



“A GAPING ETHICS WOUND”
THE REVOLVING DOOR IN MISSOURI'S CAPITOL

A Clean Missouri Report - July 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Missouri state legislators can become paid lobbyists shortly after leaving office. That means that while in office, a senator or representative may be considering how best to get a job with an interest they regulate, instead of focusing on how best to serve their constituents.

It doesn't have to be this way. Voters have a chance this November to increase integrity and take power away from special interests by voting for Clean Missouri to create a meaningful two-year waiting period before a legislator can become a paid lobbyist.

- **All four Republican candidates for governor in 2016 [condemned](#) the current six-month waiting period, passed that year, for politicians wanting to lobby.**

Former US Attorney Catherine Hanaway said at a debate shortly after the current law was passed:

["They passed a six month ban. I think that is maybe Exhibit A of how our legislature is breaching the public trust."](#)

- **The Clean Missouri measure will require politicians to wait two years before becoming lobbyists**, after the conclusion of their final legislative session. [Initiative text](#) is as follows:

After the effective date of this section, no person serving as a member of or employed by the General Assembly shall act or serve as a paid lobbyist, register as a paid lobbyist, or solicit prospective employers or clients to represent as a paid lobbyist during the time of such service until the expiration of two calendar years after the conclusion of the session of the general assembly in which the member or employee last served and where such service was after the effective date of this section. ...

[Read the full Clean Missouri initiative policy here.](#)

"It fuels a perception that lawmakers are casting votes to curry favor with potential future employers."

Former D.C. super-lobbyist **Jack Abramoff** [has talked openly about](#) how special interests (his former clients) would tease future work as a way to gain influence:

"When we would become friendly with an office and they were important to us, and the chief of staff was a competent person, I would say or my staff would say to him or her at some point, 'You know, when you're done working on the Hill, we'd very much like you to consider coming to work for us.' Now the moment I said that to them or any of our staff said that to 'em, that was it. We owned them. And what does that mean? Every request from our office, every request of our clients, everything that we want, they're gonna do. And not only that, they're gonna think of things we can't think of to do."

As the *Kansas City Star* [reported recently](#), there has been bipartisan condemnation of Missouri legislators quickly becoming lobbyists:

To critics, the dynamic [of legislators going straight from lawmaking to lobbying] erodes public trust and runs the risk of corrupting policy. It fuels a perception that lawmakers are casting votes to curry favor with potential future employers. ...

*"You have people in their last few years of office who, rather than thinking about what's best for their constituents, instead may be thinking about that next job," said **Rep. Jay Barnes**, a Jefferson City Republican.*

All four of the Republican candidates for governor in 2016 condemned the current 6-month waiting period as insufficient

For years, there were no limits of any kind for how quickly a state legislator could become a paid lobbyist. In the spring of 2016, the General Assembly finally established a six-month waiting period — but it was [roundly condemned as inadequate](#):

- **Former U.S Attorney Catherine Hanaway:** ["They passed a six month ban. I think that is maybe Exhibit A of how our legislature is breaching the public trust."](#)

- **Former Lt. Governor Peter Kinder:** "The Lt. Governor's stated position on ethics reform is that there should be a two-year cooling off period before legislators can become lobbyists."
- **John Brunner:** "Mr. Brunner does not believe the revolving door ban recently approved goes far enough."
- **Eric Greitens:** "When I'm Governor, we'll end the culture of cashing in with a simple rule: For every year you serve in office, you have to wait a year before you can do paid lobbying in Missouri."

"A very weak Band-Aid on a gaping ethics wound"

Political science and ethics experts had similar assessments.

- **Dr. Wally Siewert**, then director of the Center for Ethics in Public Life at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, [called the bill](#) "a very weak Band-Aid on a gaping ethics wound."

THE CLEAN MISSOURI MEASURE WILL REQUIRE POLITICIANS TO WAIT TWO YEARS BEFORE BECOMING LOBBYISTS AFTER CONCLUSION OF THEIR FINAL TERM

Because Clean Missouri would require legislators to wait two years from the end of their final legislative session, it would mean the following solutions:

- No more resigning early to lobby, leaving constituents unrepresented.
- No more taking lobbying jobs immediately after giving favors to special interests.
- No more cashing in on relationships with all of a legislator's current colleagues.

Clean Missouri will also:

- **Eliminate almost all lobbyist gifts in the General Assembly**, by banning any gift worth more than \$5.
- **Lower campaign contribution limits for state legislative candidates** to limit the influence of big money and lobbyists in state government.
 - Establish new campaign contribution limits for General Assembly candidates — \$2,500 for state senate, and \$2,000 for state house.
 - Limit the ability of individuals and organizations to circumvent caps by counting money from single-source committees towards totals for original, actual donors.

- Stop legislative fundraising on state property.
- **Require that legislative records be open to the public** by ensuring that the legislature operate under the same open records law as other public entities in Missouri.
- **Ensure neither political party is given an unfair advantage when new maps are drawn after the next census**, by adding criteria for fairness and competitiveness of the overall map, which will be reviewed by a citizen commission and keep compact and contiguous districts.

Volunteers from the Clean Missouri coalition turned in 346,956 signatures from every county in the state to be certified for the November 6 ballot.

A growing number of Republicans, Democrats, independents, and editorial boards across the state have publicly endorsed the full package of desperately-needed reforms in the Clean Missouri initiative, including the former U.S. Senator John Danforth, the *Washington Missourian*, *Kansas City Star*, and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Questions?

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