Fruit flies could be helpful to fight cervical cancer caused by HPV

Generated from News Bureau press release: “Fruit Flies Could be Key to Fighting Cervical Cancer Caused by Human Papillomavirus”

HPV (Human papillomavirus), one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in the United States, has been identified as a primary cause of cervical cancer in women.

Following the findings, an international team of researchers led by the University of Missouri, has completed studies on fruit flies with a condition that resembles a form of HPV-induced cancer.

The fly models, developed by the team may help scientists understand the underlying mechanism by which this virus can cause cancer as well as identify potential drug treatments.

Professor Bing Zhang, while speaking about the study, said, "This is the first model of an HPV-induced cancer in fruit flies. This new model will help scientists understand the molecular and biochemical pathways involved in tumor growth and malignancy caused by HPV as well as screen for potential drug targets."

Previous studies conducted in human cells and in mice have shown that the virus enters the body through the skin and produces several oncoproteins, which are proteins that can transform a normal cell into a tumor cell. One of these viral oncoproteins, called 'E6', plays an important role during the later stages of tumor formation and metastasis.

The study, led by Mojgan Padash, introduced the viral E6 oncoprotein and a human protein that is necessary for E6-induced cancer into fruit flies. The proteins caused severe abnormalities in the epithelial, or skin, cells of the fruit flies.
The researchers also show reduced levels of the same suite of proteins targeted by E6 in humans. Further experiments done in human cell lines with the fruit fly version of the E6-targeted proteins yielded similar results, providing additional evidence that E6 works the same in flies as it does in humans.

Although cellular abnormalities resulted, the scientists found that the E6 proteins were not sufficient enough to cause tumors in flies. Since it is thought that mutations in a human oncoprotein, called Ras, may contribute to E6-mediated tumor development in humans, the researchers introduced this third protein into the flies. With all three proteins present, the flies developed malignant tumors that metastasized.

"The take home message is that the same key molecular players that underlie HPV E6-mediated cancer in humans do the same things in flies. Practically speaking, this means we can now use this fly model to identify other essential components that contribute to E6-mediated tumorigenesis, which has the potential to translate into therapies for HPV-induced cancers," he said.

The study appeared in PLoS Pathogens.

University of Missouri Review Commission to hear from MU Chancellor on Wednesday

MU Interim Chancellor Dr. Hank Foley is set to deliver a presentation Wednesday morning to the University of Missouri Review Commission in Columbia.

The Commission meets Wednesday morning at 10 at Mizzou’s General Services Building on East Stadium in Columbia.

Commission member and Columbia radio talk show host Renee Hulshof tells Missourinet that Chancellor Foley is scheduled to deliver a presentation. Hulshof, who
graduated from Mizzou's School of Journalism, says Commission members will also discuss funding.

Governor Jay Nixon (D) withheld $750,000 in state funding for the Commission in July, citing less-than-projected revenue growth for the fiscal year that ended in June. The $750,000 was aimed at providing Commission members with resources from outside staff.

Hulshof says the Commission Wednesday will also discuss coordination of requests to the University of Missouri staff, and will hear reports from their four working groups. They'll also discuss a possible website for the Commission.

The University of Missouri Review Commission was established under legislation this year from State Sen. Kurt Schaefer (R-Columbia), who said that the UM System’s future was unclear, without some oversight.

When he announced his four Commission appointments in June, Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard (R-Joplin) said that there was “a lack of leadership at the UM System’s highest level” last year, and that the Commission “will help gain back trust and respect from people across the state.”

Dr. Jeanne Sinquefield chairs the Commission, and former UM System President Gary Forsee is the Vice Chair.
MU graduate assistant group lauds ruling on private university unions

By Alan Burdziak

Tuesday, August 23, 2016 at 4:50 pm

Though the National Labor Relations Board’s 3-1 decision Tuesday directing private universities to recognize graduate assistants as employees doesn’t apply to their counterparts at the University of Missouri, the Coalition of Graduate Workers is hopeful the precedent can help their cause.

The board decided in favor of graduate assistants at Columbia University in New York City and reversed a 2004 board decision, which had reversed a 2000 decision. The 2004 decision that resulted from a case out of Rhode Island's Brown University "deprived an entire category of workers of the protections of the" National Labor Relations "Act, without a convincing justification in either the statutory language or the policies of the Act," the board wrote in its decision.

