



2025
MISSOURI
ORAL HEALTH POLICY CONFERENCE

Igniting Innovation

MARCH 6 - 7, 2025

CAPITOL PLAZA HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER
JEFFERSON CITY, MO

Working with Legislators - Advancing Oral Health Policy

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FEBRUARY 14, 2025

THIS PRESENTATION WILL BE RECORDED



The Missouri Coalition for Oral Health is a non-profit advocacy agency - a statewide network of advocates working to improve Missouri's oral health through system change

Mission - To improve oral health with all Missourians by advocating for sound public policy

Vision – Oral Health for all Missourians

Policy Goals

- Reduction of tobacco use and vaping to improve Missouri oral health
- Incorporation of oral health care in school-based health care
- Expanded coverage of and access to silver diamine fluoride for all Missourians
- Improvement of MO HealthNet by implementing best practices and system improvements to increase provider participation and MO HealthNet participant usage
- Inclusion of a comprehensive dental benefit in MO HealthNet
- Protection and expansion of public water system fluoridation
- Expansion of access to dental sealants for children without routine dental care
- Inclusion of a comprehensive dental benefit in Medicare
- Implementation of a statewide public awareness campaign about the importance of oral health to overall health
- Strengthening provider networks and expansion of service delivery of dental care for high-risk, vulnerable, MO HealthNet and uninsured populations, including people with disabilities and special health care needs
- Incorporation of oral health in the patient-centered medical home

Advocacy

Advocacy is raising awareness about an issue that is important to you.

Contacts with state and federal legislators, city council members, county commission members, elected and appointed government members show that oral health is important to you and to Missourians.

Advocacy can also be about specifically requesting an action, such as passing a law, funding a project or program, or changing a regulation.

Decision-makers need to know that oral health is important to Missourians and important to you .

Without your voice it is easy for decision-makers to forget about oral health.

Your Voice Matters

Most decision-makers understand that they are working in a government position to serve the public interest – elected or otherwise

Most Legislators like to hear from constituents and concerned citizens

Most will listen to you

Think of your legislative contact in terms of longevity - Making a connection now can help later

Your voice as an individual citizen can carry more weight than lobbyists or professional advocacy staff

Prepare

Before making contact with a decision-maker, do some background research

- You can find a great deal of information online
- Most important information to find: the interest of the decision-maker
 - This will help you understand their priorities

Look up your Senator and Representative ahead of time

- Committee assignments
- Legislation
- Bio
- Photo
- Address & Room Number
- Phone Number

Talking with Legislators

Introduce yourself and say you are with the Missouri Coalition for Oral Health

Refer to legislators as Senator x or Representative x

Legislators expect to be asked to do something

Expect interruptions

Legislators often have many issues in mind – they may talk with you about something that is important to them

- If you wish to engage with them on issues not related to Coalition priorities, try to make it clear that you are speaking as an individual at that point
- Your conversation on an unrelated issue may have an impact on the conversation about oral health

Talking with Legislators

If you cannot talk with the legislator, talking with the LA (Legislative Assistant) or other staff and interns can be just as beneficial

- Never refer to an LA as a secretary

Staff members can make sure your issue is raised and remembered

If you get a question you cannot answer that is fine – note it on the Feedback survey

Making a connection on a personal level is good

Always be polite and thank them for their time

Writing to Legislators

Most communication now happens by email

MCOH recommends writing a letter to your legislators

Letters are somewhat unusual and more likely to make an impression

- A hand-written note is likely to stand out, but ensure it is legible

Be clear and to the point

Introduce yourself

If you get a response, please drop us a note at info@oralhealthmissouri.org, particularly if there is follow-up that needs to happen

Be polite

You may include information on the 2025 Legislative priorities

2025 Legislative Priorities

MCOH supports [HB 56](#) (Rep. Jeff Coleman) and [SB 327](#) (Sen. Ben Brown) –

Establishes the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact –

These bills will allow Missouri to participate in an interstate dental compact. Passage of HB 56 and SB 327 will lead to increased access to care through removing barriers to care provision by dental professionals from other states. Access to dental care is impacted by a limited number of providers throughout Missouri, but most acutely felt in rural areas of the state. Passage of these bills will help to increase access to oral health care, an essential health care need. Good overall health is not possible without good oral health.

There are two other Compact bills filed – SB 109 (Sen. Justin Brown) & HB 1290 (Rep. Cameron Parker) – MCOH does not support these bills.

MCOH also supports – Dental Vaccine Bill – [SB 374](#) - Sen. Steven Roberts – Movement on this bill is not expected.

