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Governor's actions hit area Medicaid patients, colleges, schools

By Crystal Thomas cthomas@joplinglobe.com Jul 2, 2017



Nikki Straw, of Joplin, will be watching her mailbox as the week goes by for a notice from MO HealthNet.

As her daughter is one of the 1 in 5 Jasper County residents who rely on Medicaid, Straw is afraid her daughter might be one of those receiving reduced assistance after Gov. Eric Greitens announced about \$250 million in spending cuts Friday afternoon to balance the state's budget.

Cuts had to be made because of an ongoing revenue shortfall, partially caused by a 2015 law that exempted corporations from paying taxes on sales made in other states. In the past 12 months, both Greitens and his predecessor, Gov. Jay Nixon, had cut about \$350 million from the state budget.

The Department of Social Services was cut by \$30 million. An increase to health care provider reimbursement rates was slashed, which will especially affect what the state will pay out to nursing homes. Along with signing budget bills and restricting funds, Greitens vetoed a bill that would have provided \$35.4 million to state assistance to Medicaid patients who need in-home health care.

As 32-year-old Joycelynn has autism and can't live on her own, Straw receives governmental assistance for home care, though "luckily" through federal instead of state aid, she said. However, her daughter relies on Medicaid for prescription assistance, along with doctor's visits to her psychiatrist, neurologist and hematologist.

She worries about less money being put aside for Medicaid, which serves not only low-income and elderly Missourians but also those with disabilities.

The bill the governor vetoed would have allowed the Office of Administration commissioner to select \$35.4 million of dedicated funds with cash balances to use for the Medicaid program. It was crafted by the Senate in an effort to save a tax credit that helps senior renters. Senators said the one-year fix would give seniors more notice that their tax credit could be taken away the next year. A Globe call to the Senate Appropriations Committee chairman was not returned.

"This was a clearly unconstitutional, last-minute budget gimmick," Greitens said in his veto message. "I won't sign an unconstitutional, one-time, fake fix to a real problem."

The bill Greitens vetoed passed in the last minute of the legislative session over the objections House Budget Chairman Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob.

"My opinion has not changed since the day we passed it," Fitzpatrick said Saturday. "If I were the governor, I would have vetoed it too."

Last week, Fitzpatrick had predicted a shortfall of about \$150 million. He added a revenue shortfall in one year meant the state had to reap twice as much revenue in the next year to keep up with predictions.

Fitzpatrick said that with the situation the governor was handed, he thought the cuts were fair. His primary concern was with the \$30 million cut to the Department of Social Services, which the governor said would be made up by the department finding "efficiencies."

"What efficiencies?" Fitzpatrick said. "That's what I'm questioning — where those savings actually are."

Fitzpatrick applauded the governor for keeping the \$48 million increase for school foundation formula intact. The \$15 million cut in school transportation still keeps a \$7 million increase over last year's funding, Fitzpatrick said.

Ron Lankford, Joplin School District interim finance director, said that for the last 10 years, the state has been lagging behind in what schools need for busing. Though the Joplin School District will take an about \$80,000 hit when it comes to busing, the district will survive, he said.

"If this is all K-12 has to endure, we can do it," Lankford said.

Lankford said the same can't be said of rural schools. The square mileage the Joplin School District covers compared with a more rural district, like McDonald County, is minuscule.

While K-12 kept its core funding, higher education will be cut an extra 3 percent. In the last round of budgets cuts, public universities and community colleges took the largest portion of cuts.

Before the announced cut, Missouri Southern State University planned making up a \$800,000 deficit with increased enrollment. Now with an additional \$620,000 cut, MSSU President Alan Marble said he can't imagine how the university will make up the money other than dipping into its reserve fund.

"We cut about everything you could think of without cutting vital programs," Marble said. "You need a history and English department."

He added that he predicts every university in the state will apply for tuition increases in the next year.

"The thing is, state funding will be what it was 15 years ago," Marble said. "If the state can't provide, we are going to have to turn to the students."

Like last year, Greitens once again restricted \$3 million set aside for the University of Missouri-Kansas City and MSSU dental school cooperative.

"That project will continue to be suspended," Marble said. The university is already in the hole by more than \$1 million to cover the cost of moving around programs and rehabbing buildings to make room for the dental school.

Though Crowder College will be cut by more than \$143,000, it will dip into its contingency fund set aside for budget restrictions, said its president, Jennifer Methvin.

Employees will still receive a 2 percent step-increase pay raise, though areas where the college wanted to add staffing will remain vacant.

"It is somewhat disappointing that at a time the state needs more skilled workers in our workforce, to pay taxes, resources are so slight," Methvin said. "It seems counterproductive in advancing our economy."

The brunt

Of the \$250 million cut on Friday, Gov. Eric Greitens restricted \$15 million of K-12 school busing money and made even deeper cuts to higher education. However, departments that service Medicaid will bear the brunt of the cuts.


