Title of proposal: Establish the Senior Services Growth and Development Program

Provide a summary of the problem or issue this subject will address:
The senior population in Missouri is growing while funding is decreasing. Important senior programs such as nutritional meals, health care and home care are being denied to seniors due to lack of funding. Cutting benefits and reducing services is counterproductive to the growing needs of the senior population in Missouri. This sustainable, permanent funding source offers a logical solution to the problem of funding for senior services without adding a tax or adding new government agencies.

Describe persons who will benefit from passage of a proposal on this subject:
Missouri Seniors who are currently unable to access services due to lack of adequate funding. Funds will be used to grow and develop senior services provided by Area Agencies on Aging and senior centers that are designed to keep seniors independent and at home.

Describe how this will work once enacted (to extent applicable, identify agencies, organizations responsible for implementation, resources to be utilized, time frames & deadlines):
Beginning January 1, 2020, the director of the Department of Revenue shall deposit 10% of the premium tax collected from certain insurance companies and associations in the "Senior Services Growth and Development Program Fund". The monies collected shall be placed in a special fund in the state treasury and the Department of Health and Senior Services shall disburse the funds to the Area Agencies on Aging based on the intra-state funding formula. This fund does not supplant current funding streams. All Area Agencies shall report annually to the Department of Health and Senior Services, the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions, Professional Registration, and the General Assembly on the distribution and use of the funds.
Title of proposal: Revision of MoRx

Provide a summary of the problem or issue this subject will address:
In 2017, the Missouri General Assembly approved extending the Sunset clause for Mo Rx program, one that helps countless older adults receive assistance with paying for prescription drugs that are so costly that these adults must decide whether to purchase food or medically necessary drugs. The 2017 Legislation eliminated low-income Medicare only eligible participants that impacted 60,000 plus older Missourians. This legislation will put those Medicare only low income back on the program and assure that they receive medicines necessary to improve their quality of life. Prior to 2017 the MoRx served 242,000 plus Missourians. Senior citizens are living longer and more prescription medicines are needed to keep them healthy and independent.

Describe persons who will benefit from passage of a proposal on this subject:
60,000 individuals previously eliminated (July 1, 2017) from the MoRx program. Missouri residents who have a Medicare prescription plan (either Part D or Part C) and an annual income of *At or below $29,140 for a married couple or *At or below $21,660 for a single person.

Describe how this will work once enacted (to extent applicable, identify agencies, organizations responsible for implementation, resources to be utilized, time frames & deadlines):
MoRx is Missouri’s new State Pharmacy Assistance Program replacing the Missouri Senior Rx Program. MoRx was created by the 93rd General Assembly to coordinate benefits with Medicare’s (Part D) Prescription Drug Program and to provide additional assistance for prescription drug costs to Missourians in need.

For more information see:
https://ltgov.mo.gov/assistance-seniors/missouri-rx-prescription-drug-program/
Title of proposal: Increase funding for Home-Delivered Meals and Congregate Meals

Provide a summary of the problem or issue this subject will address:
Because the cost of living continues to rise and gasoline prices remain in flux, senior nutrition programs across the state are struggling to adjust for the rise in costs related to purchasing food, replacing aging equipment, meeting operating expenses, and finding volunteers and/or staff to deliver home-delivered meals. Federal and state funding received by the Area Agencies on Aging continues to fall behind inflation and continues to fall behind the increase in the senior population over the past ten years.

Describe persons who will benefit from passage of a proposal on this subject:
Missouri’s senior nutrition programs provide nutritious meals that meet one-third of the recommended dietary allowance to adults age 60 and older, with emphasis placed on serving frail, isolated, homebound, and disadvantaged seniors. These nutrition services help individuals live independently and promote better health through improved nutrition, reduced isolation, and supportive services.

Not only do seniors benefit from congregate and home-delivered meals but their caregivers (adult children, relatives, and friends) benefit as they give of their time and care for the senior. Keeping seniors independent and healthy in their own homes benefits the community as well. And finally, senior nutrition programs reduce the need for Medicaid-funded nursing home stays, which are increasing annually, thereby keeping the cost to Missouri taxpayers lower.

