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JUL 11 2025

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FRANK WHITE, JR.
Jackson County Executive

VETO MESSAGE FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE FRANK WHITE, JR.

Re: ORDINANCE 5989 – SPECIAL ELECTION ON CHARTER AMENDMENT

Date: July 11, 2025

To: Members of the Jackson County Legislature

I am vetoing Ordinance 5989 because it asks Jackson County taxpayers to spend millions of unbudgeted dollars on a special election that is both unnecessary and premature.

To be clear: I support putting this charter question before the voters. I would support placing it on the ballot in August 2026 or November of 2026, when we already have scheduled elections and the cost to taxpayers would be zero. But calling a special countywide election in 2025, when the changes wouldn't even take effect until 2028, is indefensible.

This would be the fourth time in this legislative term that an unbudgeted election has been pushed forward. None have passed. None were necessary. None respected the public's trust or resources. And this one makes the same mistake.

But it's not just the timing and cost that are problematic. This ordinance fails to set even the most basic, common-sense standards for the proposed elected office. Shockingly, it does not require any experience in appraisal, assessment, property valuation or public finance, despite the technical and high-stakes nature of the role.

Worse, the language proposed for the charter says the elected Assessor will be "*responsible and accountable for efficient, effective and predictable taxation within the County.*" That's not just wrong; it's dangerously misleading.

Under Missouri law, the Assessor has nothing to do with taxation. The Assessor is responsible for valuing property according to state law. The *Collector* is responsible for taxation. This language creates confusion where there should be clarity.

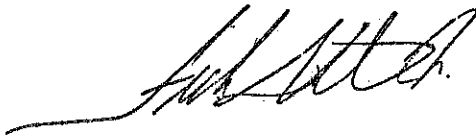


And even more telling, the ordinance never mentions the word *accurate*. Not once. It does not say that values must be *fair, correct, or in line with the law*. That sends a loud and clear message that getting it right isn't the priority, and that should concern every resident of this county.

This veto isn't about stopping reform. It's about demanding better. Better planning. Better policy. And most of all, better respect for the voters and taxpayers of Jackson County.

Let's take the time to do this the right way. Let's put it on the 2026 ballot, at no cost to the public, with language that reflects the law and the importance of getting the job done right.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank White, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Frank White, Jr.
Jackson County Executive

IN THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

AN ORDINANCE submitting to the qualified voters of Jackson County, Missouri, at the general election to be held on November 4, 2025, a question to amend the Jackson County Charter, with an effective date.

ORDINANCE NO. 5989, June 9, 2025

INTRODUCED BY Jeanie Lauer and DaRon McGee, County Legislators

BE IT ORDAINED by the County Legislature of Jackson County, Missouri, as follows:

Section 1. There is hereby submitted to the qualified voters of Jackson County, Missouri for approval or disapproval one question to amend the 2018 Jackson County Charter, as set forth in this Ordinance, at the general election to be held in Jackson County, Missouri, on the first Tuesday in November 2025.

Section 2. Subject to the approval of the qualified voters of Jackson County, Missouri, at the general election to be held on November 4, 2025, the 2018 Jackson County Charter is hereby amended with amended sections to read as follows:

ARTICLE III.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Section 6. The County Executive, in addition to other powers and duties provided in this charter, shall have the power to:

1. Appoint, subject to the County Legislature's power of disapproval, directors of departments, officers not otherwise provided for, members of boards

and commissions, and acting officers to fill any vacancy in any appointive or elective office, except that of County Legislator; the County Executive shall file written notice of such appointments with the Clerk of the County Legislature.

2. Employ experts and consultants in connection with any of the functions of the county, and ensure that all professional services contracts over \$5,000, except in emergency situations, follow a competitive process to determine award of the contract.

3. Coordinate and supervise the work of the departments, officers and agencies of the county subject to his or her control.

4. Transfer employees from one department to another department to promote efficiency and economy. If the employee reports to the County Legislature, Sheriff, Prosecuting Attorney, Assessor, or Circuit Court, the transfer shall require the approval of the Legislature, applicable office holder or presiding judge of the Circuit Court.

5. Execute and enforce the provisions of this charter, and the ordinances, resolutions and policies of the County Legislature, and the laws of the state pertaining to the government of the county; see that all contracts with the county are faithfully performed and cause to be instituted in the name of the county appropriate actions thereon.

6. Attend meetings of the County Legislature and participate in its discussions without vote.

7. Recommend to the County Legislature such measures as may, in his or

her opinion, tend to improve the county government and the general well-being of the people; submit to the County Legislature an annual report of the affairs of the county; promote, encourage and participate in cooperative relationships between the county and political subdivisions and governmental bodies and agencies, either within or outside the county or state in matters relating to public health, ecology, highways, sewers, parks, safety, public welfare, and any and all other functions for the welfare of the people of Jackson County.