Tuesday’s decision is expected to allow graduate workers at private universities to form unions and provide them with all the protections of employees under the act, a 1935 law that seeks to protect workers’ rights and spur collective bargaining.

It reversed the board’s reasoning in the Brown decision that graduate assistants are “primarily students and have a primarily educational, not economic, relationship with their university,” the board wrote, citing the 2004 decision.

“Statutory coverage is permitted by virtue of an employment relationship; it is not foreclosed by the existence of some other, additional relationship that the Act does not reach,” the board wrote in Tuesday’s decision.

Graduate workers at MU have fought for the last year for the right to unionize though they’ve had no success in getting MU officials to recognize assistants as employees. They began the push last August when then-Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said their health insurance subsidy would be revoked, a decision he later rescinded after large protests on campus. In April, graduate assistants held an election and 84 percent of those who voted were in favor of appointing the Coalition of Graduate Workers as their bargaining unit.
Coalition spokesman Joseph Moore said he hopes the decision can have an indirect effect on MU’s graduate assistants.

“It sets a precedent at the federal level that state and municipal courts can follow,” Moore said.

Moore said he hopes MU administrators read the decision “and realize the battle is futile at this point and voluntarily recognize our union and start collective bargaining with us.”

MU spokesman Christian Basi said in an email that the labor relations board makes decisions regulating the private sector, not public institutions like MU.

"MU and graduate students still need guidance from Missouri courts about important and as yet undecided issues of unionization in our state," Basi said. "MU will continue to cooperate in seeking that guidance through the case pending in Missouri court in the least adversarial manner practical."

Basi said MU officials will work with graduate students on their issues, and noted those discussions have already yielded higher stipends for assistants, changes to when graduate students pay fees so that those payments are not due before students receive stipends and the restoration of health insurance coverage. MU also offers a weeknight child care service to give student parents time to study and work online and is seeking more housing for graduate students, he said.

A lawsuit the coalition filed in May seeks legal recognition as the union representing about 2,600 graduate assistants. MU does not recognize graduate assistants as employees, but along with their health insurance subsidy, many also get a stipend and a tuition waiver.

Moore said the coalition doesn’t deal directly with administrators, but expects the decision to come up during hearings in the civil suit. No hearings have been set yet. A looming legal battle could prove to be an expensive waste of time for the university, Moore said, adding, “We know what the end result will be.”

“This is public money to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, in my estimation, when this is done,” Moore said.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Labor board ruling pleases MU grad rights group**

RUTH SERVEN, 12 hrs ago
COLUMBIA — Graduate student assistants at private universities should be seen as employees and allowed to collectively bargain, the National Labor Relations Board ruled on Tuesday.

Although the decision applies to private universities, it might boost unionization efforts at MU and other public institutions.

The Coalition of Graduate Workers, the graduate employee union at MU, released a statement Tuesday afternoon calling the decision a step toward university recognition for graduate student workers.

“In light of this ironclad, national precedent in favor of graduate student employee organizing, we call on the University of Missouri to end their legal battle to block graduate student employee unionization,” Eric Scott, co-chair of the coalition, said in the statement.

“Recognizing the fair and democratic results of April 2016’s representation election and avoiding further waste of public funds is the right thing to do, and we trust the University will make the right decision.”

The NLRB, an independent agency of the U.S. government, conducts elections for labor union representation and investigates unfair labor practices. The board found that student assistants working at private colleges and universities are statutory employees covered by the National Labor Relations Act.

The ruling reversed a 2004 decision at Brown University, saying the decision “deprived an entire category of workers of the protections of the Act without a convincing justification.”

Brown University argued that graduate assistants cannot be statutory employees because they are primarily students and have primarily an educational, not economic, relationship with their university.

"We disagree," the board said Tuesday.

MU administrators have variously designated graduate students as assistants, employees and students, and administrators have said they do not consider graduate students to have collective bargaining rights.
Following a unionization vote in April by graduate students, Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said he thought graduate students "should be graduate students first and workers second," according to previous Missourian reporting.

The NLRB decision, however, pushed back against that argument, saying the National Labor Relations Act does not clearly prohibit student assistants at private schools from its coverage or protections.

