



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2012		DATE: 2/17/2026	
COMMITTEE: Budget			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2026 11:07 AM	
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This bill funds the referees, the prosecutors, the courts, and the legislature — all in one sweep.

Let's be clear about what this is.

HB 2012 funds:

- The Governor**
- The Lieutenant Governor**
- The Secretary of State**
- The State Auditor**
- The State Treasurer**
- The Attorney General**
- The Judiciary**
- The Public Defender**
- The Senate**
- The House**
- Legislative Research**
- Joint Committees**

This is the entire machinery of state power.

When you fund the executive, the legal enforcers, the courts, and the lawmakers in one bill — with broad flexibility clauses — you are not just appropriating money.

You are redistributing leverage.

The “flexibility” language is everywhere — and that is not neutral.

Repeatedly:

- 10% flexibility**
- 25% flexibility**
- 100% flexibility between sections**
- 5% flexibility between funds**

Translation:

Money can move.

**After the vote.
Without another vote.**

The public sees one line item.

The actual implementation can drift significantly from what was publicly debated.

If this were a private corporation, shareholders would call this discretionary reallocation authority.

In government, it's called "flexibility."

Same thing.

\$76 million to Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts — plus \$60 million transfer.

**Let's not pretend that's a small policy footnote.
Section 12.185:**

**\$76,206,417 from the ESA Fund.
Section 12.190:**

\$60,000,000 transferred from General Revenue to that fund.

That is over \$136 million in total movement tied to education redirection mechanisms.

Whether one supports ESAs or not, this is a massive structural allocation decision embedded inside an omnibus constitutional offices budget.

**It is not a side note.
It is a statement.**

4. The Abandoned Fund Account shuffle is aggressive.

**Watch the flow:
\$68,000,000 for claims.**

\$17,500,000 from GR to support claims.

\$108,000,000 transferred OUT of Abandoned

Fund Account to General Revenue.

\$5,000,000 transferred to State Public School Fund.

That is not passive custodianship of unclaimed property.

That is revenue engineering.

Unclaimed property is supposed to be held in trust posture for rightful owners. When nine-figure transfers start moving into General Revenue, the optics shift from stewardship to liquidity management.

That invites scrutiny.

**The Attorney General section quietly consolidates enforcement bandwidth.
Between:**

Merchandising Practices Revolving Fund

Antitrust Revolving Fund

Workers' Comp Funds

Fraud Units

Violent Crimes Task Force

Medicaid Fraud

The AG's office is funded as both:

Legal counsel to the state
Major enforcement engine

That's fine — if there is equal oversight transparency.

But the flexibility provisions allow movement between sections (e.g., Section 12.250 allowing 10% flexibility into 12.245).

Enforcement power plus flexible money equals discretionary prioritization.

That matters.

Judiciary: 25% flexibility between entire sections.

Read this carefully:

“Not more than twenty-five percent (25%) flexibility is allowed between Sections 12.300 through 12.380...”

That covers:

Judicial proceedings
Case management systems
Automation
Appeals
Circuit courts
Treatment courts
Education and training
Commissions on judicial discipline

Twenty-five percent is not a rounding error.

That is structural fluidity across major judicial infrastructure.

When the courts can shift resources across operational silos by that margin, budget specificity becomes advisory rather than binding.

Public Defender funding — high need, high discretion.

Nearly \$96 million total.

Including:

Reinvestment Fund allocations
Holistic defense services
Contracting outside the system
Underserved area contracting
And 5% flexibility language.

No objection to funding defense. The Constitution requires it.

But the architecture of funding mechanisms matters. When multiple funds with flexibility clauses overlap, tracking performance against allocation becomes increasingly opaque.

8. The Legislature funds itself — generously and quietly.

Senate: ~\$17 million

House: ~\$30 million

Plus joint contingencies

Plus organizational dues

No transparency issues per se — but it's notable that while the bill imposes tight specificity in some areas, it maintains revolving funds and contingent expense discretion for itself.

That asymmetry is not lost on taxpayers.

This bill is a power map.

HB 2012 is not just numbers.

It maps:

Enforcement authority

Judicial authority

Electoral administration

Public broadcasting

Arts and humanities funding

School choice funding

Court automation infrastructure

Treatment courts

Legislative operations

All under a single constitutional appropriations umbrella.

That concentration demands surgical clarity.

Instead, it leans heavily on flexibility clauses, transfer authority, and fund shuffling.

Legislative Notice:

By embedding broad transfer authority, percentage-based flexibility, and multi-fund revenue movement across constitutional offices within a single appropriations vehicle, the General Assembly creates foreseeable transparency disputes, audit complexity, and accountability ambiguity as to whether appropriated intent matches executed expenditure.

This bill does not merely fund government.

It redistributes operational discretion across it.

That distinction matters.



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Cut all unnecessary expenses and waste.



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