HB 56 Hearing

Scheduled to for a public Wednesday, February 19, 8 AM, hearing rm. 7

Watch for updates – refer to the HB 56 page on line

Professional Registration and Licensing Committee

Submission of testimony on-line should be available

Keep it simple – Indicate you are in support

- Will support dental work force in MO by making it easier for professionals to move from one state to another (without going through a new licensure process)
- Going into details is difficult – requires experts
- This compact is similar to other professional compacts

At this point opposition is not expected, so as many people as possible stating they support the bill is especially helpful

Let us know about legislative contacts by filling out the feedback form and turning it in at the conference registration desk at the hotel

Schedule/Impromptu

Please consider setting appointments with your Senator and Representative

Even with an appointment, you may miss your Senator or Representative

- Spend time with the LA or staffer/intern if you can
- You may find the office locked – come back later

The LA may pull the legislator off the floor to speak with you or take you to a committee room

Please also visit other legislators - If you have extra time, it is OK to politely walk into another legislator's office, introduce yourself and ask to speak with the Senator or Representative

- Be especially polite and thank them for their time

MCOH Overview

This brief document can be left with each office

It serves to establish that -

- Oral health is important as a policy issue
- Oral health policy can and should be addressed by policy-makers
- Oral health is of interest as a policy issue to many organizations and individuals

Logos on back page help to create leverage and draw attention

Logistics

Parking can be challenging near the Capitol –

- metered parking on nearby streets
- read signs closely
- some free parking
- some metered parking is only 1 hour
- parking places you cannot use
- Police are vigilant & reliably ticket

Walking from the hotel may be the best option

Logistics

Enter the Capitol building through doors under stairs on south side - facing High St and the Supreme Court Building – opposite MO River side – watch for signs

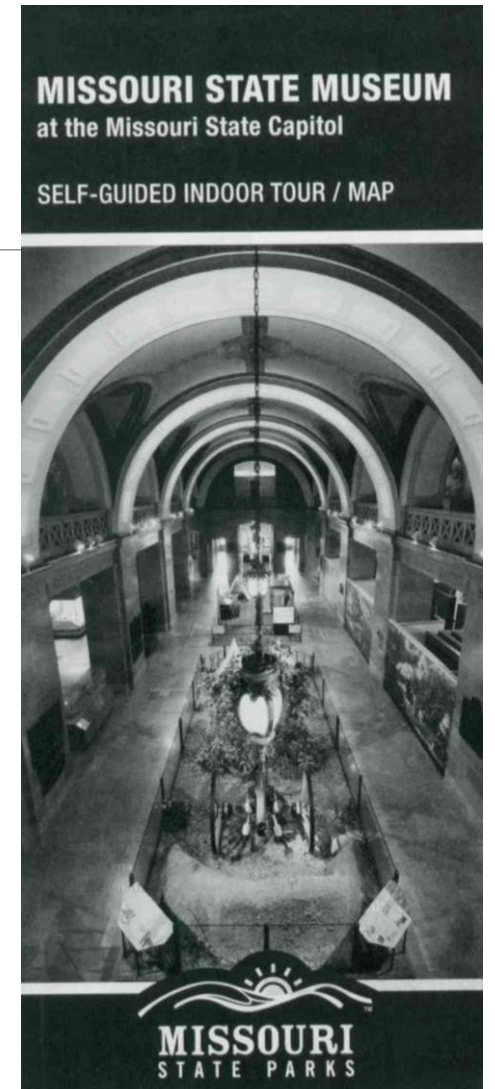
You will go through security

- similar to airport security - allow extra time

Once through security you can find elevators near the ends of each hallway to your right and left – elevator straight ahead on the other side of building

You can take the stairs accessed from the hallway, also to your right and left as you exit security and just around the corner from security

There is a Missouri State Museum tour desk straight ahead from security. They have maps that may be helpful, and legislator lists with room numbers.



