

## **2025 STATE OF THE STATE SPECIAL GUESTS**

During the 2025 State of the State Address, Governor Mike Kehoe recognized a group of special guests for their achievements and commitment to the people of Missouri. Photos of special guests can be found on [Flickr](#).

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

#### **Public Safety Partners: Safer Missouri Initiative**

*As his first official act in office, Governor Mike Kehoe launched the Safer Missouri Initiative, a comprehensive public safety plan focused on reducing crime, supporting law enforcement, and fostering safer communities. Developed in collaboration with law enforcement leaders and representatives from across the state, this multi-phase initiative includes “Operation Relentless Pursuit,” a regional effort to apprehend dangerous criminals, the “Blue Shield Program” to strengthen local partnerships and support law enforcement, and measures to bolster recruitment and retention in law enforcement. Governor Kehoe has also prioritized cracking down on illegal immigration, combating fentanyl trafficking, and improving offender management, with legislative action to build on this initiative’s momentum.*

#### **Jay Schroeder**

Missouri Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) State Lodge President; St. Louis Police Officers’ Association, FOP Lodge 68 President

#### **Dusty Hoffman**

Executive Director of Missouri State Troopers Association and retired Captain of the Missouri State Highway Patrol

#### **Rick Smith**

Former Chief of Kansas City Police Department

#### **Sheriff Michael Bonham**

Osage County Sheriff

#### **Chief Chris DiGuiseppe**

Lake Saint Louis Police Chief

#### **Mark Bruns**

Representative of Missouri Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)

## **Shawn Rhoads**

Representative of Missouri Sheriffs' Association

## **Scott Swain**

Representative of Missouri Police Chiefs Association

## **Fentanyl Epidemic**

*During his first State of the State address, Governor Kehoe urged the General Assembly to take action against the distribution and spread of the fentanyl epidemic. Fentanyl, the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45, has destroyed far too many lives and Governor Kehoe is including a \$4 million investment for fentanyl testing wastewater systems at schools across the state to help combat the crisis.*

## **Fentanyl Awareness Advocate Lizzy Schott**

Lizzy Schott, of Wildwood, has dedicated herself to raising awareness about the dangers of fentanyl following the tragic loss of her son, Keenan, who passed away at 30 from fentanyl toxicity. A Truman State University graduate, Keenan struggled with mental health and was introduced to fentanyl in effort to self-medicate and feel better.

Since his passing, Lizzy has worked tirelessly to educate others about the deadly risks of fentanyl to help prevent similar tragedies.

## **CHILDCARE**

*Governor Kehoe recognized Director of Lovely Child Development Center Alena Malone. Realizing the critical role that access to safe, reliable childcare plays in both the well-being of families and the strength of Missouri's economy, Governor Kehoe is including \$10 million in this year's budget to support grants that will foster partnerships between employers, community partners, and the childcare industry to expand and improve childcare access to families across the state.*

## **Director of Lovely Child Development Center Alena Malone**

Deeply passionate about improving Missouri's childcare system and an advocate for its growth, Alena Malone serves as Director of Lovely Child Development Center located in the City of Ferguson and Saving our Children North County Resource Center in Bellefontaine Neighbors. Through the Innovation Grant, Alena successfully launched a childcare facility that serves 56 children in North St. Louis County. Her work highlights the power of collaboration between employers and community partners and continues to shape Missouri's childcare landscape.

## **AGRICULTURE**

*Governor Kehoe recognized Ms. Adeline (Addie) Thessen, reaffirming his commitment to the future of Missouri agriculture. Governor Kehoe announced that the budget includes \$800,000 in permanent funding for Missouri FFA.*

### **Adeline “Addie” Thessen – Taos**

A fifth-generation farmer with a deep passion for agriculture, Addie Thessen is a 2024 graduate of the University of Missouri’s College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, where she found a passion for agronomy. With over 16 years of involvement in FFA and 4-H, Addie has built a solid foundation in agricultural leadership. Today, she works in precision farming, specializing in spray drones and precision equipment, and is dedicated to integrating cutting-edge technology into farming practices. As a part owner of her family’s cattle and row crop farm in Taos, Addie continues to build on her family’s agricultural legacy while mentoring youth through 4-H and livestock shows.

## **VETERANS**

*Governor Kehoe recognized the Commanding Officer and crew members of the USS Missouri, honoring their dedication to service and the sacrifice of Missouri’s veterans. As a part of his continued commitment to supporting those who have served, Governor Kehoe announced an additional \$10 million of general revenue funding for Missouri Veterans Homes. This funding ensures that no Veterans Home will be closed due to lack of state funding, further strengthening the state’s efforts to provide quality support and care for Missouri’s veterans.*

### **USS Missouri Crew**

**Commander Gieorag “G” Andrews**

**Senior Chief Robert Weaver**

**Petty Officer (PO) Colten L. Schmidt**