message was simple: their land is not for sale, and it was never offered. Waller publicly stated she would be contacting East-

West Gateway to demand her property be removed from their displays.

Byrnes has been equally direct about what this fight is really about.

“This is about transparency and local control,” she said. “Missourians should never wake up one day and discover their farms, churches, and communities have already been drafted into someone else’s vision for the future.”

S&W Farms is a 262-acre working century farm along Highway N in Wentzville, owned by the Waller family. A



century farm is a property that has been continuously owned and operated by the same family for 100 years or more. The family states the farm is not for sale and was included in the Treehouse Commons conceptual development maps without their knowledge or consent.

Linda Waller,
Wentzville S&W Farms

“I am the owner of S & W Farms. I am going to contact Gateway and request them to remove my property from their displays/plans and see what their response is. Thank you Tricia for exposing this land grab.”



REPUBLICANS OF PIKE COUNTY

TWO IMPORTANT GROUPS. TWO WAYS TO GET INVOLVED.

REPUBLICANS OF PIKE COUNTY CLUB

- MEETS THE 1ST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH
- FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH LOUISIANA, MISSOURI
- 6:30 PM

PIKE COUNTY REPUBLICAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE

- MEETS THE 3RD MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH
- WORKING TO ELECT REPUBLICANS AND PROMOTE CONSERVATIVE VALUES IN PIKE COUNTY

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: (573) 754-0232

Byrnes Launches Data Center Review

— After State Tells Her She Can't Announce It at a State Park



State Rep. Tricia Byrnes wanted to announce her review of Missouri's hyperscale data center boom at Graham Cave State Park in Montgomery County — just down the road from where Amazon and Google are building two of the largest data centers in the state. The Department of Natural Resources had other ideas.

Days before the planned press conference, DNR called Byrnes and told her she couldn't hold the event at the park without a special use permit — a permit that they said would take six to eight weeks to review and approve.

"Think about that for a second," Byrnes said. "I'm an elected state representative trying to stand in a public park, on public land, to talk to the public about projects that will reshape their communities for generations. And I'm told I need to wait two months for a permit. Meanwhile, billion-dollar data center deals are getting signed behind nondisclosure agreements in a fraction of that time. If that doesn't tell you something is backwards in Missouri, I don't know what does."

Byrnes moved the press conference to Wentzville, where she unveiled the framework for the Missouri Data Center Community Accountability Act and announced that House Speaker Jon Patterson has tasked her with holding hearings on hyperscale data center development. The House Special Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, which Byrnes chairs, will convene Sept. 16, following the veto session.

"Rep. Tricia Byrnes, is the Chairwoman of the Special Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs. I believe she will do a fine job managing a hearing on the issues related to data centers. I was happy to approve her request."— Jon Patterson, Speaker of the Mis-

souri House

But before she made that announcement, Byrnes addressed the elephant in the room. Her opponent, Mike Deering, had been implying that opposition to data centers in Montgomery County was mostly driven by Chinese misinformation. The first words out of her mouth were: "No one from China asked me to have you here today."

For Byrnes, the issue comes down to one word: transparency.

Missouri communities are being approached with development proposals involving billions of dollars, massive demands on water and electricity, and commitments that stretch decades. In Montgomery County alone, Amazon's \$10 billion facility and Google's \$15 billion, 934-acre project are already underway — and many residents say they learned the details only after the contracts were signed.

"I'm grateful Rep. Byrnes is standing up for us, said Aumann. "Property owners and communities deserve to know about these projects when they're proposed — not after they've already been approved and it's too late to ask questions. We have to do something, and this is a good start."

— Christine Aumann, Stonemeadows

"This is not about stopping economic development," Byrnes said. "I support economic growth, private property rights, and innovation. This is about making sure the people who will live with these decisions — the families, the farmers, the small businesses — get the full picture before the ink dries, not after. Communities should never be asked to make generational commitments without transparency, independent review, and a real seat at the table."