According to Article 1 of the Missouri Constitution's Bill of Rights, employees have a right to organize and bargain collectively with their employer.

Howard Bunsis, chair of the AAUP Collective Bargaining Congress, stated his support for the decision:

"Graduate employees deserve a seat at the table and a voice in higher education," he said in a statement. "Collective bargaining can provide that."

Graduate students have been organizing at MU since last August, following the sudden removal of their health insurance subsidies. Although the subsidies were eventually reinstated for that year and for the 2016-2017 school year, graduate students also continued advocating for affordable student housing, accessible child care and higher stipends.

In April, graduate students voted to unionize, but that vote has not been recognized by MU. The Coalition of Graduate Workers filed a lawsuit against the UM System Board of Curators asking the court to order MU to honor the April vote and recognize graduate assistants as workers with bargaining rights.

The coalition and the Forum on Graduate Rights, its partner organization at MU, are holding a rally Wednesday on Francis Quadrangle. The rally will celebrate organizers' efforts over the past year and continue the push for collective rights and bargaining.
Court ruling gives MU grad workers renewed hope for unionization

COLUMBIA - A ruling Tuesday from the National Labor Relations Board, which states graduate workers at private universities are considered employees, has given graduate workers at the University of Missouri new hope they may eventually be allowed to unionize.

That would grant graduate workers collective bargaining rights.

MU is a public university, so the ruling does not apply directly to it, but Coalition of Graduate Workers Outreach Officer Joseph Moore said the ruling may still help graduate workers fighting for the right to unionize.

"It does have an indirect impact in the sense that it sets a precedent at the federal level that state and local courts can follow," Moore said.

He said graduate workers will stage a rally between Jesse Hall and The Columns on MU’s campus on Wednesday at noon.

MU said in a statement that it still won't recognize graduate workers as employees, because it follows Missouri laws, ones that are different from those affected by the Labor Relations Board ruling on Tuesday.

That statement said, in part, "MU and graduate students still need guidance from Missouri courts about important, and as yet undecided, issues of unionization in our state."

Currently, MU graduate workers are in a legal battle with the university following a series of events over the past year.

Last August, graduate workers organized a walkout as they called for fully subsidized health insurance, more affordable housing, and other benefits. Then, in April, more than 1,500 graduate workers voted for unionization, with 84 percent saying yes.
After that vote, MU said it would not recognize graduate workers as employees, citing legal issues in the state pertaining to unionization. In the university's statement Tuesday, MU said it continues to work toward improved relations with graduate workers. It cited increased minimum stipends, which MU said will go up each of the next two years.

**Graduate Student Minimum Stipends:**

- 2016-17: $13,771 for master's students and $15,148 for PhD students
- 2017-18: $16,525 for master's students and $18,000 for PhD students

Moore said the labor board ruling pertaining to private schools should soon apply to public schools, because graduate workers' roles are similar at both.

"We're the same. We perform the same services. So, the definition of 'employee' the NLBR used for graduate students absolutely applies to graduate students at public as well as private universities," Moore said.

The ruling said graduate students could be treated as employees if they perform and are paid for services the university oversees.

MU said it will continue to seek legal counsel on the legality of unionization of graduate workers as the lawsuit filed against it by the Coalition of Graduate Workers continues.

---

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Ruling Pushes Door to Grad-Student Unions ‘Wide Open’**

**No MU Mention**

Many more private universities can expect to see their graduate employees move to form unions in the wake of Tuesday’s National Labor Relations Board decision on such an effort at Columbia University.

The federal labor board’s 3-to-1 ruling resoundingly overturned a 2004 decision involving Brown University. In the Brown ruling, the board asserted that graduate employees should not be allowed to form unions because their doing so would intrude into the educational process.
In Tuesday’s decision, the majority held that such a belief "is unsupported by legal authority, by empirical evidence, or by the board’s actual experience." It not only rejected the Brown precedent, but also overturned a 1974 ruling that had declared research assistants at Stanford University ineligible to unionize based on a belief that such research is part of the educational process.

The board’s decision in the Columbia case says graduate students employed by a private university are as eligible as any other type of worker to form collective-bargaining units under the National Labor Relations Act.

