

Missouri Amendment 1: What It Does — and Why We're Voting No

An Act for Missouri voter guide. We start with what Amendment 1 actually does, clear up a confusion that's driving much of the debate, lay out the real choice honestly, and then explain where we come down and why. Reasonable Missourians will weigh this differently — and that's the point of putting it to a vote. Our aim is that your vote, whichever way it goes, rests on what's true.

The short version

Amendment 1 is on your **August 4, 2026** primary ballot. It renews an existing one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) state sales tax that funds Missouri's state parks and historic sites and the state's soil and water conservation efforts.

Up front:

- It is **not a new tax** and **not a tax increase**. It's a renewal of a tax that has been in place since 1984.
- It **expires unless voters renew it**. The tax returns to the ballot every ten years; if a majority says no, it ends. If Amendment 1 fails, the tax sunsets in 2028.
- Voters have renewed it four times — 1988, 1996, 2006, and 2016. In 2016 it passed with about 80% of the vote, carrying all 114 counties.

A "yes" continues the tax for another ten years. A "no" lets it expire.

First, the confusion driving half the debate

Much of the online anger about "conservation spending" is real — but most of it is aimed at a **different tax** than the one on your ballot. Missouri has two separate conservation-related sales taxes, and they are constantly mixed up:

	The 1/8-cent Conservation Tax	The 1/10-cent Parks, Soils & Water Tax
Passed	1976	1984
Funds	Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) — fish, wildlife, forestry	State parks & historic sites, plus soil & water conservation for farmland
On the August ballot?	No	Yes — this is Amendment 1
Voter renewal?	None — it's permanent	Required every 10 years

	The 1/8-cent Conservation Tax	The 1/10-cent Parks, Soils & Water Tax
Who oversees it	Appointed Conservation Commission	DNR, with annual legislative appropriation

The expense controversies making the rounds — deer and pheasant programs, feral hog trapping, urban tree-canopy grants, the vendor-payment lists tied to MDC Director Jason Summers — all belong to the **1976 MDC tax** in the left column. That tax is permanent and is **not** on your ballot. Amendment 1 is the tax in the right column.

This matters whichever way you vote: a **"no" on Amendment 1 does not touch a single dollar of MDC's budget**. It affects state parks and farmland soil-and-water programs only. If your frustration is with the Department of Conservation's spending, Amendment 1 is not the lever — that tax has no sunset and isn't up for a vote.

What a YES vote funds

A yes continues funding, split evenly by constitutional requirement between two purposes:

- **State parks and historic sites (50%)** — acquisition, development, maintenance, and operation of Missouri's park system, which keeps admission free.
- **Soil and water conservation (50%)** — cost-share help for agricultural landowners through local soil and water conservation districts in all 114 counties, aimed at protecting Missouri farmland from erosion.

By law the money can be used "for no other purpose," and the legislature still appropriates it each year. The tax brings in about \$140 million annually and has generated more than \$772 million since 1984. These are real programs with real constituencies — the farm cost-share in particular is why groups like the Missouri Farm Bureau, the Corn Growers, and the Soybean Association support renewal.

What a NO vote does

Be clear-eyed about both sides of it:

- **It's a tax cut.** The 0.1% isn't redirected anywhere — it stops being collected. That's about \$140 million a year that stays with Missourians.
- **The tax sunsets in 2028**, and reviving it later would require passing a new constitutional amendment — a higher bar than simply keeping it.
- **It ends the dedicated funding** for state parks and the farmland soil-and-water program. The legislature could choose to fund these another way — out of general revenue — and would likely protect the strongest pieces. But that is a choice they would have to make, not a guarantee, and no one should tell you it's automatic.

- **A no affects the whole tax**, not just any one piece. You can't vote down only the parts you might question; parks and farm conservation are on the line together.

The built-in voter check

One feature sets this tax apart from almost every other tax in Missouri: it has an expiration date and must come back to you. Most taxes stay until a legislature repeals them. This one is written to return to the ballot every ten years, and dies on its own if voters don't reaffirm it. That is why it's here now — not because anyone is raising it, but because the ten-year clock came due.

This cuts against the notion that voting no is somehow radical. The legislature built in this check precisely so the people could reassess. Using it to end the tax isn't reckless — it's the mechanism doing exactly what it was designed to do.

Where Act for Missouri stands

We're voting no — and not for the reason you might assume.

Our no has nothing to do with the MDC expense controversy. As explained above, that's a different, permanent tax this vote doesn't touch, and opposing Amendment 1 on that basis would be aiming at the wrong target. We won't do it.

We're voting no for a narrower and, we think, more durable reason: **tax policy this specific does not belong locked in the state constitution, and at a moment of real budget strain, spending like this should have to compete on its merits like everything else.**

Three things drive that conclusion.

First, the proper role of government. Parks, historic sites, and conservation are good things — but "good" isn't the test. Much of this sits closer to what communities, private citizens, and the ordinary budget should weigh than to the core duties of state government. Historic preservation is a useful illustration: some of the nation's most treasured sites — Mount Vernon, Monticello — are sustained entirely by private effort. We are not arguing the state should abandon its parks overnight. We are arguing that a permanent constitutional earmark is the wrong tool for deciding how much of this the state funds, and for how long.

Second, the structure. A constitution should set the framework and limits of government. It is not the right home for a recurring 0.1% sales tax earmarked to specific programs. That kind of decision belongs in statute and the annual budget, where it can be weighed and revisited as conditions change — not written into the founding document where it takes a statewide campaign to remove. (In fairness: Missouri's constitution has long carried fiscal provisions, so this is a forward-looking reform principle, not a claim that the earmark betrays some original design. We think the principle is right regardless.)

Third, and most pressing right now, the opportunity cost. For forty years this spending has run on autopilot — a dedicated stream, walled off from the budget fight, never forced to justify itself against roads, public safety, or tax relief. A no vote ends the autopilot. It does not necessarily end the programs; it makes them compete. And the moment they have to compete,

every dollar spent on them is plainly a dollar not spent somewhere else. That isn't a flaw in our position — it's the whole point. Missourians deserve to see the real cost of what the state funds and to weigh it against everything else the state must do.

The timing makes this urgent. The State Auditor reports that the general revenue fund peaked near \$5.8 billion in FY2023 and has been drawn down by roughly \$960 million and \$480 million of deficit spending in FY2024 and FY2025, with more expected — and that is before the full effect of recent tax changes works through. The hard budget choices are not coming someday; they are here. The question Amendment 1 puts in front of us is exactly the question the whole budget will keep asking: should this spending keep a protected lane, or earn its place like everything else?

