



March 2018 Legislative Chair Report

LOCAL INFORMATION:

General Election

The Missouri General Election will be held on Tuesday, April 3rd. This is generally when most school districts elect new school board members. Remember PTAs, due to our 501(c)(3) status, cannot support or oppose candidates running for school board. However, PTAs can host candidates' forums and publish candidates' questionnaires. Such forums and questionnaires serve a dual function of informing community members about their choices among candidates and demonstrating the value of PTA. Occasionally individual candidates will contact PTAs and ask if they can address members during a unit meeting. Under IRS guidelines allowing an individual candidate a platform to speak during a unit meeting is seen as showing preferential treatment. Simply put, if a candidate would like to address your membership during an upcoming meeting in order to accommodate that request your unit would also have to invite all the other candidates to address the membership during the same meeting. If you have a candidate who requests access to your membership (via membership lists, ads in newsletters, pass out candidate information, etc.) just let them know that you are unable to accommodate them due to your 501(c)(3) status.

[Missouri PTA Position Statement on Student Led Walk Outs and Marches](#)

The tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School has recently brought gun violence into the national focus. PTA has a long history of advocating for the safety of children and supporting efforts to protect them from gun violence. Your membership may have questions about upcoming student led walkout and marches. We believe that it is important that our association in no way co-opts the efforts of our students. It is their voice, not ours. Above all, we believe it is essential that we listen to what our students have to say. As we listen to our students and our children, our resolve will be strengthened and our advocacy better informed. Missouri PTA has adopted the following guidelines for units seeking guidance for these student led activities.

We support students' rights to speak as these rights are protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.



This is a critical time for all of us to respect the student voice, observe their emerging movement, and listen to what they have to say.

We recognize and appreciate that our students, like all of us, want and need to be heard.

Our students are the ones living in the current environment in schools, and it is important that we learn from their experience and viewpoint.

As parents, we all need to listen to our children's unique voice, and it is especially critical that we do so now.

It is urgent that we work together to find solutions and make meaningful policy changes to ensure that all students have a safe environment in which to thrive and learn.

Every student deserves to learn and grow in a safe environment.

It remains a top priority of National PTA to promote safety for children and youth and improve education. As we listen to our students and our children, our resolve will be strengthened and our advocacy better informed.

Missouri PTA encourages student to contact their legislators. This can be either with letters and phone calls or with social media. If you are unsure of who your legislators are click [here](#).

Carla Wiese, VP Legislation and Advocacy

STATE INFORMATION:

House Bill 2540: Missouri PTA opposes any measure that would take away funding for schools in Missouri. The loss of revenue generated from individual and corporate income tax is a large portion of funding for Missouri schools. Without quality schools it will be hard to attract new businesses and may even cause the loss of existing businesses, which hurts all of Missouri.

In the current fiscal year, the tax is budgeted to reduce \$669 million for the general revenue budget. It is estimated to cut vital services \$144 million. These cuts would come at a time when Missouri is already struggling to meet its budget needs due to previously enacted tax changes and would require additional and steep cuts to services including education.



This bill would place Missouri on a fiscal path that would make Kansas' recent experience with tax cuts look like a cake walk. This bill would provide large tax cuts to wealthy Missourians, at the expense of everyone else. HB 2540 would give Missourians that earn the most the biggest tax cuts in 2019, while most working Missourians would see little impact. In fact, an analysis by the Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy found that 91% of the tax cut would flow to the wealthiest 20% of Missourians. As in the Kansas experience, Missouri would have little alternative but to move toward regressive consumption taxes (sales tax), increasing the burden on working Missourians.

Schools are already struggling in part due to gaps in the budget created by the passage of [SB 641](#) and [SB 1025](#) in 2016. When Missouri is unable to fully fund its portion of schools every district and every child suffers. This can be felt most strongly in districts that are struggling to pay for the cost of education due to lowering property values and tax revenue. The corporate tax is vital to these schools to help to make the playing field level for all Missouri children no matter the school district.

[HB 1255](#) - Nick Schroer [SB 793](#)- Wayne Wallingford

Requires children under the age of 18 to be prosecuted for most criminal offenses in juvenile courts unless the child is certified as an adult. MO PTA supports these bills. These are the bills that we are starting our student advocacy campaign around this month. It has been PTA's long held position to support efforts and legislation that prohibits the incarceration of youth in adult facilities.

HB 1255 Has been voted out of Committee and will be up for a full House vote.

SB 793 has been voted out of the Senate and has been assigned to the General Laws committee in the House. This is a direct result of our #18in18 campaign. MO PTA submitted testimony for the hearing and has published 2 JC/DC Alerts. THANK YOU for your help. Please keep posting to social media:

#18in18 because 17 is too young! @molegislature @missouriPTA @RaisetheAgeMO

NATIONAL NEWS:

National PTA Resolution on [Gun Safety and Violence Prevention](#)



Given National PTA's history of advocacy for the safety of children and youth, National PTA supports federal efforts to protect children and youth from gun violence. National PTA also advocates restricting access to guns from persons who may endanger public safety. School safety is a critical priority for all parents, educators, students and community members that cannot be taken for granted. We must make every attempt to reduce violence, especially incidents that involve firearms. National PTA recognizes the importance of parent involvement in the decision-making process in the development and implementation of school safety policies, including crisis response plans.