Describe how this will work once enacted (to extent applicable, identify agencies, organizations responsible for implementation, resources to be utilized, time frames & deadlines):
The Missouri General Assembly shall appropriate from State General Revenue funds $3 million to adjust for the rise in costs of congregate and home-delivered meals. These funds shall be distributed to the ten Area Agencies on Aging based on the number of meals served.
Title of proposal: Make Missouri’s income tax brackets more progressive

Provide a summary of the problem or issue this subject will address:
Recent efforts at tax reform in Missouri have made future tax brackets less progressive than current brackets, as well as making future brackets even more regressive going forward compared to brackets in most surrounding states. For 2018, Missouri has 10 brackets reaching a top rate of 5.9% for taxable income over $9,253. SCS for HCS for HB 2540, according to a 5/18/18 fiscal note, establishes for 2019 and future years only 8 brackets reaching a top rate potentially dropping to 5.1% at taxable income of only $7,196. The reduction in the level at which the top rate is reached makes Missouri’s brackets less progressive. For comparison with surrounding states that employ brackets, research found that Kansas reaches a top rate (5.7%) at $30,000 (single)/$60,000(joint); Kentucky reaches a top rate (6%) at $75,000; Nebraska reaches a top rate (6%) at $23,000 (single)/$47,000(joint); Arkansas reached a top rate (6%) at $21,100; and Iowa reaches a top rate (6%) at $14,100. More progressive tax brackets would expand brackets or otherwise reach the top rate at higher levels of income, easing the tax burden for low income seniors and others.

Describe persons who will benefit from passage of a proposal on this subject:
Low income senior citizens and other low-income citizens in Missouri will be the primary beneficiaries. At a time when governmental appropriations for senior services are flat or diminishing and the incentive (itemized tax deduction) for donations to charitable non-profits serving seniors is diminishing, more progressive tax brackets will allow low income seniors to retain more of their taxable income to meet their needs.

Describe how this will work once enacted (to extent applicable, identify agencies, organizations responsible for implementation, resources to be utilized, time frames & deadlines):
The Missouri Department of Revenue would be instructed to increase the number of brackets and/or expand the range of brackets to increase the level of taxable income at which the top rate of taxation is reached, or otherwise make Missouri’s income tax brackets more progressive. If Missouri needs to avoid reduction of revenue caused by bracket adjustment, it could end the discount that employers receive for remitting sales/payroll withholding taxes on time, benefit from enhanced collection of sales tax, or take other steps to maintain revenue neutrality.
Title of proposal: Approval of over the counter sale/use of industrial hemp oil as a supplement

Provide a summary of the problem or issue this subject will address:
Industrial Hemp Oil (CBD) is a holistic alternative that is a non-addictive treatment for various conditions such as anxiety, seizures, muscle, Fibromyalgia, joint, and arthritis pain. Although Industrial Hemp Oil is widely available and being sold commercially within the state of Missouri, Missouri officials have stated they will not honor the recent Federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) announcement stating they will not pursue those who sell or buy Hemp Oil in any of the 50 states, thus making persons liable for prosecution within the state of Missouri, many of whom are senior citizens. Such prosecution has recently been instigated in other states.

Describe persons who will benefit from passage of a proposal on this subject:
Those who suffer from the above mentioned illnesses and many other illnesses will benefit from the legal availability of this product. The taxpayers will benefit as Hemp Oil can often replace the use of expensive opioids and lower the cost for medicine and the danger and expense of fighting the illegal use of such. Since Hemp Oil has a negligible amount of THC, no high is achieved by the use of the product, thus eliminating elder abuse when relatives or others demand that our elderly turn over their narcotics. If this product was available over-the-counter, the individual would not have to pay for expensive medical office calls to obtain relief.

Describe how this will work once enacted (to extent applicable, identify agencies, organizations responsible for implementation, resources to be utilized, time frames & deadlines):
The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) will oversee the use and sale of non-psychotrophic Industrial Hemp Oil only as they would any other health supplement, such as vitamins. Companies selling this oil in the state of Missouri should be allowed to use Industrial Hemp purchased anywhere in the United States to produce their product. Such companies should be required to produce, if requested by the DHSS, lab reports showing the organic purity of their product and that the product meets the legal guidelines of delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than 0.3 percent on a dry weight basis. The product should abide by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines. Missouri officials would follow the DEA guidelines of non-prosecution of those who use, buy or sell Industrial Hemp Oil.