The decision leaves the doors to unionization "wide open" for graduate employees and "pretty much sweeps almost anyone who is a graduate student providing some service for stipend into the mix," says Daniel V. Johns, a lawyer who advises colleges in labor talks as director of the higher-education practice of Ballard Spahr LLP.

The story continues: [http://chronicle.com/article/Ruling-Pushes-Door-to/237544](http://chronicle.com/article/Ruling-Pushes-Door-to/237544)

Similar story also ran in Inside Higher Education. That story can be found here: [NLRB: Graduate Students at Private Universities May Unionize](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/10/03/nlrb-graduate-students-private-universities-may-unionize)

**Area businesses could see a drop with lower numbers at MU**

COLUMBIA - Area businesses will most likely be impacted by the recent drop in MU enrollment.
The university has about 2,000 fewer students attending this year compared to last.

Columbia Chamber of Commerce member, Jolyn Sattizahan, said the drop will affect local businesses. He and it’s something the city has paid attention to in recent months.

“We don’t monitor the enrollment at Mizzou per say, other than were aware of the enrollment trends, and the University of Missouri is one of the larger economic drivers and engines in Columbia so anytime there’s a significant change in the population or enrollment in the university we do see the trickle effect in the rest of our economy and our businesses both downtown and community wide,” Sattizahan said.

A shift leader at the downtown Seoul Taco, Dylan Couch, admits around 65 to 70 percent of their customers go to MU. He said there is a wait-and-see approach as to how much business is affected.

“We’re not cooking as much as we normally would, but that’s also coming off the summer months where we normally don’t cook as much so were still getting adjusted to see exactly how much we need,” Couch said.

However, there is one development that might help businesses, but it’s one that's been met with controversy.

More student housing units being built downtown might help those businesses.

“With more students living downtown kind of the effects of the enrollment drop might be a little bit more dispersed throughout our community. Those students have a lot of buying power and now that they’re living kind of all over the community I think we’ll see the effects spread out,” Sattizahan said.

She also said with the commerce the city expected there was going to be a drop.

For now, though, it is mostly a waiting game to see just how much the businesses are impacted.
MSU sees record enrollment; transfer students are largest success

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (KY3) - This is week one of classes at Missouri State University, and enrollment is up by 770 students -- to a record high.

Enrollment is down, though, at the University of Missouri in Columbia -- and that adds up to a deficit of millions of dollars in loss of tuition for the university.

We talked to students on Tuesday about why they chose Missouri State.

"It was just cheaper than a lot of the bigger universities," said junior MSU student Cole Bishop.

It is busy on Missouri State's campus, more so than ever before. University officials say they can't tell us for sure that the misfortune at Mizzou, with all the national scrutiny after unrest over race relations and budget issues, necessarily meant more students coming to Springfield. However, we did talk with some students who say it absolutely weighed-in to their decision.

"I know a lot of students that thought about going to MU came here instead, especially a lot of freshman, I think their parents kind of waited on that, too," said MSU student Russell Rounds.

MSU leaders say three things really determine which university a student chooses: cost, location and academic programs offered.

Transfers are really growing. Because of Missouri State's partnership with Ozarks Technical Community College, kids go there for two years for free if they have certain academic standards, and it's just worth it to save the money and have less debt, post graduation.

"The money weighed in a lot. I got my community college for free through the A-plus program and the PELL grant, so my first two years were free and now I'm not in a bunch of debt starting up here," said Bishop.
Missouri state officials say cost is likely the biggest factor in determining where you're going to go, and tuition per year at Missouri State is $2,000 below the national average, so college students, of course, say that's appealing in why those choose MSU.

University of Missouri system sees drop in enrollment


Enrollment is down significantly at the University of Missouri this year. The drop was expected, but the number may be a surprise to many people. The main campus in Columbia has about 2,100 fewer undergraduate students this year compared to fall of 2015. The bulk of that decrease comes from fewer incoming freshmen. Part of the drop may be attributed to the tumultuous year the school had last year, but is likely also a factor of the growing concern over the rising cost of tuition.

The university system had been expecting the enrollment drop after the protests on campus and the departure of high level administrators. But the actual numbers weren’t realized until school began a few days ago. Michelle Luraschi, the College and Career Preparation Counselor at Pattonville High School, says she still sees many students who have the hearts sets on going to Mizzou. But many families are also now exploring other options because schools across the area are offering very competitive student financial packages. “Parents and students are much more
cost conscious,” Luraschi says. “They are also exploring many more schools than I think they have in the past.”

