



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 171		DATE: 2/24/2026
COMMITTEE: Legislative Review		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: JASON ZAMKUS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-291-6180
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 9:36 AM
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I oppose HJR 171.

This resolution proposes a constitutional amendment modifying Article VI, Section 26(b) by altering how assessed valuation is calculated for purposes of school district indebtedness.

Core Concern

The amendment allows property owned by a municipality under industrial development authority — property that is otherwise tax-exempt — to be included in the assessed valuation calculation for purposes of determining a school district’s bonding capacity.

In effect, this increases the borrowing capacity of school districts without increasing taxable revenue.

1. Artificial Inflation of Debt Capacity

Bonding limits exist to tie indebtedness to actual taxable value.

Including tax-exempt industrial development property in the valuation calculation increases allowable debt ceilings while that property does not generate property tax revenue to service the debt.

That creates structural fiscal distortion.

2. Long-Term Risk to Taxpayers

If bonding authority increases based on non-taxable property, repayment still falls on:

- Taxable property owners
- Residential taxpayers
- Existing commercial taxpayers

This shifts risk while expanding borrowing power.

3. Constitutional Stability Concerns

Article VI debt limitations were adopted to protect taxpayers from excessive municipal indebtedness.

Constitutional debt caps should not be modified to include property that does not contribute to the tax base funding repayment.

If additional bonding capacity is necessary, the fiscal mechanism should align with revenue reality — not assessed value theory.

4. Voter Threshold Remains — But Structure Changes

While voter approval thresholds remain intact, voters may not fully appreciate that the bonding base calculation is being structurally altered.

This amendment is not merely procedural — it changes the fiscal guardrails embedded in the Constitution.

Conclusion:

HJR 171 expands school district borrowing capacity by including tax-exempt industrial development property in assessed valuation calculations.

That expansion is structurally disconnected from revenue capacity and increases long-term taxpayer exposure.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose the resolution.

Legislative Notice:

The General Assembly is on notice that HJR 171 alters the constitutional debt limitation framework by permitting inclusion of tax-exempt industrial development property in assessed valuation calculations for school district indebtedness. This structural change increases borrowing authority without corresponding taxable revenue support, creating foreseeable fiscal instability and potential taxpayer litigation concerning debt capacity calculations.