We will be honest about what we are **not** claiming. We are not promising that the legislature will smoothly backfill every program — we can't, and if it were painless there would be no discipline in it. What we are saying is that these programs should have to earn their funding in the open, and that a popular program with a real constituency is exactly the kind that can survive that test on its merits. And we would gently add this: a tax you only ever renew "just to be safe" never actually goes away. If you believe state government should be smaller and more disciplined, the ten-year window is the moment that belief either means something or it doesn't.

The bottom line

Here is the honest choice. **A yes** keeps a small, voter-controlled tax funding parks and farmland conservation, and keeps the option to revisit it in ten years. **A no** is a modest tax cut that ends the dedicated funding, forces these programs into the regular budget to compete on their merits, and makes a statement about the proper scope of government as the state heads into a tight fiscal stretch.

Act for Missouri comes down on **no** — for reasons of scope and budget discipline, not because of any controversy attached to a different tax. But this is your vote and your judgment. If you've read this far and conclude that parks and soil conservation are worth a dedicated dime on every ten dollars, that is a defensible call, and the mechanism exists precisely so you can make it. All we ask is that your vote rest on what Amendment 1 actually does — and now you know.

Missouri Amendment 2: What It Does — and Why We're Voting No

An Act for Missouri voter guide. We start with what Amendment 2 actually does, clear up a confusion that's been circulating about it, lay out the choice honestly, and then explain where we come down and why. Reasonable Missourians will weigh this differently — particularly Jackson County voters, whose local democracy is on the line. Our aim is that your vote, whichever way it goes, rests on what's true.

The short version

Amendment 2 is on your **August 4, 2026** primary ballot. It changes Section 18(b) of Article VI of the Missouri Constitution in two ways:

1. **It removes a 2010 constitutional carve-out** that exempted one county — Jackson County — from the rule requiring every charter county to elect its assessor.
2. **It adds a new clause** requiring charter-county assessors to "comply with all training provisions required by general law."

A "yes" passes both changes together. A "no" keeps the current Section 18(b) — meaning the 2010 carve-out stays in place and Jackson County's assessor remains an appointee of the County Executive.

The background you need

In 2009 and 2010, the Missouri General Assembly passed and voters approved a constitutional amendment requiring every charter county to elect its assessor — *except* counties with a population between 600,000 and 700,000. At the time, only Jackson County fit that population bracket. The carve-out was drafted specifically so Jackson County could keep an appointed assessor.

Fifteen years later, that appointed-assessor arrangement became deeply unpopular. After the 2019 and 2023 property reassessments produced widespread errors and lawsuits, Jackson County voters took matters into their own hands. On November 4, 2025, they amended their **county charter** to make the assessor an elected position — 88.2% to 11.8%, an overwhelming local mandate.

But here is the structural problem: a county charter cannot override the Missouri Constitution. As long as the 2010 carve-out remains in the state constitution, Jackson County's local vote can't take full effect. The only body that can remove a provision of the state constitution is the statewide electorate. So even though Jackson County's voters demanded an elected assessor, they need every Missourian's permission to actually get one. That is what Amendment 2 is about.

What a YES vote does

A yes does two things:

- **Removes the 2010 Jackson County carve-out.** Every charter county in Missouri — Jackson included — would be required to elect its assessor, the same as every other

county. The constitutional rule becomes uniform with no exceptions. Jackson County would elect its first assessor in 2028.

- **Adds the training compliance clause.** Every charter-county assessor — Jackson and the others — would be constitutionally required to comply with whatever training provisions the legislature establishes by general law.

What a NO vote does

A no:

- **Leaves the 2010 carve-out in place.** Jackson County's assessor remains an appointee of the County Executive, and Jackson County voters' 88-12 local vote remains blocked by the state constitution.
- **Leaves Section 18(b) otherwise unchanged.** The training compliance clause is not added.
- **Sends the question back to the legislature.** If the General Assembly wants to fix the Jackson County problem, they would have to draft a new constitutional amendment and put it before voters again — possibly in a future election cycle.

First, a confusion worth clearing up

You may have heard that Amendment 2 "forces other counties to change how they select their assessors." That is not what the text does. Every other charter county in Missouri already elects its assessor under existing law — they have since 2010. Amendment 2 doesn't impose a new selection rule on any county outside Jackson. It removes the single exception that lets Jackson County not elect its assessor.

The training compliance clause is the one provision that touches all charter counties, not just Jackson. But that clause is about competence requirements for the person in the office, not about how the person gets there. Selection authority is unchanged for every county except Jackson, where the change is required by the local 88-12 vote.

The case for voting yes

Supporters — including the Missouri Farm Bureau and a near-unanimous bipartisan coalition in the General Assembly that passed the bill 125-7 in the House initially, then 33-0 in the Senate and 129-0 in the House on final passage — make these points:

- **Local democracy.** Jackson County's voters demanded an elected assessor by 88-12. Honoring that vote requires removing the state-level obstacle blocking it.
- **Equal treatment.** Missouri's constitution should not single out one county for different rules. Amendment 2 restores uniform treatment across all charter counties.
- **Accountability.** An elected assessor answers to voters at the ballot box. An appointed one answers only to the county executive who appointed them. After Jackson County's recent reassessment controversies, supporters argue elected accountability is the right answer.

- **Competence guardrail.** The training compliance clause ensures whoever holds the office meets state-set qualifications, regardless of how they got the job.

The honest case for voting no

There is a principled case against, and it deserves a fair hearing:

- **Constitutional hygiene.** A constitution should set the framework and limits of government, not contain detailed forward references to ordinary statute. The training compliance clause writes a "comply with whatever the legislature later requires" pointer into the founding document — and once it's there, removing it takes another statewide amendment.
- **Vague language carries risk.** "Comply with all training provisions required by general law" doesn't specify what those training provisions are or what they could become. A future legislature could write the definition broadly without ever returning to voters. That is the same architecture as a blank check, even if smaller in scale.
- **Bundled choice.** Voters can't accept the Jackson County carve-out fix while rejecting the training clause, or vice versa. The two pieces move together as a single yes-or-no, even though they are conceptually separate.
- **The carve-out fix could have been done cleanly.** A single-purpose constitutional amendment that only deleted the 2010 exemption — without adding any new language — would have accomplished the same Jackson County result without creating new constitutional language to debate.

How the training clause got into the bill

Because this is the heart of where we land, you deserve the full record.

