

CURTIS TRENT
DISTRICT 20

201 W. CAPITOL AVE., RM. 323
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65101
PHONE: 573-751-1503



COMMITTEES:
GENERAL LAWS - CHAIR
ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
INSURANCE AND BANKING

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

March 23, 2026

The Honorable Catherine Hanaway
Missouri Attorney General
Supreme Court Building
207 W. High Street
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Attorney General Hanaway,

This letter is on behalf of my constituents and the surrounding confusion of your office's recent enforcement efforts against video gaming machines. Previous administrations, and Attorneys General, have issued opinions to the business community confirming the video gaming machines were not illegal. Your recent actions have created significant confusion for businesses and charitable organizations.

For many years, hundreds of upstanding, law-abiding businesses across Missouri have made video gaming machines available to the public without facing criminal penalties. As a result, these machines may now be found in commercial businesses such as convenience stores, restaurants, and many other long-established, legitimate businesses. These businesses operate in good faith without any intention of violating Missouri law.

As your office begins aggressive enforcement steps against these machines, including criminal prosecutions, many businesses and individuals across the state are at risk with this abrupt change in state enforcement. I do not believe it serves the public interest to harass taxpaying citizens and businesses or to bring serious, life altering criminal charges against individuals who, if appropriately formally notified of the shift in your office's policy, would gladly, fully, and swiftly comply.

Media statements about sudden enforcement actions are not reasonable or adequate notice. In addition to seeking media publicity, that may or may not be seen by these law-abiding citizens and their businesses, I request that your office going forward practice patience with the public by giving at least thirty days of written notice to individuals and businesses before bringing adverse criminal or civil actions against them.

Many charitable and nonprofit organizations throughout the state for years have relied on video gaming machines at their facilities to generate revenue to support their activities. It is my understanding that you are going to be shutting down these games, so I would request that you send written notifications to all such groups across the state, giving them 30 days as well to shut down their machines.

Given the sudden shift in enforcement you are practicing, I believe that these reasonable steps will help bring clarity to the situation and prevent the unnecessary use of law enforcement resources against those members of our community who will comply once they are properly informed.

The General Assembly has for many years wrestled with legislation that would clarify the legal status of the machines in question. The legislation has now passed the House of Representatives and is currently pending in the Senate.

The people of Missouri, operating in good faith and with no illegal intention, should not have to suffer harm to their finances, reputation, and peace of mind over ambiguous points of law that the State has historically failed to act upon. Any steps you can take to protect the law-abiding and upstanding citizens of our state, while acting to enforce the law, would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Curtis Trent". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Curtis Trent
Missouri State Senate
District 20