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.