



January 29, 2026

The Honorable Rep. Tricia Byrnes
Chair
Special Committee on Intergovernmental
Affairs

The Honorable Rep. Philip Oehlerking
Vice-Chair
Special Committee on Intergovernmental
Affairs

The Honorable Rep. Bridget Walsh Moore
Ranking Minority Member
Special Committee on Intergovernmental
Affairs

Chair Byrnes, Vice-Chair Oehlerking, Ranking Minority Member Moore, and all members of the Special Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, my name is Graham Owens and I serve as Policy Fellow for Americans for Prosperity, the nation's largest grassroots organization dedicated to breaking barriers to opportunity. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on HB 2559.

My testimony today focuses on a straightforward but fundamental principle: major regulatory decisions should not take effect without approval from the elected branch of government. Major rules often function as statewide policy decisions with far-reaching economic impacts, and under current law these decisions can be made without any affirmative vote by the people's elected representatives. HB 2559 strengthens legislative oversight of major rules, ensuring that agencies do not impose large economic burdens without clear legislative authorization.

This reform enhances accountability, protects Missourians from costly or unwarranted regulatory burdens, and aligns the state with a growing national trend toward responsible rulemaking oversight.

I. Major Regulations Receive Too Little Democratic Oversight

When agencies develop significant rules using powers delegated to them from the Administrative Procedure and Review Act, they effectively make policy choices with real economic consequences. Yet under current Missouri law, many of these high impact rules can take effect without a direct vote from the legislature. HB 2559 addresses this gap by requiring legislative approval for major rules—meaning rules that impose substantial economic impacts on Missouri families, businesses, or local governments.

II. HB 2559 Complements the Existing JCAR Process

Missouri is already home to an important oversight body—the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR)—which reviews proposed rules for compliance with statutory authority and

procedural requirements. JCAR plays a critical role in ensuring agencies do not exceed the boundaries of the laws the legislature enacts. However, under the current system, even when JCAR identifies significant concerns, major rules can still take effect without an affirmative vote of the legislature.

HB 2559 complements the existing JCAR process by adding a higher level of accountability for *major* rules—those with substantial economic impact—by requiring explicit legislative approval before such rules become binding. This affirmative approval requirement is appropriately calibrated to the stakes involved: when a rule carries significant economic consequences for Missouri families, businesses, and local governments, it deserves the higher standard of democratic legitimacy that only a legislative vote can provide. HB 2559 preserves the strengths of JCAR’s existing procedural review while ensuring that the most consequential policies receive the direct consent of elected lawmakers.

III. How HB 2559 Works

HB 2559 provides a clear, commonsense process:

- Agencies continue drafting and proposing rules as they do today, with the only added requirement that proposed rules receive written approval from the Governor.
- Major rules that cost governments, individuals, or businesses more than \$250,000 per year must receive legislature approval through a concurrent resolution, followed by the Governor’s signature or veto and a potential override by the legislature.
 - Emergency rules or rules required to comply with federal law or obtain federal funding are exempt.
- If the legislature does not adopt the concurrent resolution, the rule does not take effect.

IV. A Growing National Movement for REINS-Style Reform

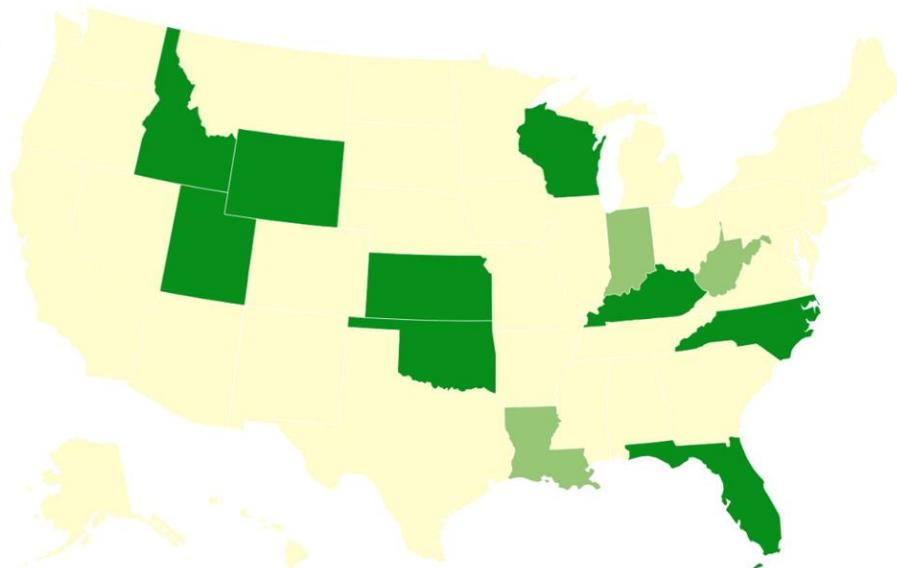
Across the country, a broad bipartisan movement is underway to restore full legislative oversight of major rules. Legislatures are introducing versions of the [Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny](#) (REINS) Act. To date, nine states have a REINS Act, and another three states have a REINS-like process. Among Missouri’s neighbors, Kansas, Kentucky, and Oklahoma have full legislative review of major rules. This reform is no longer theoretical—states across the political spectrum have recognized that the legislative branch must provide significant oversight of major administrative rules.

States with REINS Act

Nine states with full legislative review of significant agency rules. Three states with REINS-like processes.

Legislative Approval of Major Rules

- No REINS
- Partial REINS
- Full REINS



Map: Americans for Prosperity • Created with Datawrapper

Missouri is surrounded by states that are reinforcing separation of powers and strengthening legislative oversight. Failing to act risks leaving Missouri as an outlier—one that offers fewer procedural protections from major regulations to its citizens and businesses than neighboring states.

These states—ranging from Kentucky to Wisconsin to Florida—have recognized that improved legislative review leads to more transparent, accountable, and predictable rulemaking. Their experience shows that REINS-style reforms do not halt necessary regulations; they simply ensure that major policies receive the same democratic legitimacy as statutes.

V. The Solution is Clear: Pass HB 2559

HB 2559 offers a focused and practical reform that ensures major regulations receive the same level of democratic accountability as major policy decisions. By requiring legislative approval for rules with significant economic impacts, the General Assembly can ensure that high-stakes regulatory actions reflect the will of the people of Missouri. This reform strengthens transparency, reinforces the proper balance between agencies and the legislature, and aligns Missouri with proven best practices in other states.

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity, I urge the General Assembly to adopt HB 2559 and affirm that in Missouri, the authority to approve major policy decisions remains where it belongs—with the elected representatives of the people.

Sincerely,

Graham Owens, Policy Fellow
Americans for Prosperity Missouri