Counselors say that in the past, the University of Missouri didn’t have to be as competitive as other schools because they were always at, or near, capacity. That made other universities in Missouri more appealing because they would often give hefty scholarships and student loan packages to lure top students to their universities. Other schools in surrounding states have also started recruiting St. Louis area students. Colleges in Illinois, Kansas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and others are now offering in-state tuition of students from Missouri who qualify for admittance.

Luraschi says that it’s not just Mizzou seeing a drop. Many other colleges, even community colleges, are seeing a drop because there are fewer students graduating from Missouri high schools. St. Louis Community College system says they were down about 3-percent on opening day, but have actually gained more first time and re-entry students. Missouri State University in Springfield was also down by around 30 incoming freshmen, but overall enrollment was up by nearly 800 students due to better retention. So when you have fewer students going to college, coupled with other states cherry picking some of our top students, you are bound to see the numbers decline across the board.

MU joins Peace Corps fellowship program

Tuesday, August 23, 2016 at 2:00 pm

The Peace Corps and the University of Missouri have launched the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program at MU to provide graduate school scholarships to Peace Corps volunteers who have returned to the United States.

All program fellows will complete internships in underserved American communities while they complete their studies, allowing them to expand on the skills they learned in the Peace Corps, according to a news release.

The Coverdell Fellows Program at MU will be housed in the Department of Geography and offered to students pursuing a master’s degree in geography. Fellows selected for the program will receive a full tuition waiver and work part time as a graduate assistant.

The Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program began in 1985 at Columbia University and now partners with 98 universities.
New director picks up the baton to lead Marching Mizzou

PAMELA A. HOUSER, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — Last week, on a hot August day, members of Marching Mizzou gathered on a concrete field south of Memorial Stadium.

Erin Cooper perched on the top of scaffolding as the band members held horns, flutes, drums, clarinets and assorted other instruments.

“Detail set! Horns are up!” she yelled.

Through the PA system, a metronome set the tempo, and the musicians began to move. With instruments held silently in playing position, they counted in unison — “1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,” — and marched in a series of precisely orchestrated drills around the field.

“Now that I am finally here and things are finally going, it is really being around the students that excites me,” Cooper said. “Having them back on campus, having them working and finally being able to meet them.”

Last month, Cooper became the director of Marching Mizzou, the first woman in the history of MU to lead the marching band. She is the 16th director in the band's 131-year history and currently, the only female director in the SEC.

Cooper also becomes the director of Mini Mizzou, a pep band created in 1973 to include select members of Marching Mizzou. Mini Mizzou performs at basketball games and other requested events on campus.
Before moving to Columbia, Cooper was the director of bands at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma, where she taught music and led the marching band, the wind ensemble and the pep band.

**131 years of band**

Marching Mizzou was founded in 1885 under then-Army Lt. Enoch H. Crowder as an ROTC cadet band belonging to the Military Department on campus. The band had just one performance that year, during half time of the MU-Kansas football game. Most of its repertoire was classical — Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Schubert, Wagner, Mozart.

By the turn of the century, the band had been invited to fairs, parades, horse shows and student activities. The classic big “M” formation first appeared on the field in the 1920s, and the musicians had become the “Tiger Band.”

By 1938, the band included 65 men. Women wouldn't be allowed to join for 20 more years, until 1958.

“There weren’t enough men to form the “M,”” said Michael Budds, a music history professor at MU.

1958 was also the year when the band became Marching Mizzou and began to swell, from around 165 members to nearly 200 in 1966 and more than 300 today.

During the last 100 years, Marching Mizzou has performed during nearly 30 bowl games. Memorable performances include an appearance at the Orange Bowl in 1960 when director Charles Emmons and his team created the “Flip Tigers” routine. The band would spell out the word MIZZOU, then execute a flip drill to spell TIGERS.

Flip Tigers has been used for pre-game performances ever since, and Cooper said she plans to continue the tradition when the band takes the field for the first football game of the season on Sept. 3.
Taking her place

During Marching Mizzou's first rehearsals last week, Cooper energetically led the band through a series of drills. The musicians marched up and down the field, practicing easy drills without music before moving to more advanced moves with music added.