The original House version of HJR 23, sponsored by Rep. Carolyn Caton, did not contain the training compliance clause. Neither did the companion HJR 3 sponsored by Rep. Coleman. The clause was added in the Missouri Senate on April 29, 2025, by **Senate Amendment 1**, offered by Sen. Barbara Washington, a Democrat representing Senate District 9, which covers eastern Jackson County and Kansas City's east side. The amendment was offered and adopted the same day. The Senate then passed the bill 33-0, and two days later the House concurred 129-0.

Sen. Washington explained her amendment publicly in her legislative column three days later, on May 2, 2025:

"On April 29, the Senate passed House Joint Resolution 23, a proposal to be put before voters that would require Jackson County to elect its assessor. During floor discussions, I added an amendment to ensure the candidates seeking that office have the proper training and credentials to be a qualified, fair assessor."

We take Sen. Washington at her word. Her stated rationale is consistent with what a thoughtful local legislator would offer in her position: her constituents would be electing a brand-new officer, and she wanted a competence standard built in.

But this is exactly the point that matters for how we evaluate the language. **Sen. Washington's intentions are not the issue. The text is.** Once "comply with all training provisions required by general law" is written into the Missouri Constitution, it is no longer Sen. Washington's amendment. It is constitutional law, available to be defined and redefined by future legislatures, with no requirement to return to voters. Good intentions today do not bind future legislatures tomorrow.

This is the same lesson Missourians keep relearning from the same constitutional provision. The 2010 carve-out itself was framed as a small accommodation for one county. Fifteen years later, that small accommodation became the obstacle Jackson County voters could not get around without a statewide constitutional amendment. The legislature has now bundled small additions onto Section 18(b) twice in fifteen years. Both times, the immediate justification sounded reasonable. The cumulative effect is a constitutional provision that keeps growing in ways voters never specifically approved.

Where Act for Missouri stands

We're voting no — and we want to be precise about why.

We support the carve-out repeal. Jackson County voted 88-12 for local accountability over their assessor, and the state constitution should not be standing in their way. If Amendment 2 only deleted the 2010 exemption — a single-purpose, clean repealer — it would have earned our enthusiastic yes.

That is not what we are being asked to ratify. We are being asked to ratify the carve-out repeal **plus** a new piece of vague, forward-reference language that does not need to be in the Missouri Constitution and that carries risks regardless of who added it or why.

Our opposition rests on the same principle we apply to Amendment 5: **Missouri's constitution should not contain blank checks.** Amendment 5's blank check is enormous — an entire tax-base redesign delegated to future legislatures. Amendment 2's blank check is much smaller — training requirements for charter-county assessors. The scale is vastly different. The architecture is exactly the same. Voters are asked to write a pointer into the founding document and trust the legislature to fill in what it points at, with no obligation to return to voters when the definition changes. We don't believe Missouri's constitution should work that way at any scale, and applying the principle consistently — even when the stakes are small and the politics are easy — is what makes the principle worth invoking when the stakes are large.

The larger point we want Missourians thinking about

If the case for Amendment 2 stopped at "fix Jackson County," this would be an easy yes for Act for Missouri. It doesn't stop there. And the reason it doesn't stop there is the part we most want Missourians thinking about as you head into this election.

Missouri Republicans hold a supermajority in the Missouri House, a supermajority in the Missouri Senate, and the governor's office. They have the votes, by themselves, to pass clean, single-purpose constitutional amendments anytime they want. Stripping the 2010 Jackson

County carve-out is something they could have done — and the original House version of HJR 23 nearly did. Instead, somewhere between the introduced bill and final passage, additional language got added. The bill that came back from the Senate with new vague language in it could have been amended, sent back, or replaced with a clean version. The supermajority chose to accept it as-is and pass it 129-0.

This is the pattern we are asking Missourians to refuse to accept.

The conventional answer when an imperfect bill reaches your ballot is *"it's not perfect, but it's better than the alternative — vote yes."* That answer would be more persuasive if Missouri Republicans did not have the votes to write perfect bills. They have those votes. When they hand voters a bundled, imperfect measure anyway, the right response is not to accept it gratefully and ask for nothing better. The right response is to refuse the false choice and demand clean legislation.

We are not voting no because we want Jackson County stuck with an appointed assessor. We are voting no because we believe Missouri voters should not let the supermajority off the hook for the legislative product they choose to deliver. Insisting on clean bills is the only way clean bills get written. Accepting bundled bills with vague constitutional language — even on issues we agree with — is how that vague language ends up permanent.

The cost of our position, and why we think it's worth it

A no vote leaves the 2010 carve-out in place. Jackson County voters' 88-12 local mandate stays blocked by the state constitution until the legislature returns with a clean amendment in a future cycle. That is a real cost paid by real Missourians who voted overwhelmingly for local accountability over their own assessor, and we are not going to pretend it isn't.

We believe the legislature will return to this. The pressure won't go away — Jackson County voters made their position clear, and the political incentive to fix the problem cleanly will only grow. A no vote tells the General Assembly that next time, the bill needs to do one thing and do it well. We think that's worth waiting for. Jackson County voters in particular may weigh that tradeoff differently, and we respect that. This is your county, your assessor, and your vote.

The bottom line

Here is the honest choice. **A yes** delivers the Jackson County fix and writes a vague training compliance clause into the constitution as the price of admission. **A no** leaves Jackson County's appointed assessor in place for now and tells the legislature to come back with a cleaner bill.

Act for Missouri comes down on **no** — not because the Jackson County fix is wrong, but because the price of admission is wrong, and because we believe a supermajority with the votes to write clean bills should be expected to write them. But this is your vote, your judgment, and your county's future. If you've read this far and conclude the Jackson County fix is worth the bundled language, that is a defensible call, and one we will respect.

Our job is to make sure your vote rests on what Amendment 2 actually does — and to tell you honestly where we land and why. Now you know both.

Missouri Amendment 4: What It Does — and Why We're Voting No

An Act for Missouri voter guide. We lay out the facts about Amendment 4, address the misunderstandings that are circulating, present the case for and against fairly, and explain where we come down and why. For our full argument and the legislative history behind this measure, see our long-form piece, "Amendment 4 Isn't Reform — It's a Power Grab." This guide is the short version designed to be printed and shared.

The short version

Amendment 4 is on your **August 4, 2026** primary ballot. It raises the bar for amending the Missouri Constitution by citizen initiative petition from the current **simple statewide majority** to a **simultaneous majority in every one of Missouri's eight congressional districts** — while leaving the legislature's own path to the constitution completely unchanged. It also bundles in several other provisions packaged under the title "Protect Missouri Voters."

