



Here's what's happening with our right to read:

Chapter 26 July 23, 2026

[Join the Coalition Today!](#)

Vote NO on Amendment 5: “Everything Tax”



Early voting is now available for the August 4 election. Check here for more information. [Early Voting Options and Schedules in Missouri \(2026\)](#).

The Right to Read coalition opposes Amendment 5 which requires lawmakers to eliminate Missouri's income tax. If passed, many essential services will be in danger of drastic cuts, including funding for education and public libraries.

Actions Speak Louder than Words

Although lawmakers often proclaim support for education and literacy, their actions can signal otherwise. The budget the legislature passed for 2026-27 is a case in point; significant cuts were made:

- A two-thirds cut to The Dolly Parton Imagination Library program which provides free books to preschoolers, many in underserved communities.

- A 50% reduction in funds available to Missouri's libraries to purchase materials. This will be especially difficult for small and rural libraries that depend heavily on state funding.



Missouri lawmakers cut the Imagination Library's budget from about \$6 million to \$2 million. **This means no additional children will be able to enroll in the program;** it is uncertain whether the 170,000 children currently enrolled will continue to receive books.

When Missouri joined the Imagination Library program 2023, then-Gov. Mike Parson said he was proud to bring the resources to the state's children. **Missouri was the first state to fully fund the program.**

"The education of Missouri children is near and dear to us, and we know learning starts early. **Even simple access to quality books at a young age can make a transformational difference in the life of a child** as they grow older and seek to achieve their own American Dream," Parson said.

The Right to Read coalition will advocate strongly for the state to restore funding for the Imagination Library and for libraries throughout Missouri.

**Don't Let the Government Decide
What Children Can Read**

Parents should decide what their children read, not politicians. **S. 4925 threatens to hand over parents' rights to lawmakers**, letting them decide what books students can access in their school libraries.

Let Missouri's U.S. Senators know that you [oppose this bill](#).

Texas Public School Students Will Be Required to Read the Bible



The Texas education board has approved a required reading list for more than 5 million public school students that includes Bible passages, widening conservative efforts to push Christian teachings in U.S. classrooms.

[Texas education board approves Bible stories as required reading in public schools | PBS News](#)

Libraries: For 250 Years Essential to Democracy

As we commemorate the 250th anniversary of America's founding, it's important to note that libraries have always been fundamental to our freedom.



The Founding Fathers viewed libraries not merely as repositories of books but as **instruments of public education, civic engagement, and democratic stability**. Their writings and actions underscore the enduring principle that an educated populace is

vital for the health and longevity of a free society.

I have often thought that nothing would do more extensive good at small expense than the establishment of a circulating library in every county, to consist of a few well-chosen books, to be lent to the people of the country under regulations as would secure their safe return in due time." *Thomas Jefferson*

"I have an unshaken conviction that democracy can never be

undermined if we maintain our library resources and a national intelligence capable of utilizing them." - *Franklin D. Roosevelt*



"The libraries of America are and must ever remain the home of free and inquiring minds. To them, our citizens - of all ages and races, of all creeds and persuasions - must be able to turn with clear confidence that there they can freely seek the whole truth, unvarnished by fashion and uncompromised by expediency." - *Dwight D. Eisenhower*

Interesting” Items Librarians Find in Books!



A \$5,000 check. Medical records. A used popsicle stick. These and other “interesting” items have been found in books returned to the Santa Rosa Library. [Take a look](#)