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It's the Trump World Like Reply
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Tessa Pogue from Facebook 2 days ago

Why couldn't they curb MoDot spending? We certainly don't need more roundabouts or ridiculously complicated interchanges. Like Reply
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Ronnie Malven from Facebook 2 days ago

They have been cutting funding for schools for a while. It's odd to see a lottery place say how much they donated to school while they're busy cutting everything but sports. Of course, all kids who play sports in school will go on to be professional sports players. Like Reply



Leslie Merrick from Facebook

This is such a BIG surprise! The governor could care less about the people of this state!

2 days ago

Like Reply



Matt Luker from Facebook

This state? You haven't seen what Chris Christie did to New Jersey over the weekend I assume? They all suck the money out of their states.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Kim Stephens from Facebook

He didn't get any sun...he had a baseball hat on.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Linda Watts from Facebook

Thanks republicans for voting this pathetic excuse for a human into office.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Leonard Hopper from Facebook

Thanks liberal for degrading a human being instead of his policies and actions.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Noah Andrews from Facebook

The budget for elected officials and their salaries is \$340,000,000 but yeah make cuts to education

3 days ago

Like Reply



Leonard Hopper from Facebook

So, do we cut the number of reps in half and give them larger territories? This sounds reasonable

2 days ago

Like Reply



Noah Andrews from Facebook

or just stop giving them raises every year. if they get raises to account for inflation then the minimum wage should change for inflation. just seems like a fair trade.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Kim Stephens from Facebook

I agree Noah Andrews

2 days ago

Like Reply



Richard Davidson from Facebook

Health/human services and education make up almost 80% of the state budget. That's why they are always targets - because that's where most of the money goes. In perspective, the cuts are less than 3% of the total budget.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Dustin Schroyer from Facebook

But the sky is falling

2 days ago

Like Reply



Angela Dawn Low from Facebook

Balance who's budget?

3 days ago

Like Reply



Allison Golay Riddle from Facebook

These cuts will affect disabled individuals and seniors who can't work. As a result of these cuts, its more than likely people will end up in nursing homes. Guess who pays for nursing home care? At about the tune of \$3000-5000 per month in Missouri? Medicaid, unless you're independently wealthy. It's more cost effective to keep them in their homes than it is to ship them off into nursing homes.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Angie Lange from Facebook

Very well said.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Natalie King from Facebook

That's about the most uninformed statement.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Allison Golay Riddle from Facebook

Natalie King how so?

2 days ago

Like Reply



Brooke Pearish from Facebook

It is more effective to keep seniors in their homes. It's a fraction of the price to pay an in home care company.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Yvonne Clifton Campbell from Facebook

Except most people can't afford nursing homes because their so expensive so instead the disabled and elderly and poor people get screwed again while the middle class and rich people are just fine but their the ones complaining!

2 days ago

Like Reply



Mary Crane from Facebook

Natalie King can you explain or are you just blowing off. Do you want to stay in your home or go to a nursing home if were you?

2 days ago

Like Reply



Johnny Tipping from Facebook

Hm, people talk about putting the elderly in nursing homes.....what not have the children take care of their parent and have a home health nurse come visit...at least the elderly can be with family instead of strangers.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Allison Golay Riddle from Facebook

Johnny Tipping that's an ideal situation and many do that but not everybody has family and not every family member has the setup at home to accommodate someone that needs skilled nursing care. Or when a memory unit is needed if they have Dementia or Alzheimers. Another example of why it makes more sense to keep people at home.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Allison Golay Riddle from Facebook

Yvonne Clifton Campbell The people that don't have the money to pay for a nursing home will end up drawing Medicaid which will end up costing the state more in the long run. Which is why it makes more sense to provide supports to keep the person in their home longer.

2 days ago

Like Reply



John Jackson from Facebook

Crystal Thomas should look out - the local liars (Charlie Davis, etc.) will be demanding that you not tell on them and their misdeeds in Jefferson City. The rich need their tax cuts. The workers need their wages cut, granny can rest easy in a grass bed on your lawn and the poor kids - well they don't vote or give money. Trickle down will get to them.

3 days ago

Like Reply



jumpinjezebel

Crystal Thomas should look out the local liars (Charlie Davis, etc.) will be demanding that you not tell on them and their misdeeds in Jefferson City. The rich need their tax cuts. The workers need their wages cut, granny can rest easy in a grass bed on your lawn and the poor kids - well they don't vote or give money.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Noah Andrews from Facebook

So willing to cut a childs education just to let corporations keep dodging taxes. It's time we look at the other prosperous states and take note.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Larry Swinehart from Facebook

Like Illinois and California? <https://taxfoundation.org/some-corporations-pay-zero/> there is more going on than what the media will portray. The modern media makes it's money from stirring up emotions.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Noah Andrews from Facebook

3 days ago

I dont pay attention to the media anyways but California has a 21 billion dollar surplus after raising taxes on corporations and that's the same almost everywhere they decided to do that. I don't know how anyone's priorities can be so messed up that you put corporate profits ahead of childhood education. there is nothing I can say to make you care about other people

Like Reply



Ronald Green from Facebook

Maybe the money was misappropriated in the first place?