Up front:

- It is **not symmetrical**. The new requirement applies *only* to constitutional amendments proposed by citizen initiative petition. It does **not** apply to amendments referred to the ballot by the legislature itself.
- It bundles several provisions into a single yes-or-no choice. Voters cannot accept some pieces and reject others.
- It originated as HJR 3, passed during a 2025 special session. Republican Senate leadership used the "previous question" motion to shut down debate before a final vote.

A "yes" enacts all the changes together. A "no" leaves the current initiative petition standard in place.

What Amendment 4 actually does

The amendment makes several changes wrapped in the appealing name "Protect Missouri Voters":

1. **Replaces the current statewide-majority standard with an eight-district concurrent-majority standard for citizen initiative petitions.** Today, a citizen-initiated constitutional amendment passes with a simple statewide majority — 50% plus one. Under Amendment 4, the same kind of amendment would need to win a majority in **every single one** of Missouri's eight congressional districts simultaneously. Miss even one district by a single vote and the measure fails, no matter how lopsided the statewide vote.
2. **Bans foreign-adversary and foreign-national funding** of ballot measure campaigns.
3. **Criminalizes petition signature fraud.**
4. **Requires the full text** of initiative petitions to be available to voters.

5. **Requires public hearings** before petitions can circulate.

The first provision is the structural centerpiece. The others are real but secondary — and as we'll explain below, several of them have already been addressed by separate legislation.

The provision that matters most

Here is the new constitutional text being added:

Statewide ballot measures to amend the constitution that are proposed by initiative petition are approved only if affirmative votes are cast by a majority of voters in each congressional district in effect at the time of the vote.

The phrase to focus on is "**proposed by initiative petition.**" That phrase means this requirement applies to one path to the constitution only — the path the people use. The path the legislature uses to refer amendments to the ballot is **unchanged**. Legislators can still place constitutional amendments before voters with a simple majority of both chambers, and those amendments still pass with a simple statewide majority. No district-by-district hurdle. No supermajority. No new restriction whatsoever on the path politicians control.

How big a change is this? Ballotpedia's analysis found that **every single citizen-initiated constitutional amendment passed in Missouri since 2020 would have failed under Amendment 4's standard** — all of them failed in Missouri's 7th Congressional District. That's not a higher bar. That's effectively a wall, applied to one side of the constitutional process and not the other. And the legislature's path remains wide open: Amendment 5, the sweeping tax-code overhaul also on this August ballot, will face no district-by-district test at all — even though the Missouri Western District Court of Appeals had to rewrite its ballot language before voters could see it.

This is the asymmetry at the heart of Amendment 4. It is not a reform of how Missouri's Constitution gets amended. It is the substitution of an extreme, one-sided standard for citizens while the legislature's own path is left untouched.

A confusion worth clearing up

You may hear Amendment 4 described as protection against out-of-state interests, signature fraud, and foreign influence in ballot measures. Several provisions in the bill do address those concerns, and to that extent the framing is accurate. The foreign-adversary funding ban, the signature fraud criminalization, the public hearing requirement, and the full-text availability rule are all defensible provisions on their own merits.

But here's a fact worth knowing: **the foreign funding ban was already passed as separate legislation** — Missouri Senate Bill 152, signed into law by Gov. Mike Kehoe in July 2025. So a meaningful piece of what Amendment 4 supporters say the measure is needed for is *already Missouri law*. The other popular reform provisions could have passed the same way — as clean, stand-alone bills voters could evaluate on their merits.

The structural change — the concurrent-majority requirement — is not about out-of-state money or fraud. It is about who can amend Missouri's Constitution and how. Bundling that structural change with already-popular reforms is what makes Amendment 4 a yes-or-no choice rather than a clean set of fixes. The packaging is doing real work here, and it is worth seeing through.

What a YES vote does

A yes does all of the following at once:

- Replaces the current **simple statewide majority** standard for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments with a requirement for a **simultaneous majority in each of Missouri's eight congressional districts**.
- Leaves the **legislature's path to the constitution unchanged** — simple legislative majority, simple statewide majority, no district requirement.
- Adds the foreign-funding, signature-fraud, public-hearing, and full-text provisions (with foreign funding already covered by SB 152).

What a NO vote does

A no:

- Leaves the **current initiative petition standard** in place — a simple statewide majority approves a constitutional amendment, the same standard that applies to legislative referrals.
- Does **not** enact the bundled provisions in this package. (The foreign funding ban already exists in statute through SB 152.)
- **Sends the question back to the legislature.** If the General Assembly wants to address real abuses of the initiative process, they can return with cleaner legislation that doesn't bundle structural changes onto popular fixes.

The case for voting yes

Supporters make these points:

- **The current bar is too low.** A constitutional amendment that becomes part of the foundational governing document of the state can pass with 50% plus one statewide vote. That is a low threshold for permanent law, and the concern that Missouri's Constitution is too easy to amend is legitimate.
- **The initiative process has been abused.** Well-funded out-of-state campaigns have used Missouri's initiative petition process to enshrine policies — including abortion access, marijuana legalization, minimum wage increases, and Medicaid expansion — directly into the constitution. Supporters argue that broad geographic support across the state, not just statewide totals, should be required for changes of that magnitude.

- **The companion provisions are real fixes.** Foreign money in ballot campaigns is genuinely a problem federal law doesn't fully address. Signature fraud is a real concern. Public hearings and full-text availability help voters understand what they are voting on.
- **Rural Missouri deserves a voice.** Supporters frame the choice as one between "representative government" and "direct democracy" — arguing, in the words of Freedom Principle MO's official campaign: *"Progressives are corrupting the citizen initiative process to push for direct democracy, bypassing representative government."*

The honest case for voting no

There is a principled case against, and we think it is the stronger one:

- **The asymmetry is the problem.** A constitutional standard that applies to citizens but not to politicians is not reform. It is a transfer of power. The legislature's own path to the constitution remains exactly as easy as before.
- **It doesn't even solve the stated problem.** Under the new rule, the two urban-anchored congressional districts would have veto power over every citizen initiative — meaning Kansas City and St. Louis could still block anything rural Missouri wants. More importantly: **the legislature's path remains wide open, and political control of the legislature changes.** Today's Republican supermajority will not last forever. When Democrats next control the General Assembly — and history says they will, eventually — they will inherit a constitution where citizens can no longer reach the ballot but the legislature can. Every progressive amendment Missouri conservatives say they fear — gun restrictions, expansive abortion language, sanctuary policies, tax increases — could be placed on the ballot by a future Democratic legislature with a simple majority of legislators and a simple statewide majority of voters. No district hurdle. No supermajority. Nothing. Amendment 4 doesn't close that door. It locks it open and hands the key to whoever runs Jefferson City next.
- **The bundling forces a false choice.** The foreign funding ban already exists as separate law. The other popular reforms could have passed the same way. They were packaged with the structural change specifically to make a no vote harder.
- **The Missouri Constitution itself answers this question.** Article I, Section 1 says *"all political power is vested in and derived from the people."* Article I, Section 3 says the people have *"the inherent, sole and exclusive right"* to alter their government. Amendment 4 narrows that right while leaving the legislature's parallel power intact. That is directly opposite the intent of our Constitution.