National PTA recognizes the importance of a safe learning environment in attaining the highest level of student learning and achievement. National PTA believes the most effective day-to-day school climate to be gun-free, but defers to local collaborative decision-making to allow for the presence of law enforcement deployed in community-oriented policing. Examples of ways to improve youth safety and to restrict guns to only responsible owners include advocating for the following:

- gun safety locks and other safety devices to prevent young children from accidentally discharging a gun
- alternative educational settings for youth who have brought a firearm to school, along with appropriate evaluation and counseling
- restrict Internet gun sales, including kits that can be used to make/modify guns
- enforce federal and state minimum age requirements for handgun purchases
- raise the minimum age to 21 to be allowed to buy a handgun from non-licensed dealers
- allow at least three business days to conduct background checks
- require non-licensed dealers to conduct background checks and fill out proper paperwork so that guns can be traced
- increase penalties for the transfer of handguns or semiautomatic assault weapons to juveniles for use in a crime
- revoke the license of dealers who knowingly sell to minors
- establish education programs to teach students, parents, and community members about gun safety and violence prevention
- prevent juveniles who commit violent crimes from buying guns as adults
- support state and federal funding initiatives for the research of the causes and effects of gun violence



These and other measures are some of the ways National PTA believes that gun violence can be decreased in order to make our schools, as well as our communities, safer. National PTA believes we must enact legislation that will reduce gun violence and help protect all children and youth.

Adopted by the 1999 Board of Directors

Amended by the 2013 Board of Directors

Amended by the 2016 Board of Directors

National PTA Advocates for Gun Safety and Mental Health Services to Protect Children

ALEXANDRIA, Va., (Feb. 21, 2018)—National PTA joins students, families, educators, school administrators, community leaders and the nation in grief over the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and all acts of gun violence involving children and youth. This kind of loss is unimaginable, and our country has experienced far too many gun-related tragedies. It is urgent that we work together to find solutions and make meaningful changes to keep our children safe. “Every child deserves to learn in an environment that is safe and to have the opportunity to grow into a happy and healthy adult,” said Jim Accomando, president of National PTA. “Our top priorities as a nation should be to protect our children, meet the needs of the whole child and ensure every child reaches their full potential. It is critical that solutions are enacted to eliminate gun violence.” National PTA urges Congress to adopt legislation that would help prevent future tragedies from occurring while preserving the lawful use of firearms for sport and personal protection. National PTA has a strong history of advocating for laws and regulations in the areas of gun safety and violence prevention and supports the following policy recommendations:

- Require universal background checks and a license to purchase a firearm (Position Statement on Gun Safety and Violence Prevention, 2016).
- Re-enact a federal ban on the sale and possession of military-style assault weapons (Position Statement on Firearms, 1990).
- Lift any ban on research that studies the causes and effects of gun violence (Resolution on the Sale, Resale and Destruction of Firearms, 2017). National PTA also advocates for preventative measures to educate students, educators and community members on firearm safety and violence prevention, such as:

everychild. onevoice.



- Inclusion of violence prevention and intervention strategies in public schools and community programs and services (Resolution on Violence Prevention, 1995).
- Promotion of public education campaigns to alert parents and community members to the devastating effects of firearm-related violence (Resolution on Firearm Safety and Awareness, 1996). At the same time, National PTA urges federal, state and local policymakers to prioritize mental health education, early intervention, prevention and access to school and community-based mental health personnel and services, so that all children can reach their fullest potential (Position Statement on Early Identification and Interventions for Children with Mental Health Needs, 2017). National PTA has long been committed to providing improved mental health programs and services to children, youth and their families and believes that all children and youth have the right to mental health treatment. National PTA recommends:
 - Federal, state and local policies prioritize outreach and education—including professional development for all school-based employees—in schools and communities regarding childhood mental health. Media Contact Heidi May Wilson, National PTA hmay@PTA.org, (703) 518-1242
- Resources are specifically provided to build mental and behavioral health system capacity within schools and communities to ensure students can receive a proactive continuum of behavioral and mental health services.
- States and school districts provide the necessary resources to ensure adequate ratios of school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and school nurses, who are the most qualified professionals to provide school-based mental health services.

“Resolutions and position statements inform PTA's advocacy efforts on behalf of kids and schools,” added Nathan R. Monell, CAE, National PTA executive director. “National PTA urges our members and all child advocates to reach out to their members of Congress and state and local policymakers to ensure schools and communities have the resources and capacity to provide a safer and healthier environment for all students.”