Protests Spark Around Springfield

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SPRINGFIELD -- We have seen an increase in activism lately around the nation with people taking to the streets to voice their opinions.

And it's been no different in the Queen City. Just over the past weekend, at least three rallies sparked around Springfield against the Republican agenda on several issues at the state and national level.

At the same time, Republicans from all over Missouri gathered here for Lincoln days.

"Democracy doesn't just happen around elections," said Crystal Brigman Mahaney, deputy director of Missouri Health Care for All. "The way that democracy works is the engaged citizen is involved, and that's what's happening now."

Dozens of activists showed up Friday afternoon in support of transgender students in downtown Springfield.

"As long as they are peaceful protesters every had the right to be protesting," said Darrell Proctor, a State Committee member for the 30th Senatorial District, attending Lincoln Days.
Later Friday another protest against Senator Roy Blunt's backing of the new head of the EPA.

"I want to thank them for voicing their opinions," said Chris Beyer, legislative director of the Missouri Federation of College Republicans. "I would encourage them to write their legislators, whether that's the governor's office or the Senator's office because that's how we create dialogue."

Saturday morning another action brought out about 300 supporters.

"They are realizing that the decisions of our congressional leaders make really have consequences of their everyday lives," said Mahaney.

Those activists were urging the Senator to speak with constituents about several issues.

"I think in many cases they represent a small fraction of the population and more to the left of what the mainstream population of Missouri would probably go along with," said Proctor.

One of the main topics - protecting the Affordable Care Act.

"Even though Republicans in Congress have been talking repealing ACA for over six years we haven't really seen a plan," said Mahaney.

But there are those who agree with repealing and replacing a program they say hasn't proved to be affordable.

"I'm a nurse and I'm telling you it is not working," said Mary Hill, a republican voter attending Lincoln Days. "It's not healthcare if you can't access it."

But whatever the opinion of constituents, one state elected official says the more - the merrier.

"Regardless of where they come from whatever their differences are, if we are all looking for the solution, the more people we have involved the better off we are," said Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft.
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