On "direct democracy" and the Republic

This deserves its own section, because it is the heart of the supporter argument and the place where we have the most to say.

Supporters of Amendment 4 — including campaign groups like Freedom Principle MO — are presenting Missourians with what looks like a clean choice: *vote yes and restore representative*

government, or vote no and accept direct democracy. Their framing puts "the Republic" on one side and "direct democracy" on the other, and asks you to pick.

Act for Missouri agrees that pure direct democracy — where transient majorities can rewrite foundational law on a single vote — produces unstable government and threatens the protections a constitution exists to provide. America's founders understood this. James Madison's deepest fear in Federalist 10 was tyranny of the majority — the danger that a numerical majority could use its power to oppress minorities or override the structural protections of constitutional government. The founders' answer was a republic: a system in which majority power is *checked and constrained equally*, regardless of which majority is acting.

That principle is the key. The republican answer to majority tyranny is *constraint applied to all majorities* — including legislative majorities. Separation of powers, federalism, judicial review, and equal application of constitutional limits are how the Republic defends against unchecked majority power. The republican tradition does not say "raise the bar for some majorities and leave others unrestrained." It says "constrain majority power consistently, so no majority — popular or legislative — can act tyrannically."

This is where Amendment 4 fails the test it claims to pass. A measure that raises the bar for citizen majorities while leaving the legislature's own majority untouched is not republican reform. It is the relocation of majority power, not its constraint. It does not honor the founders' republican principles — it borrows their language while violating their structure.

The choice supporters are offering — "Republic versus direct democracy" — is itself a false choice. It defines the only two options as Amendment 4 or the status quo, and treats anyone rejecting Amendment 4 as endorsing pure direct democracy. The third option — clean, symmetric, principled reform applied equally to the people *and* the legislature — gets defined out of the conversation entirely. That third option is the one actually consistent with the founders' republican tradition. It is the one Amendment 4 supporters do not want you considering.

A genuine republican reform would raise the bar for amending Missouri's Constitution **whether the amendment comes from the people through initiative petition or from the legislature as a referral**. A supermajority requirement applied to both. A district-majority requirement applied to both. Whatever the threshold, the same threshold for everyone. That is what republican government means. Anything else is just rebranding who holds unchecked power.

How this got to your ballot

Amendment 4 came out of a 2025 special session of the Missouri General Assembly as HJR 3. Real debate over the measure's structural defects existed inside the Republican supermajority itself. A cleaner alternative — HJR 4, sponsored by Rep. Bryant Wolfenbarger, which would have applied a two-thirds requirement to *all* constitutional amendments equally — received no meaningful hearing.

When HJR 3 reached the Missouri Senate floor, Republican leadership used the "previous question" motion — the Senate's nuclear option — to shut down debate and force an immediate vote. Republican Sen. Joe Nicola of Independence objected on the record: *"This chamber should*

be very thoughtful and deliberate. We should have some honest debate." A bill that fundamentally alters how Missouri's Constitution can be amended was pushed through the Senate without the honest debate even some Republicans said it deserved.

We mention this because the *process* by which Amendment 4 reached your ballot matters. Voters are being asked to ratify a structural change to Missouri's Constitution that did not survive normal legislative scrutiny — because leadership did not allow it to.

Where Act for Missouri stands

We're voting no.

Our reasoning is laid out fully in our long-form piece, "Amendment 4 Isn't Reform — It's a Power Grab." The short version:

We agree that the initiative petition process has been abused and that the bar for amending Missouri's Constitution should be higher. We have said so consistently. We also agree that unmediated direct democracy is dangerous, and that the founders' republican tradition is the right model for self-government. **All of that is precisely why we oppose Amendment 4.** A reform that raises the bar for citizens while leaving the legislature unrestrained is not a return to republican principles — it is a one-way ratchet that gives the General Assembly something it should never have: a monopoly on the realistic path to the state constitution.

The pieces of Amendment 4 we could support — the anti-fraud provisions, the public hearing requirement — are bundled with a structural change that is neither fair nor effective. The foreign funding ban is already separate Missouri law. A clean stand-alone bill containing only the genuine remaining reforms would have earned our enthusiastic yes. That is not what we are being asked to ratify.

The larger point we want Missourians thinking about

Missouri Republicans hold supermajorities in both chambers of the General Assembly and every statewide office. They have the votes, by themselves, to pass clean, single-purpose constitutional amendments anytime they want. They could have separated the popular reforms from the structural change and passed each on its merits. They chose not to. They could have allowed honest debate on the Senate floor. They chose not to. They could have considered Rep. Wolfenbarger's symmetric alternative. They chose not to.

This is the pattern we are asking Missourians to refuse to accept.

The conventional answer when an imperfect bill reaches your ballot is *"it's not perfect, but it's better than the alternative — vote yes."* That answer would be more persuasive if Missouri Republicans did not have the votes to write better bills. They have those votes. When they hand voters a bundled, asymmetric measure anyway — passed without honest debate, packaged to make a no vote harder, structured to benefit the party that wrote it — the right response is not to accept it gratefully and call it progress. The right response is to refuse the false choice and demand legislation that is both genuinely reformist and genuinely fair.

We have a rare situation in Missouri: a Republican supermajority with the unchecked power to govern well. We are watching that opportunity squandered, year after year, by leadership that delivers measures like this one. Insisting on clean bills is the only way clean bills get written. Accepting bundled bills with structural defects — even when parts of them are good — is how the defects become permanent.

The cost of our position, and why we think it's worth it

A no vote leaves the current initiative petition standard in place. The signature fraud gap, the lack of mandatory public hearings, and the full-text availability rule remain unaddressed for now. Those are real problems and we are not going to pretend a no vote fixes them.

We believe the legislature will return to those issues. The political incentive to pass clean anti-fraud and procedural reforms will only grow, and those provisions can pass on their merits without being held hostage to a structural power shift. A no vote on Amendment 4 tells the General Assembly that next time, the bill needs to do one thing and do it cleanly — or, if it does multiple things, it needs to apply the same standards to politicians that it applies to citizens.