8. Investigate any matter or circumstance having to do with the operation of the county government, and examine witnesses, parties and others on oath or affirmation touching any matter or circumstance in the examination of any payroll, account, demand or claim against the county, and have access to all county books, records and papers kept by county officers and employees.

[9. Correct errors in assessment and tax records.]

[10] 9. Represent the county and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this charter or be required of the County Executive by ordinance or resolution of the County Legislature or as may be implied by the powers and duties specified in this charter, law or county ordinance.

[11] 10. Establish by County Executive order from time-to-time systems of administrative organization in the departments which shall be as uniform as the various departmental functions will permit.

[12] 11. Submit to the County Legislature for approval by ordinance an annual balanced budget at the time and in the manner provided in this charter and

by county ordinance.

**ARTICLE IV.
DEPARTMENTS**

Section 5. The County Executive shall assign all duties and functions prescribed by law or this charter for [the county assessor,] the county collector, and the county treasurer.

**ARTICLE V.
CHARTER OFFICERS
ASSESSOR**

Section 16. The Assessor shall be elected at the general election in 2028, and every four years thereafter. The Assessor shall take office on January 1 following his or her election. The Assessor shall be a qualified voter, and shall have been domiciled in the county for at least three years before assuming office. No Assessor may serve more than three consecutive full terms commencing on or after January 1, 2029. The Assessor shall forfeit office if he or she:

1. Ceases to be a qualified voter of the County;
2. Removes his or her residence from the county;
3. Holds any other federal, state, county, or municipal elective office;
4. Owes federal income tax, Missouri state income tax, or Missouri local

tax which remains unpaid for more than twelve months after such tax debt becomes final under the law of the jurisdiction assessing such tax, unless a payment plan to resolve such delinquency is in effect and is current on its terms.

The Assessor shall be in charge of and responsible for the Division of Assessment. The Assessor shall possess and exercise all the powers and duties given by law, charter and ordinance to the County Assessor and shall perform such other duties and exercise such other powers relative thereto as are provided by law, charter and ordinance. The assessor shall be responsible and accountable for efficient, effective and predictable taxation within the County, as well as responsive to taxing jurisdictions. The assessor will, if requested, report at least quarterly to the Legislature the plans, outcomes, and anomalies of the assessment, making themselves available and responsive to legislative and executive communications.

Section 3. The qualified voters at said election shall vote by ballot and the ballots to be used at said election shall contain the following language:

JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

**QUESTION # 1
GENERAL ELECTION
NOVEMBER 4, 2025
OFFICIAL BALLOT**

Shall Articles III, IV, and V of the Jackson County Charter, adopted by vote on November 3, 1970, and as amended by public votes on August 8, 1978, April 2, 1985, November 4, 1986, August 2, 1994, August 3, 2010, and November 6, 2018 be amended to require that the Charter Office of the Jackson County Assessor no longer be a qualified appointee and instead be an elected position?

YES

NO

If you are in favor of the question, place an "x" in the box opposite "Yes."

If you are opposed to the question, place an "x" in the box opposite "No."

Section 4. If a majority of the qualified voters at said election shall vote in favor of the approval of any ballot question submitted by this Ordinance, the amended provisions related to that ballot question shall be binding and shall become effective January 1, 2029, subject to any transition provisions contained herein.

Section 5. The Clerk of the Legislature is hereby authorized and directed to notify the Jackson County and Kansas City Boards of Election Commissioners of the adoption of this Ordinance no later than 5 p.m. on August 26, 2025, and to include in said notification all of the terms and provisions required by 115.125, RSMo.

Effective Date: This ordinance shall be effective upon its signature by the County Executive, and in accordance with Section 4 hereof.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Bryan Covinsky

Bryan Covinsky (Jun 5, 2025 12:26 CDT)

County Counselor

I hereby certify that the attached ordinance, Ordinance No. 5989 introduced on June 9, 2025 was duly passed on June 30, 2025 by the Jackson County Legislature. The votes thereon were as follows:

| | | | |
|------------|----------|--------|----------|
| Yeas | <u>6</u> | Nays | <u>3</u> |
| Abstaining | <u>0</u> | Absent | <u>0</u> |

This Ordinance is hereby transmitted to the County Executive for his signature.

7-1-2025
Date

Mary Jo Spino
Mary Jo Spino, Clerk of Legislature

I hereby approve the attached Ordinance No. 5989.

Date

Frank White, Jr., County Executive