See DATA CENTER/Page 16

IMMIGRATION LAWS

From Page 4

to \$1,000 for the driver and \$3,000 for the carrier per violation. The bill also modifies CDL requirements for non-domiciled foreign applicants and strengthens standards for obtaining and maintaining a commercial license in Missouri. "They need to be able to read our highway signs, and they need to be able to speak about safety with law enforcement if they're pulled over. Whether it's an illegal immigrant or a legal immigrant — regardless of that — if you cannot speak English, you should not be on our roads." — Rep. Byrnes

"Missourians expect their licensing system to prioritize safety and accountability," said Rep. Mayhew when introducing the legislation. "HB 3491 is a commonsense step to ensure that standard is upheld."

The Problem Other States Created

Missouri does not issue commercial driver's licenses to non-domiciled foreign nationals who cannot meet state residency and licensing requirements. But several other states — including California — have issued non-domiciled CDLs, allowing individuals to legally operate commercial vehicles across state lines, including on Missouri highways. Missouri has no control over the standards used by other states when issuing those licenses.

That exposure became impossible to ignore after the Lincoln County incident. According to the Department of Transportation, 194,000 people who are neither American citizens nor legal permanent residents hold a non-domiciled commercial driver's license. California announced it would revoke approximately 17,000 non-domiciled CDLs on March 6, 2026 — two days after Byrnes' committee hearing — following a federal audit finding that the state had improperly issued them.

The concern is not hypothetical. A series of deadly crashes involving non-domiciled truck drivers has sharpened the debate nationally. Harjinder Singh was convicted in a Florida crash that killed three people after making an illegal U-turn. Jashanpreet Singh was involved in a California crash that killed three. Bekzhan Beishekeev, who entered the United States through a Biden-era parole program, was charged in an Indiana truck crash that killed four people.

"I often drive Highway 61 - it goes right through my hometown. When I saw that video, I couldn't believe what I was watching — an 80,000-pound truck going the wrong way for miles. If that driver couldn't read a road sign, he never should have been behind that wheel. Tricia Byrnes is right to push this. Our families use these roads." — Cathy Hager, Troy/Lincoln

Immigration Enforcement: Missouri Must Step Up

For Byrnes, HB 3491 is one piece of a larger picture. She argues Missouri is now managing the consequences of years of federal inaction at the southern border — and that state government cannot afford to wait for Washington to fix it. Federal authorities estimate up to 10 million migrants entered the United States during the Biden administration be-

See IMMIGRATION LAW/Page 14

CREEK TO CONGRESS

From Page 2



Senator Hawley’s office has since reported that more than \$101 million in compensation has been delivered to Missourians harmed by Manhattan Project nuclear waste. In his 2026 State of the State address, Governor Mike Kehoe recognized Rep. Byrnes by name for her role in securing Missouri’s inclusion alongside Senator

Hawley and President Trump.

“I’m just glad after nearly 80 years these Missouri families finally have some justice from our federal government,” Byrnes said. “Now we can continue to hold D.C. accountable for damages in Missouri because of the Manhattan Project nuclear bomb created during WWII.”

The Fight Continues

There is a painful irony at the heart of Byrnes’ story. Her son Chase — the boy whose cancer set everything in motion — is not covered under the current RECA law. His cancer is so rare that there is not yet enough federal documentation for inclusion.

Senator Hawley continues pushing to expand RECA coverage to additional zip codes and rare cancers tied to America’s nuclear weapons legacy. Byrnes has made clear she will be beside him every step of the way. She has hosted town halls to walk victims through the RECA application process, organized panels of experts to answer questions, and continued building the “Chasing Answers” community online. She has traveled to Washington, drafted legislation in Jefferson City, installed warning signs at contaminated sites, and testified before committees — all while keeping the faces and stories of the families who suffered at the center of everything she does.

For the families of Coldwater Creek and the Weldon Spring communities, Rep. Tricia Byrnes has been the voice they never had — and the fighter they always needed.

RECA Eligibility Information: Visit TriciaByrnes.com/reca to learn more about whether you or a family member may qualify for compensation.

FARMERS

From Page 14

free to undercut American prices under the same flag. There are also food safety stakes. American beef producers operate under strict USDA inspection standards that foreign producers are not required to match. When imported beef is allowed to carry a U.S. label, consumers lose the ability to make an informed choice about the regulatory system that produced their meat.