The bottom line

Here is the honest choice. A **yes** raises the bar for citizens to amend the constitution while leaving the legislature's own path unchanged, and enacts several already-popular or already-passed reform provisions. A **no** leaves the current standard in place and tells the legislature to come back with a cleaner bill that treats citizens and politicians equally.

Act for Missouri comes down on **no** — because political power belongs to the people, because reform must apply equally to those who wrote the bill and those they govern, and because a supermajority with the votes to write fair legislation should be expected to write it.

But this is your vote, your judgment, and your constitution. If you've read this far and conclude the bundled reforms are worth the structural change, that is a defensible call, and one we respect.

Our job is to make sure your vote rests on what Amendment 4 actually does — and to tell you honestly where we land and why. Now you know both.

For our full argument, including additional legislative history and the Missouri Constitutional text on the people's authority, see ["Amendment 4 Isn't Reform — It's a Power Grab."](#) For our coverage of HJR 3 during the 2025 special session, see ["Special Session or Political Theater?"](#) and ["Selling Us a Lemon."](#)

Missouri Amendment 5: What It Does — and Why We're Voting No

An Act for Missouri voter guide. We lay out the facts about Amendment 5, address the misunderstandings that are circulating, present the case for and against fairly, and explain where we come down and why. For our full analysis — including our response to the most credible pro-Amendment 5 case made by Carl Bearden, an interactive household impact calculator, and detailed coverage of the legislative history — see our long-form work at act4mo.org. This guide is the short version designed to be printed and shared.

The short version

Amendment 5 is on your **August 4, 2026** primary ballot. It would rewrite the Missouri Constitution to phase out the state individual income tax and authorize the legislature to expand the sales and use tax to goods and services not currently taxed — while suspending key voter-approval protections during a five-year window when those new taxes get written.

Up front:

- The legislature already cuts the income tax through ordinary law. Missouri's top rate has dropped from 6.0% to 4.7% since 2014, all through statute. **Amendment 5 is not necessary to continue that work.**
- It does **not** specify what gets taxed. The actual list of newly taxed services, the rates, the exemptions, the offsets — none of that is in the amendment. Voters are approving a framework and trusting the legislature to fill in the details.
- It **suspends** the voter-approval requirement in Section 18(e) of the Missouri Constitution — commonly referred to as the "Hancock Amendment" voter-approval protection — for five years, during the exact window when the legislature would be rewriting the tax code.
- Its ballot language was so misleading that the **Missouri Western District Court of Appeals rewrote it** on June 5, 2026, finding the legislature's version unfair and insufficient.

A "yes" enacts the framework and the five-year voter-approval suspension. A "no" leaves the current constitutional structure in place and tells the legislature to continue cutting the income tax the way they have been — through ordinary law that voters can hold them accountable for.

What Amendment 5 actually does

The amendment makes several major changes to the Missouri Constitution:

1. **Directs the legislature to phase out the individual income tax.** The constitutional text says only that "the general assembly shall enact legislation to reduce and eliminate the state individual income tax by requiring reductions to the top rate of the individual income tax based on revenue growth until such tax is eliminated." The actual mechanism — what counts as revenue growth, the size of each rate cut, what triggers the next one, when the rate hits zero — is **not in the amendment**. Those details are

delegated to future legislation. Once the income tax is eliminated, the constitution permanently bars the legislature from re-imposing it.

2. **Authorizes the legislature to expand the sales and use tax** to goods and services not taxed as of January 1, 2015 — a category currently prohibited by the Missouri Constitution. The amendment does not say which services. That decision is left to the legislature.
3. **Suspends voter approval under Section 18(e) for five years.** Section 18(e) of the Missouri Constitution — commonly known as the "Hancock Amendment" voter-approval protection — requires statewide voter approval for any tax-raising legislation that would generate more than approximately \$100 million annually. Amendment 5 suspends this requirement for the tax-expansion legislation for five years after the amendment takes effect.
4. **Allows the state auditor to adjust certain constitutionally mandated sales-tax rates** to keep the system in balance during the transition.
5. **Requires local subdivisions to offset sales tax increases** by reducing other local taxes, without cutting school funding.

The provision that matters most

Of those five changes, **number three is the heart of the constitutional question.** Everything else is policy. Number three is procedural — and what it does is strip Missourians of their right to approve their own taxes during the most consequential rewrite of Missouri's tax code in a generation.

A brief explanation of what Section 18(e) is and why it exists.

In 1980, Missouri voters passed a constitutional amendment (commonly known as the "Hancock Amendment" after its sponsor, taxpayer activist Mel Hancock) that limited how much state government could grow taxes without voter approval. In 1996, voters added Section 18(e) to strengthen that protection further. Section 18(e) requires statewide voter approval for any single piece of legislation that would raise state taxes by more than approximately \$100 million annually.

Section 18(e) is the specific clause that gives Missourians a direct vote whenever the legislature wants to make a large tax change. It is one of the strongest taxpayer protections in any state constitution in the country. **And it is the single clause of the Hancock Amendment they choose to suspend.**

Here is the structure to understand:

- **Today**, if the legislature wanted to expand the sales tax to dozens of services — generating billions in new revenue — Section 18(e) would require them to put it to a statewide vote. Voters would see the specific list, the specific rates, and would decide directly.
- **Under Amendment 5**, for five years after the amendment takes effect, that exact same tax expansion can be enacted by the legislature alone, with no statewide vote on the specific changes.

Voters approve the framework once, in August 2026. The legislature then writes the actual taxes — which services, at what rates, with what exemptions — over the following five years. Voters do not get a separate say on any of those specific decisions. That is what the five-year suspension does.

This is not a small technicality. This is the citizen-protection clause Missourians wrote into their constitution in 1996 specifically to keep the legislature from rewriting the tax code without coming back to the people. Amendment 5 turns that protection off for five years — and the five years cover exactly the window when the most consequential rewrites would happen.

Why was this one provision the one they chose to suspend?

That question deserves a direct answer, because Amendment 5's sponsors have taken serious political fire for the Section 18(e) suspension and have continued to defend it. When a provision is that politically costly to keep, you can be confident it is doing real work for the people writing the bill. The question is: what work?

We believe the answer is in the structure of the offset language itself. The amendment text requires that any sales tax expansion be "offset in the same legislation by a reduction in the top rate of individual income tax that reduces such tax revenues... by an amount that is at least substantially equal to revenues generated by such expansion."

Read that carefully. The offset has to be in **the same legislation** — but the text does not say it has to take effect at the same time.