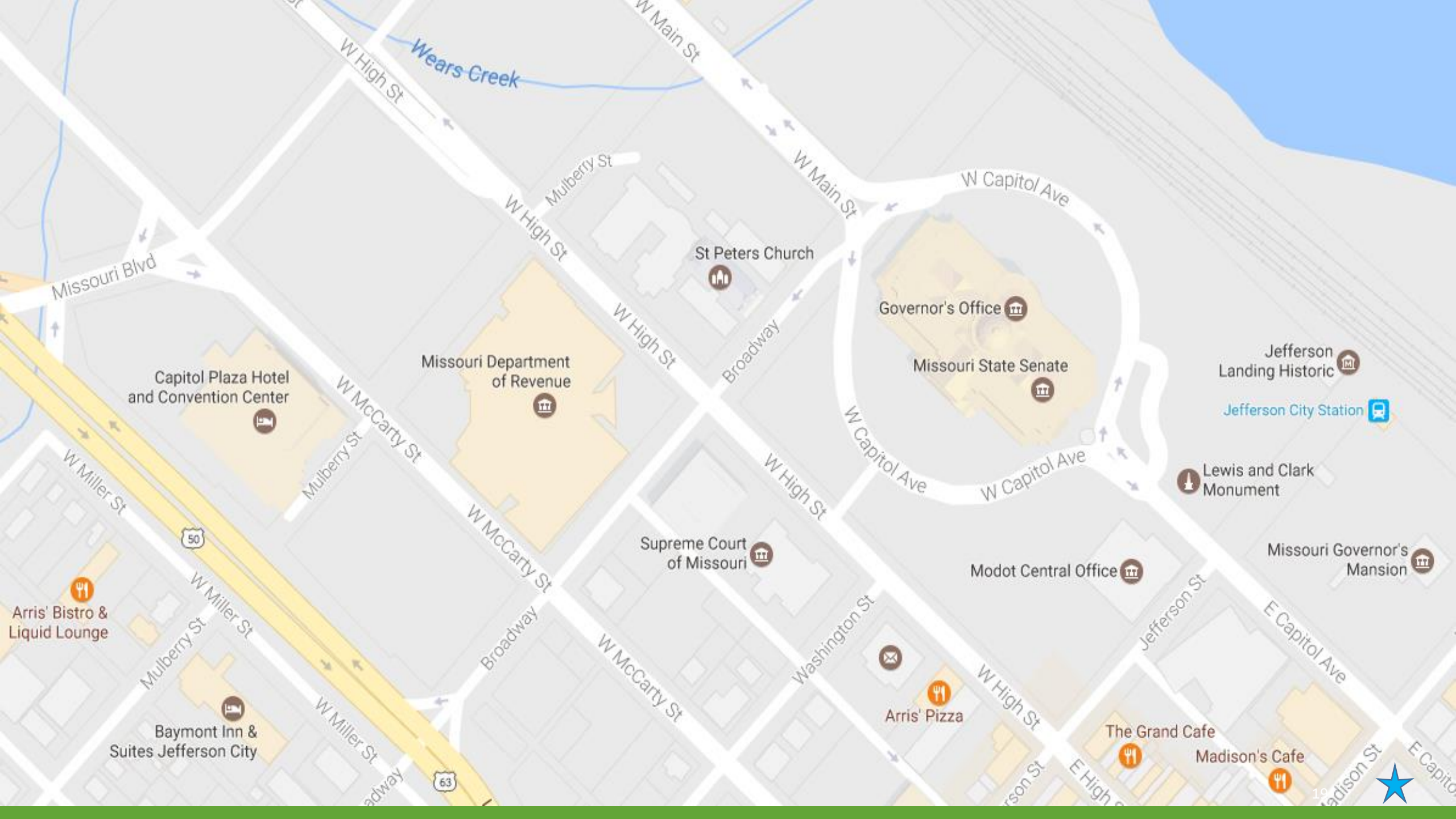
Logistics

Gary will be in the rotunda area by about 8 AM & will be there for about 90 minutes - answer questions and provide guidance

There will be some copies of needed material, but look for material sent to you ahead of time

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- 2025 Legislative Priorities
- MCOH Overview
- Legislative Feedback Forms
 - We will also send out a link to an online version
 - Include any questions you were unable to address
- Legislature will usually go into session at 10 AM – consider leaving by then – the conference starts at 10:30 AM



