

Missouri Government and Constitution

State Motto: "Salus populi suprema lex esto."

"The welfare of the people shall be the supreme law."



Missouri Facts

- Missouri's capital is Jefferson City
- Missouri became the 24th state in 1821
- Missouri's nickname is the "Show Me State"
- The state animal is the mule
- The state bird is the blue bird
- The state tree is the dogwood

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Missouri legislature is known as the General Assembly

- General Assembly is divided into two houses:
 - Senate—upper house
 - House of Representatives—lower house
- Legislature is in session from January to May each year

Senate

- has 34 members
- serve 4 year terms (1/2 elected every two years)—8 years max.
- presided over by Lt. Gov. (President pro Tempore takes over in his absence)
- approves gubernatorial appointments

Qualifications:

- 30 years old
- A qualified Missouri voter for 3 years
- A resident of their district for 1 year

House of Representatives

- has 163 members
- Representatives serve 2 year terms—8 years max.
- H.O.R. is presided over by the Speaker of the House

Qualifications:

- 24 years old
- A qualified voter of Missouri for 2 years
- A resident of their district for 1 year

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Missouri Governor

- Term: 4 years
- Term limit: 2 consecutive terms

Qualifications

- at least 30 years old
- U.S. citizen for at least 15 years
- live in MO for at least 10 years

Basic powers of Missouri's governor –

- administers state laws
- appoints and removes officials
- liaison with federal government

- recommends laws and budget
- signs or vetoes bills
- calls special sessions
- commands national guard
- grants pardons, reprieves, or commutations
- ceremonial head of state

Missouri's Lieutenant Governor

- Term: 4 years

Qualifications

- at least 30 years old
- U.S. citizen for at least 15 years
- live in MO at least 10 years

Basic Powers of the Lieutenant Governor

- ceremonial head of state
- President of the Senate
- succeeds to governorship if necessary
- acting governor when needed
- volunteer coordinator
- ombudsman

Secretary of State

- responsible for providing and preserving information for the public
- Oversees all elections

Attorney General

- serves as the chief legal officer of the state
- represents the interests of government agencies and citizens

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Supreme Court

- Chief Justice presides over court
- 7 justices
- 12-year terms
- highest court in Missouri
- hears cases on appeal from lower courts or transferred from appeals court

Requirements

- must be at least 30 years old
- must be citizen of U.S. at least 15 years
- must be qualified MO voter at least 9 years

The MO Court of Appeals

- Eastern district: 14 judges
- Western district: 11 judges
- Southern district: 7 judges
- 12-year term of office
- hears cases on appeal from lower courts

Requirements

- must be at least 30 years old
- must be citizen of U.S. at least 15 years
- must be qualified MO voter at least 9 years

The Missouri Circuit Courts (trial courts)

- All cases under state law first come to trial in one of the state's Circuit Courts
- 4-year term of office
- 44 Circuit Court districts

MISSOURI'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Municipalities

A municipality is an incorporated local government, meaning it is organized under Missouri law with corporate and governmental characteristics. Cities, villages, and incorporated towns are considered municipalities.

Townships

A township is a sub-administrative unit of county government with very limited powers. Usually, the main function of a township is road maintenance. There are 23 counties in Missouri with township government, mostly located in the northwest of the state.

Counties

A county is a sub-administrative unit of state government. Counties carry out crucial state functions such as taxation and law enforcement. There are 114 counties in Missouri.

