

# Ownership Is the Answer

## A Missouri Ownership Agenda

To the people of District 61,

Over the past several years, something has been weighing on me, and if you are honest, you have probably felt it too. We are working harder, paying more, and yet it feels like we have less control over our own lives than we did before. The numbers back that up. Missouri's state budget has grown dramatically in a short period of time, while many of our rural communities have shrunk, and families are feeling the pressure from every direction.

That disconnect is not an accident, and it is not just bad luck. It is the result of a system that has slowly moved away from something fundamental. We have built an economy and a government that too often manages people instead of empowering them. The more that happens, the fewer people actually own anything meaningful, and the harder it becomes to build a stable life, a business, or something you can pass on to your children.

I do not believe the answer is more programs, more complexity, or more promises that get sorted out later; I believe the answer is ownership. Ownership of a home that cannot be taxed out from under you, ownership of a business or a share in the one you help build, ownership of land treated with respect instead of as a line item for revenue, and ownership of your labor, where you keep enough of what you earn to actually move forward. When people own something real, they take care of it, invest in it, defend it, and stay rooted in their communities; a state built on that kind of ownership is stronger, more stable, and more honest than one built on dependency and constant adjustment.

What follows is a series laying out a path in that direction, each paper taking on a piece of the problem, tax policy, property rights, small business, agriculture, employee ownership, and procurement, and tying it back to that single idea of ownership; these are not abstract theories, but grounded in Missouri law and focused on changes that can actually be made. You may not agree with every conclusion, and that is fine, that is the point, because a republic only works when people read, think, question, and engage; but I would ask you to consider it seriously, look at where we are, where we are headed, and decide whether the current path is producing the future we actually want for our families and our communities.

I believe we can do better, and I believe it starts by restoring ownership as the foundation of how we govern and how we grow.

Respectfully,

John Grady