Missouri Blvd

W High St

Wears Creek

W Main St

Mulberry St

W Main St

W Capitol Ave

St Peter's Church

Governor's Office

Missouri State Senate

Jefferson Landing Historic

Jefferson City Station

Lewis and Clark Monument

Missouri Governor's Mansion

Capitol Plaza Hotel and Convention Center

Missouri Department of Revenue

Supreme Court of Missouri

Modot Central Office

Arris' Bistro & Liquid Lounge

Arris' Pizza

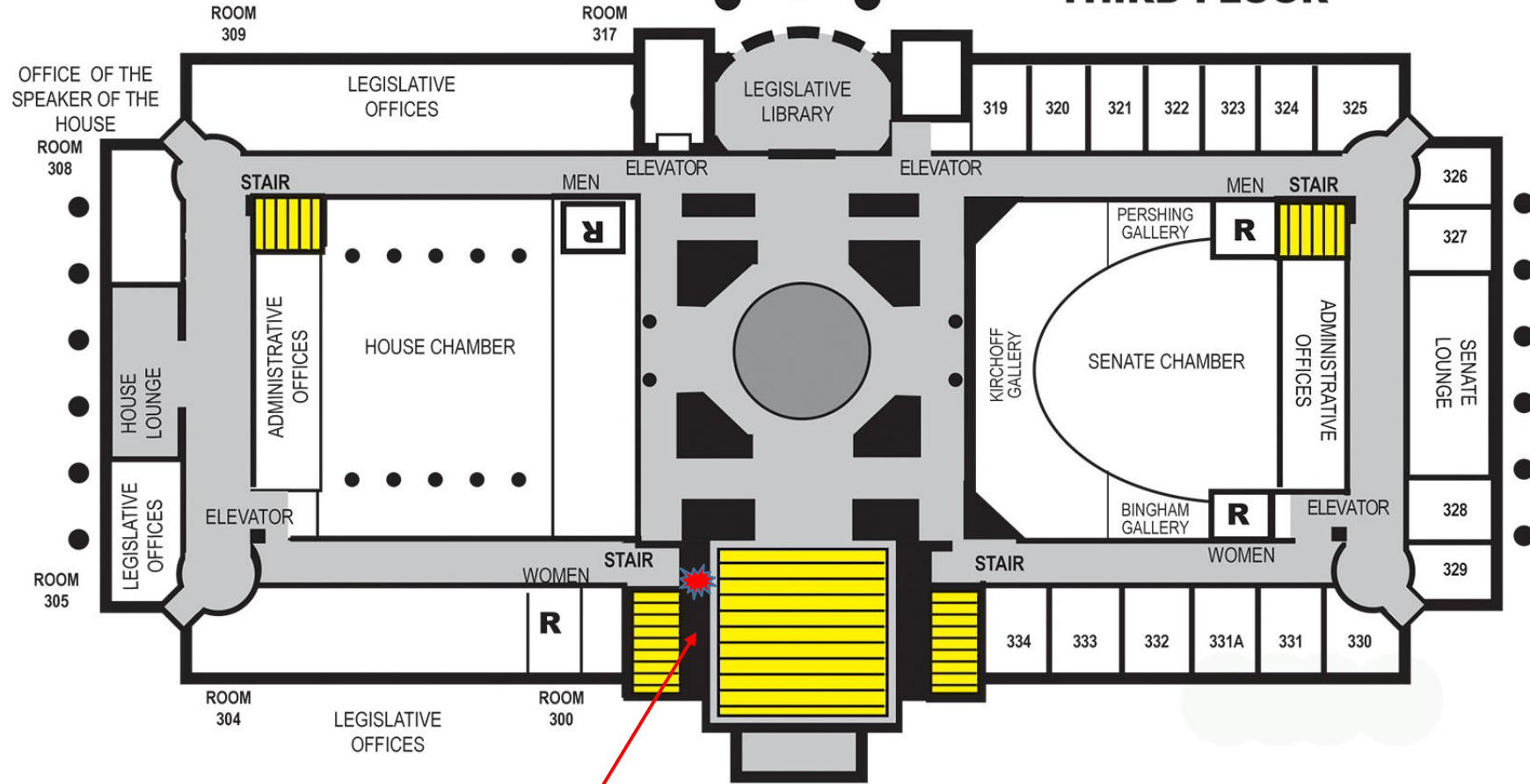
The Grand Cafe

Madison's Cafe

Baymont Inn & Suites Jefferson City



THIRD FLOOR



3rd Floor Alcove
on the House Side
Next to the Grand Staircase

Grand Staircase

High Street

Follow Through

A personal thank-you note will make a great impression

When you get home, write a thank-you note for each Legislator and/or LA with whom you spoke

Hand-written notes are unusual and more likely to be read and remembered

You can find addresses on the House and Senate websites

If you have questions or need assistance, drop us a line at info@oralhealthmissouri.org

The Honorable *Senator's First and Last Names*

The State Senate Rm. *Room Number*

Jefferson City, MO 65101

The Honorable *Representative's First and Last Names*

Missouri House of Representatives Rm. *Room Number*

Jefferson City MO 65101

Discussion Questions and a few notes

- What concerns do you have in regards to talking with elected officials?
- What successes and challenges have you had in previous legislative visits?
- How can MCOH better assist you in your advocacy outreach efforts?

Please note –

- Your voice can make more of a difference than you have imagined
- Working together, the sky is the limit
- There are no bad questions
- Anxiety about something new is par for the course – expect it – turn it into energy
- Some attendees have a lot of experience, some have none

info@oralhealthmissouri.org

Thank you for all you do for Missouri oral health!



www.oralhealthmissouri.org