Cooper's positive attitude and reinforcement seemed well-received with students carefully following her instructions.

“That was so much better!” she exclaimed at one point in the rehearsal. "I love it!"

The music she likes covers a wide swath of American music, from classic rock to pop. The first halftime show will include music from the World War II era — “Sing, Sing, Sing,” “You’re a Grand Ol’ Flag,” and a medley of a salute to the armed forces.

Cooper said she plans to incorporate sets from Earth, Wind and Fire, and Queen, as well as a Halloween show to feature "The Time Warp" from "Rocky Horror Picture Show."

She said she chooses music she is excited to teach, compositions the students want to play and tunes the audience wants to hear. The halftime shows are designed with a software program that choreographs movements and assigns them to each player. Cooper said she will design six shows for the 2016 season.

So far, the band members seem to like her choices and her style.

“Dr. Cooper runs a tight ship, and that’s a good thing,” said Travis Meier, a third-year member of Marching Mizzou and an alto sax section leader.

“I think as a college marching band we need to be strict in some areas, just to make sure we are as pristine as possible.”

Sam Riley, a drum major of the band, called her "great."
"She has a lot of energy and she has good direction with the band. She has a vision of what she wants us to do and we have already improved in just a couple days."

**Background in music**

Cooper grew up in Germantown, Maryland, with music at the center of her life. She started with piano lessons, acted in school musicals and studied classical ballet. She said she can play nearly every instrument, with an emphasis on piano, flute and piccolo.

“My parents had this wall of records in the basement when I was growing up, which led to my eclectic taste,” she said.

She said she knew from a young age that she wanted to be a teacher but didn't land on music until she attended the one of the George N. Parks Drum Major Academy's summer camps at West Chester University in Pennsylvania when she was 16.

She calls Parks, a pioneering educator in the field of marching band leadership, a profound influence on her life. He was the founder of the academy in Pennsylvania and director of the University of Massachusetts Amherst until his sudden death in 2010.

An emotional Cooper recalled that a colleague who learned of her MU appointment told her, “Parks would be proud.”

She earned a bachelor's degree in music education from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and a master's degree in instrumental conducting performance from the University of Delaware. She also has a doctoral degree in conducting from the University of Alabama.

Last week, as she surveyed the band from the top of her tower, she paused to consider the season ahead.

“We are all working hard together," she said, "so we all look great together.”
Missouri may still miss campaign despite narrow gap in Trump-Clinton race

BY DAVE HELLING

dhelling@kcstar.com

Is Missouri now up for grabs in the race for the White House?

Two public opinion polls released Tuesday suggested a tantalizing answer — yes. That’s a sharp turnaround from just a few months ago, when all sides agreed the state was safely in the column of Republican nominee Donald Trump.

But a Monmouth University poll released Tuesday showed Trump leading Democrat Hillary Clinton in Missouri by a razor-thin one point margin, 44 percent to 43 percent. A Survey USA poll released Tuesday showed an identical result.

Such a close race would typically prompt both candidates to start competing for the state’s 10 electoral votes.

Yet analysts and operatives urged caution. Trump’s small margin in Missouri may simply reflect a campaign struggling for support everywhere, they said. That means it’s unlikely Trump — or Clinton — will begin pouring significant money and people into what is still considered a reliably red state.

Missouri hasn’t delivered a majority for a Democratic presidential nominee since 1996.

“If the Trump campaign has to divert resources to Missouri it will be a signal that he is in real trouble nationally,” said Peverill Squire, a political science professor at the University of Missouri.

The Monmouth University Poll has a margin of error of 4.9 percent. The Survey USA poll was conducted for the Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund, a group supporting Gov. Jay Nixon’s veto of a bill that expands gun rights. The poll’s margin of error is 3.3 percent.
Missouri remains more important for Trump than Clinton. While the Democrat has several plausible paths to a victory in the Electoral College, Trump has to win safe states like Missouri, plus pick up other blue states, if he hopes to win the White House.

In its news release, Monmouth says its survey shows Trump doing better in Missouri with white women than with white men, the opposite of the dynamic in other states. Clinton has a commanding lead with nonwhite voters, the survey shows, although she is underperforming Barack Obama’s nonwhite vote share in 2012.

