

Attacking Vulnerable Communities

Republicans in the Missouri Legislature overturned the will of Missouri voters by passing legislation that transferred control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department to the state. On March 26th, Gov. Mike Kehoe signed legislation that places the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department under the control of a state board rather than local officials. The bill passed along party lines in both the House and Senate, with Democrats arguing that the measure is racially motivated, noting that the majority of officers in St. Louis are held by Black Democrats, and contended that crime is declining, contrary to the bill's stated goal of enhancing public safety. The bill proposed a five-member board that would be made up of the mayor and four commissioners appointed by the governor, essentially leaving the governor with the votes to control the police department. The St. Louis Police Department has been under local control since 2013, after nearly two-thirds of Missouri voters approved a statewide ballot measure—backed by police reform advocates and elected officials—that placed the department under the St. Louis mayor's authority. By overturning a measure overwhelmingly approved by voters, Republican legislators are negating the will of Missouri's electorate and reinstating an antiquated system that dates back to the Civil War. [St. Louis Public Radio, [Accessed 2/15/2025](#) ; Missouri Independent, [03/26/2025](#) ; ProPublica, [02/27/2025](#)]

Missouri Republicans introduced legislation to make being an undocumented immigrant punishable by life imprisonment and create a bounty program to encourage citizens to report on other residents. In December 2024, Missouri Republicans pre-filed Senate Bill 72, proposing the "Missouri Illegal Alien Certified Bounty Hunter Program." According to Newsweek, "SB 72 introduces several key provisions aimed at addressing illegal immigration at the state level. It classifies illegal immigration as a state crime under the designation of 'felony trespassing.' The bill additionally expands the authority of the Department of Public Safety (DPS), granting it the power to investigate immigration status, collaborate with ICE, and execute arrest warrants. It also establishes an anonymous tip line modeled after federal ICE tip lines, allowing individuals to report suspected illegal immigration. If a tip then leads to an arrest, the person who provided the information may receive a \$1,000 reward." In January, the bill had a hearing in the Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee and hasn't moved since. [Newsweek, [2/13/2025](#); St. Louis Public Radio, [1/27/2025](#)]

Missouri Republicans have introduced legislation to establish criminal penalties for undocumented immigrants, threatening a \$10,000 fine and years of imprisonment. S.B. 282 establishes the crime and punishable measures of illegal entry into Missouri. According to the bill, first-time offenders are punishable by a fine of \$10,000, and subsequent offenses are classified as a class E felony, with individuals facing imprisonment of 1-7 years, another \$10,000, and deportation following imprisonment. To enact this legislation, the bill enables local law enforcement to arrest or detain people suspected of being illegal immigrants. Democrats have spoken against this measure, arguing the provision would lead to racial profiling. "I just don't want us being in a position that every single person who doesn't look like you gets arrested because they're supposedly a criminal," said Senator Barbara Washington (D-D9). On February 13, 2025, the bill received its Second

Reading and was referred to the Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee.
[Columbia Missourian, [02/10/2025](#), Missouri Independent, [03/20/2025](#)]