3 days ago

Like Reply



Ronald Green from Facebook

It would nice if we could afford to solve every problem in the world, but we can't. Tough as it is, you have to say no sometimes. Conversely, if we would stop sending the tax base overseas via off shoring, if we would not replace higher wage (higher taxes) Americans with lower wage and off the books illegals, maybe we would have the money for these programs. Maybe with more people working we might not need as many of them.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Sidra Zaidi from Facebook

Ronald Green Sending the tax base overseas? This article literally says that cuts to programs that help children, seniors and the disabled were made because MISSOURI has become a tax haven. A 2015 law allows corporations to not pay taxes for sales made in other states.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Pam Devins from Facebook

Schools should never be hit. A child's education means everything.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Ronald Green from Facebook

Schools can waste money just like any other organization. Bucks don't automatically equal quality.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Ann Courtney from Facebook

Then we should refuse to pay for the stupid Fed-mandated standardized testing, if we're going to cut education\$\$.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Shara Camarena-bryant from Facebook

It's sad to cut education period. We already have a lot of teachers using their own money to buy supplies for their classes.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Charlie Mckinzie-Lingenfelter from Facebook

Be thankful that with the cuts your schools can stay open. Here in Illinois most can't survive this coming school year.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Clara Sue Johnson from Facebook

STOP giving our state reps MONEY to remodel their F_____ING offices!

3 days ago

1 Like Reply



James Harman from Facebook

Sounds like the governor doing governor stuff. The last governor spent more than was coming in, this governor had to balance the check book or missouri will end up the same as Illinois.

3 days ago

Like Reply



jumpinzebel

Too bad you're wrong. Missouri always has had to balance their "checkbook". Missouri will end up like Kansas if the Republicans keep giving money to the rich and then having to throw your grandma out of her nursing home.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Sidra Zaidi from Facebook

This article clearly says that the last governor also made budget cuts

3 days ago

Like Reply

James Harman from Facebook

3 days ago



Agreed. Not enough, to balance from loss of revenue versus spending.

Like Reply



Chris Fenske from Facebook

Have to balance the budget in Missouri. It is an amendment and the law

3 days ago

Like Reply



Tehya Deardorff from Facebook

You know it's against the law to have an unbalanced state budget, right? Might want to read up a little before you speak.

2 days ago

Like Reply



James Harman from Facebook

Right, tehya, I think you must be taking my posts out of context.

2 days ago

Like Reply



Miriam Campbell from Facebook

I believe a balanced budget is required by law so why blame the current Governor?

3 days ago

Like Reply



Miriam Campbell from Facebook

Oh and since when was Medicaid ever cut!

3 days ago

Like Reply



Noah Andrews from Facebook

The current governor decides where to make the cuts, that's why we blame him. Cutting education is never the answer

3 days ago

Like Reply



Dustin Schroyer from Facebook

About time someone steps up to cut fat out of these. Media find and prints a heart felt story so everyone feels bad people you have really got to use some common sense seriously

3 days ago

Like Reply



Noah Andrews from Facebook

My common sense tells me that cutting education is not the way to balance a budget.

3 days ago

1 Like Reply



Stephanie Brown from Facebook

The elderly and children is who will be hurt by this..

3 days ago

1 Like Reply



Amber R Howard from Facebook

Yes, because government spends money so well and has just been pissing it away on the kids and elderly. It's the only logical place to cut.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Dustin Schroyer from Facebook

Yes the elderly and the children \U0001f62dshut up already! Congratulations you fell for it

3 days ago

Like Reply



Linda Watts from Facebook

Hopefully this chicken will come to roost at your house someday. Karma loves people like you.

3 days ago

Like Reply



Stephanie Brown from Facebook

Dustin Schroyer ..people are allowed to disagree...and no I most certainly will not shut UP..if you do not like it than move on.

3 days ago

Like Reply

Mary Crane from Facebook

2 days ago



Dustin I will pray for you and your attitude. Do you have no feelings for these people at all?? I feel so bad for you. God told us to take care of the hungry and sick.

Like Reply



Dustin Schroyer from Facebook
Yes us not the government

2 days ago



Mary Crane from Facebook
Are you going to do it out of your own pocket or the tax money you pay the government to take care of these people?

2 days ago



Mary Crane from Facebook
Can you afford it out of your pocket? That is what I pay taxes for. I don't pay them to support our politicians before the poor. They cut the poor and not themselves. Nothing they do towards health care cuts or medicade cuts effect them. The budget needs to balance so let's cut the poor at the bottom. That is the Christian way!!! NOT!!!

2 days ago



Dustin Schroyer from Facebook
Mary Crane nope I can out of my own but I also believe in giving it all to God FYI I pay my tithes which I happily give my 10% or more when I can which I know where it goes I would rather pay tithes than taxes politician don't get none of my tithes Your way of see things is fairly backward if you want to compare being a Christian The only people I will ever support being on any kind of assistance is unemployment though personally never used it and that's a max of 6 months and if someone is on social security wether by age or disability. NEVER because someone wants to sit around and do nothing. http://biblehub.com/nasb/2_thessalonians/3.htm

18 hours ago



Dustin Schroyer from Facebook
The biggest problem is we have to any wanting someone else to do our work for us

18 hours ago

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Crystal Thomas



