



# Principles of Missouri Governance

The Missouri Constitution is built upon a set of very precise principles which are concisely presented in its first five clauses. The balance of that seminal document must be understood in light of those principles.

## Preamble Missouri Constitution

**Everything** *We the people of Missouri, with profound reverence for the **Supreme Ruler of the Universe**, and grateful for His goodness, do establish this constitution for the better government of the state.*  
is subordinate  
to God

## The Bill of Rights and Declaration of Duty

In order to assert our rights, acknowledge our duties, and proclaim the principles on which our government is founded, we declare:

### Article I, Section 1

**Government is subordinate to the people.**

*That all political power is vested in and derived from the people; that all government of right originates from the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.*

### Article I, Section 2

**The purpose of government is to protect the liberty, property, and economic freedom of the people.**

*That all constitutional government is intended to promote the general welfare of the people; that all persons have a natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and the enjoyment of the gains of their own industry; that all persons are created equal and are entitled to equal rights and opportunity under the law; that to give security to these things is the principal office of government, and that when government does not confer this security, it fails in its chief design.*

### Article I, Section 3

**The people of Missouri are sovereign.**

*That the people of this state have the inherent, sole and exclusive right to regulate the internal government and police thereof, and to alter and abolish their constitution and form of government whenever they may deem it necessary to their safety and happiness, provided such change be not repugnant to the Constitution of the United States.*

### Article I, Section 4

**Missouri is a sovereign state.**

*That Missouri is a free and independent state, subject only to the Constitution of the United States; that all proposed amendments to the Constitution of the United States qualifying or affecting the individual liberties of the people or which in any wise may impair the right of local self-government belonging to the people of this state, should be submitted to conventions of the people.*



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The Missouri Constitution takes into account the fallibility of mankind and the temptations that accompany power. Therefore, it sets clear and concise limits on the legislative power the People loan to their elected representatives.

## Oath of Office

*I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the state of Missouri, and faithfully perform the duties of my office, and that I will not knowingly receive, directly or indirectly, any money or other valuable thing for the performance or nonperformance of any act or duty pertaining to my office, other than the compensation allowed by law.*

## Limits on Legislative Power

### Article III, Section 21

*Can not change a bill's purpose.*

*The style of the laws of this state shall be: "Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows." No law shall be passed except by bill, and no bill shall be so amended in its passage through either house as to change its original purpose. Bills may originate in either house and may be amended or rejected by the other. Every bill shall be read by title on three different days in each house.*

### Article III, Section 23

*Can not have more than one Subject per bill.*

*No bill shall contain more than one subject which shall be clearly expressed in its title, except bills enacted under the third exception in section 37 of this article and general appropriation bills, which may embrace the various subjects and accounts for which moneys are appropriated.*

### Article III, Section 40(30)

*Limitations on local and special laws.*

*The general assembly shall not pass any local or special law: ...where a general law can be made applicable, and whether a general law could have been made applicable is a judicial question to be judicially determined without regard to any legislative assertion on that subject.*

### Article III, Section 42

*Must provide notice of local and special laws..*

*No local or special law shall be passed unless a notice, setting forth the intention to apply therefor and the substance of the contemplated law, shall have been published in the locality where the matter or thing to be affected is situated at least thirty days prior to the introduction of the bill into the general assembly and in the manner provided by law. Proof of publication shall be filed with the general assembly before the act shall be passed and the notice shall be recited in the act.*