Special Districts

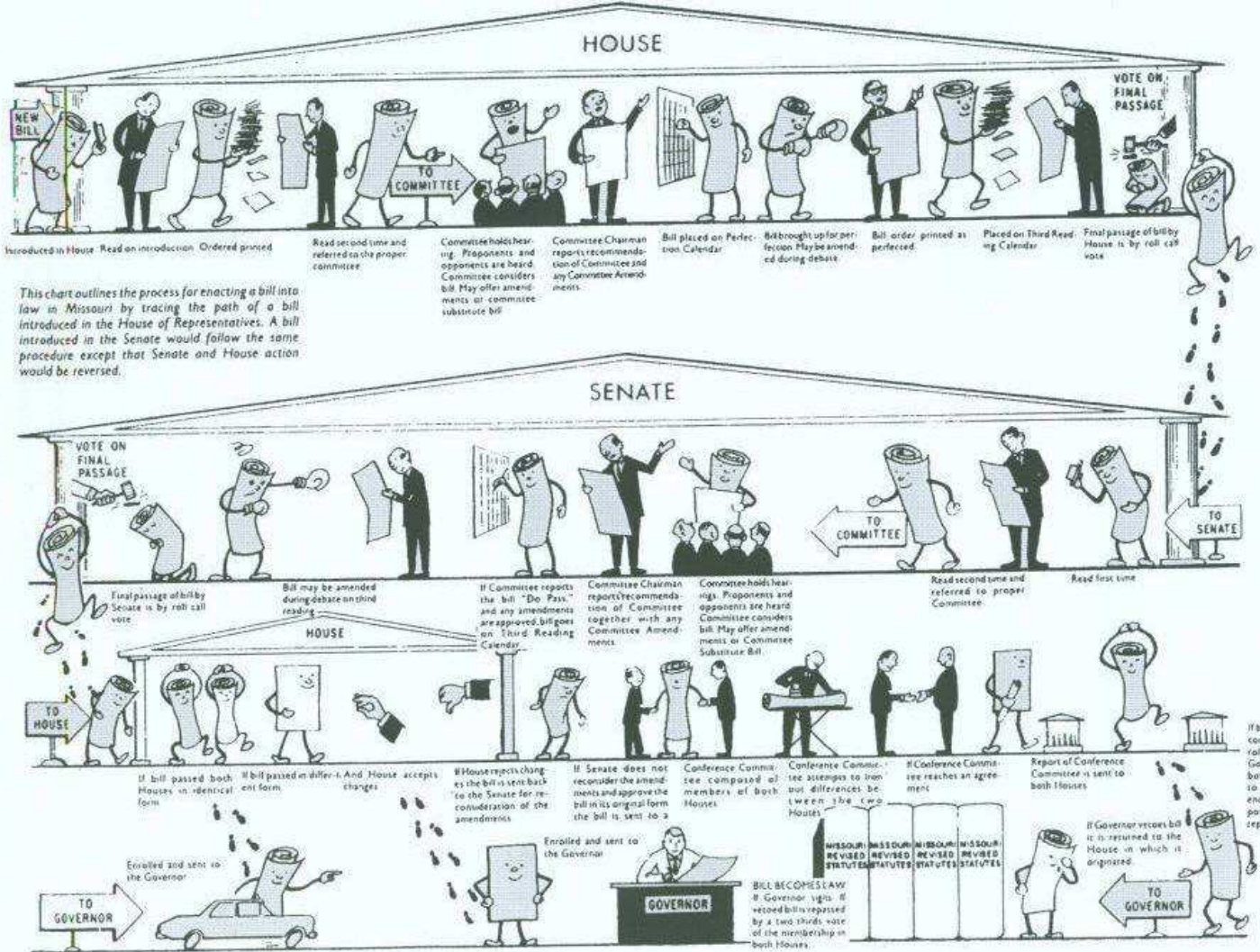
A special district is usually a one-service local government, but can overlay other local government entities. The most common special districts in Missouri provide fire protection, road maintenance, and water supply.

School Districts

School districts administer and provide for public education within recognized governmental systems. In Missouri, they function under dual control of local and state governmental influences or mandates.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

How a bill becomes law...



This chart outlines the process for enacting a bill into law in Missouri by tracing the path of a bill introduced in the House of Representatives. A bill introduced in the Senate would follow the same procedure except that Senate and House action would be reversed.