That distinction matters enormously. A single bill could expand the sales tax to dozens of services beginning January 1, 2027, while the offsetting income tax reduction doesn't take effect until January 1, 2029. Or 2030. Or 2031. Both provisions are in the same legislation, satisfying the literal requirement. But the state would collect two, three, or four years of new sales tax revenue before the offsetting income tax cut begins.

If Section 18(e) was in effect, then this would trigger it and voters would have to approve that specific package under Section 18(e). We believe that they would see the timing gap immediately and reject it. By suspending Section 18(e), the legislature gives itself the ability to write that timing gap into law without ever having to put it before voters. The legislation could be structured so that the sales tax expansion takes effect quickly while the income tax reduction is back-loaded — and voters would have no procedural recourse during the five-year window.

This is our best read of the structure. We cannot read the legislature's mind. But when a provision is politically costly, technically central to the bill, and structurally aligned with a specific kind of delayed reduction, the inference is straightforward: the suspension exists because the people writing the bill want flexibility to time the swap in a way that voters would not approve if asked.

This is exactly the kind of decision Section 18(e) was created to protect against.

A confusion worth clearing up

You may hear Amendment 5 described as "eliminating the income tax." That framing is incomplete in a way that matters.

The income tax is *already* being phased out. Missouri's legislature has been cutting the top rate through ordinary statute for over a decade — from 6.0% in 2014 to 4.7% today, with further cuts triggered by revenue growth under existing law. Continuing those cuts requires no constitutional amendment. The legislature has the authority to keep going right now.

What Amendment 5 actually adds is two things ordinary tax cuts don't: a constitutional prohibition on ever reinstating an individual income tax once eliminated, and authorization to expand the sales tax to services that are constitutionally protected from taxation today. The first is the carrot. The second — combined with the five-year voter-approval suspension — is the part voters should look at hardest.

Supporters frame this as "eliminating the income tax." A more accurate framing is "swapping the income tax for an expanded sales tax, with the swap details written by the legislature without voter approval." Reasonable Missourians can support that — but they should know that is what they are voting on.

A second framing worth clearing up: "revenue neutral"

Amendment 5's supporters describe the swap as "revenue neutral." That phrase needs translation, because it does not mean what most voters will assume it means.

"Revenue neutral" is government-speak. It means the **total amount of tax revenue collected by the state** stays roughly the same after the swap. The state collects no more, and no less, in total dollars.

What "revenue neutral" does **not** mean is that every Missourian's tax bill stays the same. The whole point of a tax swap is that *who pays the taxes shifts*. When you eliminate one tax (income) and expand another (sales), the people who were paying a lot of the first tax will pay less overall, and the people who were paying less of the first tax will pay more overall.

Specifically:

- **Retirees on fixed incomes** generally pay little or no state income tax already, but they still consume goods and services. Under Amendment 5, they would pay expanded sales tax on services with no offsetting income tax cut to benefit from.
- **Working families and low-to-middle income households** pay some income tax, but spend a larger share of their income on consumption. Their sales tax bill will go up, and the income tax savings may not fully offset the increase.
- **Upper-income households** pay significant income tax and spend a smaller share of their income on consumption. They are the most likely to see net savings from the swap.

"Revenue neutral" is a description of what happens to the state's bank account. It is **not** a description of what happens to individual citizens' bank accounts. Under any revenue-neutral tax swap, some Missourians pay more and some pay less. The phrase is technically accurate from the state's perspective, but it can be deeply misleading if a voter assumes it means their personal tax bill won't change.

Supporters of Amendment 5 are not required to disclose this when they use the phrase. But voters should know what is actually being described — and what is not.

What a YES vote does

A yes does all of the following at once:

- Constitutionalizes a **directive** that the legislature phase out the individual income tax based on revenue growth, with the actual mechanism — triggers, rate cuts, schedule — left to future legislation.
- Permanently bars the legislature from re-imposing an individual income tax once it reaches zero.
- Authorizes the legislature to expand the sales and use tax to goods and services not currently taxable under the Missouri Constitution.
- **Suspends Section 18(e) voter approval** — the Hancock Amendment's tax-approval protection — for tax-expansion legislation enacted within five years of the amendment's effective date.

- Requires local subdivisions to offset sales tax increases by reducing other local taxes (without cutting school funding).

What a NO vote does

A no:

- Leaves the **current Missouri Constitution in place** — including the Section 18(e) voter-approval protections in full effect.
- Does **not** stop the legislature from continuing to cut the income tax through ordinary statute. Existing law already does this, and would continue to do so.
- Tells the legislature that if they want to eliminate personal income tax faster, they have the authority to do so already — by cutting spending!

What the courts said about how Amendment 5 was sold

On **June 5, 2026**, the Missouri Western District Court of Appeals issued a unanimous opinion — written by Judge Thomas Chapman — finding that the legislature's official ballot summary for Amendment 5 was unfair and insufficient.

The court rewrote the ballot language itself. Here is the comparison.

The legislature's original ballot title (now superseded):

"Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to: Phase-out the individual income tax based on revenue growth; Reduce personal property and other local taxes when local revenues increase; Modify the sales and use tax to eliminate income tax and reduce local taxes; and Protect local funding for public schools and other purposes?"

The court-rewritten ballot title (operative as of June 2026):

"Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to: Require legislative phase-out of the individual state income tax based on revenue growth, and authorize the expansion of sales and use taxes; Curtail constitutional limits on taxing goods and services; and Require local tax rate cuts without reducing school funding if local sales tax revenue increases?"

Look at what the court added: *"authorize the expansion of sales and use taxes"* and *"curtail constitutional limits on taxing goods and services."* Those phrases were not in the legislature's original. The court added them because, in its judgment, voters could not understand what they were voting on without them.

When the court has to rewrite the ballot language of a constitutional amendment to tell voters what it actually does — that is a signal worth heeding. The legislature wrote a ballot title that obscured the sales tax expansion and the curtailment of constitutional limits. Missourians had to be told by a court of appeals what the legislature was asking them to ratify.

The case for voting yes

There is a serious case for Amendment 5, and it deserves a fair hearing. Supporters argue:

- **The shift to consumption taxation is broadly conservative.** Taxing what people spend rather than what they earn aligns with longstanding conservative economic principles.
- **Revenue-neutral design is possible.** A carefully designed expansion of the sales tax base — combined with rate adjustments — could replace income tax revenue without significantly increasing the total tax burden the state collects (though as noted earlier, who pays which share would change).
- **Permanent constitutional protection is valuable.** Once the income tax is gone, the constitution prevents future legislatures from re-imposing it. That is a real and durable benefit for taxpayers.
- **The revenue-growth trigger is fiscally responsible.** Income tax rate cuts only happen when revenue actually grows, which is intended to prevent budget shortfalls.