The tension reveals what the COOL debate is really about: not labels, but market power. Large international meat-packing companies benefit from the flexibility to source cattle globally. Mandatory labeling limits that flexibility — which is exactly why independent producers want it, and why Missouri families should too.

ICOM Stands With Byrnes

The Independent Cattlemen of Missouri — whose founding is directly tied to the mCOOL dispute — was formed in large part by independent cow-calf producers who believed the established association’s position on labeling better served packer interests than the interests of family-scale operators. The organization has endorsed Rep. Byrnes for Missouri Senate District 10.

“Tricia Byrnes has done more to advance the cause of independent cattle producers in this legislature than anyone we’ve seen in years. She didn’t just talk about mCOOL — she pulled the bill into her committee and got it done. Missouri cattlemen need a fighter in the Senate, and that’s exactly what Tricia is.” — Independent Cattlemen of Missouri

What Comes Next

Missouri’s resolutions do not carry the force of



law — they send a message to Congress, where the ultimate decision on mandatory labeling rests. Fortunately Representatives, Alford and Smith as well as Senators Hawley and Schmitt have publicly expressed their support for COOL. Similar efforts have emerged in other states, and legislation has been introduced in Congress to restore mCOOL. As long as labeling remains voluntary, the fundamental question — whether consumers should be guaranteed to know where their beef comes from — is still unresolved. Byrnes intends to keep the pressure on.

“Look at what is happening to our industry under the Missouri Cattlemen’s watch—they have taken the corporate packers’ side, and our cow heard is at an all time low as the result of their globalist policies. The Indecent Cattlemen of Missouri don’t have the lobbyists, headquarters, or money they do, but we have real farmers who know what our members need, and we’ll keep fighting to be heard!”— ICOM member Ben Thomas, Grundy County

IMMIGRATION LAWS

From Page 13

fore border crossings declined under President Trump’s renewed enforcement. The result is that states are being asked to absorb challenges created by Washington’s failures.

Those concerns have fueled support for Senate Bill 1388, sponsored by Senator Curtis Trent, which would expand cooperation between Missouri law enforcement agencies and federal immigration authorities — allowing officers to detain individuals unlawfully present in the country and coordinate with federal officials on removal. Byrnes is a supporter.

“Missourians have watched the federal government allow millions of people to enter the country illegally. States like Missouri are now dealing with the consequences of

— Rep. Byrnes

“Missourians have watched the federal government allow millions of people to enter the country illegally. States like Missouri are now dealing with the consequences of policies that failed to secure the border and enforce existing immigration laws. Public safety must come first.”

for the rule of law. Missouri should support legal immigration while ensuring that those who commit crimes or violate our laws are detained and removed.”

policies that failed to secure the border and enforce existing immigration laws. Public safety must come first.” — Rep. Byrnes

Byrnes said the issue is not about hostility to immigrants. “America is a nation built on legal immigration,” she said. “People who follow the law deserve a system that is fair and orderly. But when immigration laws are ignored, it creates public safety concerns, places additional burdens on taxpayers, and undermines respect

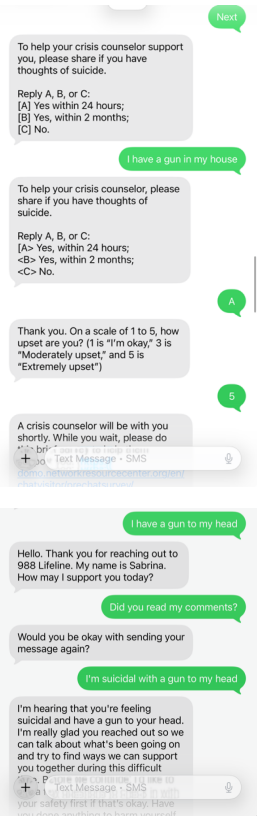
The Bottom Line

Byrnes said President Trump’s border enforcement has slowed the flow — but the challenge inside the country remains. **“Thankfully, President Trump stopped the flood,” she said. “But millions of people entered the country illegally over the last several years. Missouri now has a responsibility to protect its citizens, enforce the law, and ensure that public safety comes before politics.** Measures like HB 3491 and Senator Trent’s immigration enforcement legislation are part of that effort.”

