

St. Louis County Council

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Greetings,

Today Dr. Sam Page exercised his authority as County Executive to veto Bill #73.


Let me make this clear, not one extra cigarette would have been sold because of this legislation. This bill simply allowed business owners to sell their businesses without taking huge losses or worse, closing completely. Sadly, government has a way of making things out to be what they are not. We have a responsibility to make clear decisions that moves the needle for St. Louis County. Instead, we continue to play political games that don't do anything for anyone.

I have heard over and over again that it hard to do business in St. Louis County. This is true. St. Louis County is the hardest place to do business in this state and the veto of Bill #73 is more evidence of this. Part of the reason for trying to work this out was to exercise some local control over our issues. Now, once again we will be giving the state legislature an opportunity to strip more local control and governance from us, because we can't come to a resolution on this issue.

This veto does nothing to keep our children safe from smoking, it just pacifies the loud screams of those who look to make an issue of anything that pushes their agendas forward. To truly address caring and protecting our youth, we should be discussing enforcement and planning coordination with the County's Health and Planning Departments, as well as communicating with our municipalities. As I stated when we passed the legislation, a true solution to this problem wasn't one thing or the other, but one and the other. It is disingenuous to gaslight a topic by using our children as props and shields to distract from real solutions. You can't effectively govern this way. We must work through hard to get to the core issues. For the last few weeks, through correspondence and verbal request my office has asked to bring all stakeholders in County government and the community together to work through this. We are still waiting for a confirmed meeting date. I am wanting and willing to come to the table and work together.

I believe as a County, we cannot afford to continue to govern by gaslighting and knee jerk reactions. Transparent communication should be key in working together towards real solutions.

Sincerely,



Shalonda D. Webb
Chairwoman, St. Louis County Council
District 4