



GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI
JEFFERSON CITY
65102

ERIC R. GREITENS
GOVERNOR

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February 2, 2017

Fellow citizens of Missouri,

For decades, insiders, special interests, and lobbyists have made a mess of our budget. They've let programs get more expensive, year after year—without ever asking if those programs are serving our citizens well. They've fought to protect their pet projects and their slice of the pie—without any sense of how their choices affect the people of Missouri.

Here's the truth: Our budget is broken. Because our businesses have struggled these last few years, the taxes those businesses pay into the government are down. Special interest tax credits took another big chunk of money. Finally, Obamacare has raised the cost of healthcare around the country and has sent our state's healthcare expenses soaring.

We must come together, tighten our belts, be smart and wise with our tax dollars, and work our way out of this hole by bringing more jobs with higher pay to the people of Missouri. Hard decisions have to be made, and we won't run from them. The Fiscal Year 2018 budget makes more than \$572 million in reductions across state government. These cuts were targeted, to the extent possible, at programs with no track record of success, and services that are duplicated elsewhere in government.

My administration is committed to funding the core priorities of government and to watching over every single tax dollar. We have protected funds for our K-12 classrooms, invested in programs essential to public safety, and honored the state's pension and health care obligations. We've also tried to protect victims of domestic violence, invested in the fight against opioid abuse, and increased funding for children with special needs. We've also put some money away for the expenses we know our state will face down the road—the same way a family saves for a rainy day.

We had to make some difficult choices. The lobbyists and insiders won't be happy with some of what's in this budget, and that's because this is a conservative, responsible budget that tries to do right by Missouri's people. Not every problem that we're facing in the state of Missouri can be solved over the next week, the next month, or the next year. But the recommendations in this budget are a strong start, and they will help to get our state in economic shape again so we can grow our way out of this mess. I look forward to working with you all as we take Missouri in a new direction.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric R. Greitens".

Eric R. Greitens
Governor