The question before Missouri, Byrnes says, is whether the state will wait for Washington to solve the problem — or act to protect Missouri communities itself. Her answer is clear.

CRISIS HOTLINE

From Page 3



~10:06 AM Byrnes: **Did you read my comments?**
< *Would you be okay with sending your message again?* [~10:08 AM]
Sabrina had no idea what had been said. Byrnes repeated herself:
~10:09 AM Byrnes: **I'm suicidal with a gun to my head**
Sabrina replied — scripted empathy, no 911, no dispatch, no phone call:
< *I'm hearing that you're feeling suicidal and have a gun to your head.*
I'm really glad you reached out... Have you done anything to harm yourself today?
[10:10 AM]
~10:12 AM Byrnes: **Are you a real person?**
< *Yes, I am a real, trained crisis counselor... How would you feel about putting the gun down and going to a different room while we talk?* [10:14 AM]
No 911. No phone call. No dispatch. Inactivity warning at 10:21 AM. Chat disconnected 10:29. Sabrina followed up at 10:31 and again at 10:38. At 10:45, the system closed with a form goodbye and a link to a customer service feedback survey.
A suicidal person with a gun to their head was asked to fill out a transgender survey. Then asked to go to a different room. Then the system closed the chat — and asked for a customer service review.
Compass Health's own EVP watched every message in real time. She was stunned. 988 had treated a reported firearm suicide attempt as a conversation to manage with pre-scripted auto-responses. One hour and 22 minutes after the exchange started, police finally called Byrnes's number. She missed it, called back three times. An officer told her the case was closed.
Then the Capitol Police showed up outside her door.

The Prosecutor's Campaign: Charged With Nothing, Threatened With Everything

Cole County Prosecuting Attorney Locke Thompson — who advertises on Facebook that he prosecutes corrupt elected officials — decided Byrnes had committed a crime. What followed was not a criminal investigation. It was a political campaign.
Thompson circulated a memo in the Capitol claiming Byrnes had been charged with felony terrorism. However, she had not been charged with anything. He told House leadership charges had been filed — asked directly twice, confirmed twice. He distributed the memo to Democratic legislators, the Ethics Committee Chair, and Missouri senators — in an apparent effort to get her expelled before any charge was ever filed.
"He lied. I was not criminally charged. In fact, I never was charged during this entire slanderous campaign." — Rep. Tricia Byrnes, complaint
On February 23, the chairwoman of the House Children and Families Committee was told to cancel that week's 988 hearing or Byrnes would be arrested. She did not cancel it. Byrnes was pulled into offices at 9 PM with warnings. The House Attorney told her Thompson intended a public felony arrest inside the Capitol if the hearing moved forward.

Chairwoman Holly Jones held the hearing.

During that February 25th hearing, Democratic Rep. Raychel Proudie — the committee's Ranking Member — announced on camera that she was testing 988 right then, in real time, by texting "I'm suicidal and I want to die". She got the same chatbots. No live person. No follow-up. No law enforcement came to her door. No prosecutor threats for arrest. Not one word.
The double standard was impossible to miss.

Three Pre-Written Press Releases, Zero Charges
February 27, 2025, 7:07 PM — Thompson emailed Byrnes's attorney Sarah Ernst:
If Representative Byrnes wishes to resign voluntarily, I will agree that the Cole County Prosecutor's Office will permanently forego charges... If contacted by media, my response will be that the Representative resigned of her own accord... and the matter is considered closed.
At 7:46 PM he sent three pre-written, pre-dated press releases — all dated February 28, 2025:
Option 1 — Resign: Case closed.
Option 2 — Deferred Prosecution: Four years probation, recoupment to police agencies, community service, public apology.

Option 3 — Guilty Plea: Class B misdemeanor, one year probation, recoupment, community service, public apology.
All three written. Dated. Ready to release — before a single charge was filed. She accepted none of them.
Byrnes's team gave Thompson an off-ramp. He took it. Final press release: investigation closed, no charges filed. She was never charged with a single crime. Thompson's conduct is now the subject of a formal bar complaint alleging coercion, official misconduct, and tampering with judicial proceedings.