Act for Missouri takes these arguments seriously. We agree with the underlying goal — eliminating Missouri's individual income tax — and our disagreement is with the path Amendment 5 takes, not the destination.

The honest case for voting no

There is a principled case against, and we think it is much the stronger one:

- **The constitution is the wrong place for tax-code design.** A constitution should set the framework of government, not contain detailed tax structures that the legislature could write into ordinary statute. The income tax cuts are already happening through statute. There is no need to constitutionalize the rest.
- **Voters are being asked to approve a framework, not a plan — on both sides of the swap.** The income tax phase-out mechanism — what triggers each cut, how big each cut is, when the rate reaches zero — is not in the amendment. The sales tax expansion — which services, at what rates, with what exemptions, with what offsets — is not in the amendment either. The constitution would carry a directive ("the legislature shall enact legislation to...") and an authorization ("sales and use taxes may be expanded by legislation to..."), with every actual decision delegated to future legislatures. This is the architecture of a blank check.
- **The five-year voter-approval suspension is the critical defect.** Missourians wrote Section 18(e) into the constitution in 1996 specifically to keep the legislature from rewriting the tax code without voter approval. Amendment 5 turns that protection off precisely when the most consequential rewrites would happen.
- **The risk is asymmetric.** Voters bear the downside automatically — the sales tax expansion happens by legislative action, with no statewide vote. Voters get the upside (income tax elimination) only if the legislature follows through, only if revenue grows enough to trigger the cuts, and only if the offsets work as projected. The downside is locked in. The upside is conditional.
- **The math is contested and the legislature hasn't shown its work.** Independent analyses, have produced revenue shortfalls of more than a billion dollars against the targets even Amendment 5's defenders use. The legislature has not put a specific, scoreable plan in front of voters showing how the offset actually works in practice.

- **The court had to rewrite the ballot language to make it honest.** When the legislature writes a ballot title misleading enough that the Court of Appeals has to fix it, voters have evidence that the people writing this measure were not being straight about what it does.

Where Act for Missouri stands

We're voting no — and we want to be precise about what that means.

Act for Missouri supports eliminating Missouri's individual income tax. We have said so consistently. We believe the right path is responsible spending discipline, a top-to-bottom review of Missouri's tax credits and exemptions, and real economic growth — which can deliver income tax elimination without a tax swap, without expanding the sales tax to services, and without suspending Missourians' voter-approval rights.

We oppose Amendment 5 because the path it takes is wrong, not because the destination is.

The single most important reason for our no vote is procedural: **Missourians' constitutional right to approve their own taxes should not be suspended.** Section 18(e) of the Missouri Constitution — the citizen-protection clause added in 1996 to strengthen the voter-approval protections Missourians have come to know as the Hancock Amendment — exists for a reason. It is one of the strongest constitutional protections taxpayers have in any state. Amendment 5 turns it off for five years, during the exact window when the legislature would be rewriting the tax code at unprecedented scale. That is not a small thing. It is the largest single suspension of voter tax-approval rights Missouri has been asked to ratify in our lifetime.

We also believe Amendment 5 fails the basic test of what constitutions are for. The framework belongs in statute. The legislature already has the authority to cut the income tax — and has been doing so. If they want to expand the sales tax to services to fund further cuts, the right way is to write a specific proposal, put it on the ballot, and let voters approve the specific changes. Amendment 5 does the opposite: it asks voters to approve the framework once, then trusts the legislature to fill in the details outside of voter approval.

The larger point we want Missourians thinking about

Missouri Republicans hold supermajorities in both chambers of the General Assembly and every statewide office. They have the votes, by themselves, to keep cutting the income tax through ordinary law. They have done it. They are doing it. The rate has fallen from 6.0% to 4.7% without a single constitutional amendment.

They also have the votes to put a clean, specific tax-swap proposal in front of voters — one that says exactly which services would be taxed, at exactly what rates, with exactly what exemptions, with exactly what offsets — and let Missourians decide directly. That is what Section 18(e) requires. That is what voters approved in 1996. That is the deal.

Instead, what they delivered is a framework amendment that delegates the actual decisions to the legislature, suspends voter approval for five years, and wraps it all in ballot language so misleading the Court of Appeals had to rewrite it.

This is the pattern we are asking Missourians to refuse to accept.

The conventional answer when an imperfect bill reaches your ballot is *"it's not perfect, but it's better than the alternative — vote yes."* On Amendment 5, that answer is especially weak. The alternative to voting yes is not "the income tax stays forever." The alternative is "the legislature keeps cutting it through statute, the way they have been, and if they want to do something bigger they bring a specific plan to voters." Missourians lose nothing by voting no. The income tax cuts continue. The legislature keeps its existing authority. The only thing that doesn't happen is the one thing voters shouldn't accept: a five-year suspension of their right to approve the largest tax rewrite in a generation.

We have a rare situation in Missouri: a Republican supermajority with the unchecked power to govern well. We are watching that opportunity squandered when measures like Amendment 5 are delivered with this kind of structural defect. Insisting on clean bills is the only way clean bills get written. Accepting framework amendments that suspend voter approval — even ones whose stated goals we share — is how voter approval ends up suspended.

The cost of our position, and why we think it's worth it

A no vote on Amendment 5 means the constitutional path to permanent income tax elimination is not opened in this election. The legislature can keep cutting the rate through statute — and we expect they will. A future legislature could re-impose an income tax through ordinary law, where today's Amendment 5 would permanently prohibit it.

We weigh that real loss honestly. We do not think it outweighs the loss of voter-approval rights that Amendment 5 demands as the price of admission. Missourians have not been asked to surrender Section 18(e) protections at this scale before. We do not think they should start now.

The bottom line

Here is the honest choice. **A yes** constitutionalizes a framework for income tax elimination, authorizes the legislature to expand the sales tax to services, and suspends voter approval of that expansion for five years. **A no** leaves the current constitution in place, lets ongoing statutory income tax cuts continue, and tells the legislature to come back with a specific plan voters can actually vote on.

Act for Missouri comes down on **no** — because the destination is right, the path is wrong, and Missourians' right to approve their own taxes is not something we should suspend for any policy goal, no matter how worthy that goal might sound.

But this is your vote, your judgment, and your constitution. If you've read this far and conclude the trade is worth it, that is a defensible call, and one we respect.

Our job is to make sure your vote rests on what Amendment 5 actually does — and to tell you honestly where we land and why. Now you know both.

For our broader work on Missouri's tax structure and the legislative history of HJR 173, see act4mo.org.