The Transgender Data Operation Inside 988
The survey was not a glitch. It was a feature. The 988 network — partly operated by the Trevor Project — built a subnetwork routing LGBTQ+ callers to specialized counselors, funded by up to \$50 million in federal money. Every caller, whether they wanted LGBTQ+ services or not, was directed to a survey collecting gender identity and transgender status data.
Byrnes recognized it immediately: not crisis intervention — data collection. Statistics on transgender youth suicides, gathered from the most vulnerable people in America's worst moments, used to argue for more federal funding and more ideological entrenchment inside the mental health system.
The Trump administration saw this for what it was and quickly terminated the \$50 million program. By July 17, 2025, the 988 LGBTQ+ Youth Specialized Services were officially shut down.

She Did Not Back Down. It Did Not Disappear.
On March 11, 2025, the committee voted 13-1 to advance HB 1148. The Missouri Department of Mental Health — which runs the \$20 million 988 program — did not attend the hearing to defend it.
In December 2025, Byrnes introduced HB 2512, the Care Before Predictable Harm Act, to strengthen early mental health interventions statewide. Billboards advertising 988 keep going up across Missouri. But the transgender surveys are gone — because one legislator from Wentzville picked up her phone and refused to pretend the test went fine.
A prosecutor tried to charge her with terrorism and handed her three resignation options. Political operatives tried to remove her before she could run for Senate. Lobbying interests wanted her silenced.
None of it worked. The story is here. Her bill is real. And the 988 system's failure is on the record — in its own words, with its own timestamps.

Documents: HB 1148 (HCS, 103rd General Assembly); Cole County Prosecuting Attorney press releases and emails (Feb. 27-28, 2025); formal complaint filed with the Missouri Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel. Text exchange screenshots from Rep. Byrnes's phone, February 20, 2025, taken at the direction of Compass Health EVP Lauren Moyer.

DATA CENTER

From Page 13

REPORT:
\$64 billion of data center projects have been blocked or delayed amid local opposition

The proposed **Missouri Data Center Community Accountability Act** would require independent, developer-funded feasibility studies before state incentive agreements are approved — examining public costs, water impacts, utility impacts, workforce projections, and potential conflicts of interest, with the findings made public. It would also require disclosure of project agreements, incentives, ownership interests, and consultants before local governments sign on, and establish enforceable commitments protecting ratepayers from footing the bill for Big Tech’s power needs. Byrnes has also sent a letter to Gov. Mike Kehoe requesting his support for greater transparency, independent review, and public engagement on data center proposals statewide.

The Sept. 16 hearing will bring lawmakers, local officials, residents, subject matter experts, and industry stakeholders to the table to examine both the opportunities and the challenges — and to shape legislation for the 2027 session. “Speaker Patterson deserves credit for recognizing this issue can’t wait,” Byrnes said. “This hearing is about asking the questions that should have been asked from the beginning. Who pays for the power lines? What happens to the water table? Why are local officials being handed NDAs that keep them from even consulting experts? Missourians deserve those answers in the open — not buried in a contract they never got to read.” As for Graham Cave, Byrnes says she isn’t giving up. “I filed for the permit. **I’ll see everyone at the park in eight weeks — apparently that’s how long transparency takes in Missouri.**”

YES ON 3

WOMEN'S HEALTH - CHILD SAFETY - COMMON SENSE

Paid for by MO Protects, Tom Estes, Treasurer

Hidden Shire ESSENTIALS®

Handcrafted self-care, gifts & cozy finds

Body Care • Teas • Books • Gifts

NOW OPEN SATURDAYS 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Store Hours
Sat 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

530 Court Street
Fulton, MO

THE BRICK DISTRICT
DOWNTOWN FULTON, MO

In the heart of
Fulton's historic
Brick District

This special section is a political advertisement paid for by Friends of Tricia Byrnes, Art Bottorff, Treasurer. Throughout this campaign, Tricia Byrnes has focused on the issues that matter to the families of Senate District 10. Rather than relying on personal attacks, her campaign has worked to clearly explain where she stands on the important public policy questions facing Missouri and to highlight the different decisions and voting records that give voters a meaningful choice in this election. While many campaigns focus on personal attacks, Tricia has stayed focused on the issues. Her campaign has emphasized listening, serving, and leading with integrity. Missouri deserves that kind of leadership in the State Senate.