Nevertheless, the survey’s authors think Missouri will be more competitive at the presidential level than in the last cycle.

“The race was a squeaker the last time there was a vacancy in the Oval Office,” Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute, said in a news release. “This year looks more like 2008 than 2012.”

In 2008, GOP nominee Sen. John McCain defeated then-Sen. Barack Obama by about 3,900 votes out of almost 2.9 million votes cast in Missouri. The race was the closest in the nation — so close that many news organizations didn’t declare a victor in the state until days after Election Day.

There are some indications that Trump is paying more attention to Missouri than might have been expected just a few months ago. The campaign announced this week that it had hired a Missouri director and a communications director, for example.

The communications office did not respond to a phone call and email request for comment on the poll and the state of the Trump campaign in Missouri.

But there are no indications Trump or his running mate, Gov. Mike Pence, will come to Missouri in the immediate future. Neither presidential campaign has purchased advertising time on local broadcast stations, although some ads are airing on cable programs.

Trump is making yard signs and bumper stickers available at some Missouri locations.

Trump has a small presence in Kansas, where he leads by five points according to a Survey USA-KSN poll released earlier this month.

Clinton has made some gestures toward Missouri. Her campaign opened a St. Louis headquarters Tuesday, and last week Sen. Tim Kaine, the vice presidential nominee, raised several hundred thousand dollars in Kansas City.
“Hillary Clinton is committed to organizing in all 50 states,” said Marlon Marshall, state campaign director for Hillary for America.

Yet much of the Clinton effort remains focused on 13 battleground states, plus potential pickups like Georgia and Utah. Missouri, some sources said, remains less competitive than those states.

National Democrats may also be trying to tamp down expectations in Missouri because of the so-called Kerry effect. In 2004, nominee John Kerry promised an expensive effort in Missouri — only to withdraw from the state just weeks before the election. Kerry’s decision infuriated the state’s Democrats, including Sen. Claire McCaskill, who was then engaged in a losing campaign for governor.

Instead, the 2016 Democratic effort will be aimed at down-ballot races for the U.S. Senate and governor in the state. Kaine’s fundraiser, for example, raised money for the state party as well as the presidential campaign.

Monmouth found Sen. Roy Blunt leading Democratic opponent Jason Kander by five points, 48 percent to 43 percent. Democrat Chris Koster leads in the governor’s race by 11 points, the survey said, 51 percent to 40 percent for Republican nominee Eric Greitens.

The Survey USA poll had the governor’s race much closer — 44 percent for Koster compared with 42 percent for Greitens.

The Monmouth poll included Libertarian Gary Johnson as an option in the presidential race. He had the support of 8 percent of likely voters who responded to the poll.

Green Party presidential nominee Jill Stein wasn’t included in either survey. Stein will be on the November ballot in Missouri, the secretary of state’s office said Tuesday.

**Messenger: Voting rights case shines light on region's separate and unequal schools**

By Tony Messenger St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 3 hrs ago

The question that tripped up Tim Wolfe is at the heart of what ails St. Louis.
Last November, during the Concerned Student 1950 protests on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, a group of black students asked Wolfe, then the president of the university system, a simple question.

“What do you think systematic oppression is?” they asked.

Wolfe hemmed and hawed.

“I'll give you an answer, but it will be the wrong answer,” he said, not wanting to engage in the important discussion.

So they asked again.

True to his word, Wolfe got the answer wrong. He put the onus back on the young protesters, suggesting systematic oppression was based on their understanding that certain government systems work against the interests of minorities.

The uncomfortable exchange, caught on video, contributed to Wolfe’s demise.

Nine months later, a federal judge got to the heart of the correct answer.

On Monday, U.S. District Judge Rodney W. Sippel put a hold on School Board elections in the Ferguson-Florissant school district in part because its method of electing at-large board members disenfranchises black voters.

Sippel's ruling came on a lawsuit filed by the ACLU on behalf of the NAACP and three district residents who argued that blacks are under-represented on a board, which when the suit was filed, five of its seven members were white in a district in which 80 percent of the students are black. (A third black board member has since been elected.)

The problem, Sippel noted, isn’t necessarily with voters, but with a broken system:
“… (I)t is my finding that the cumulative effects of historical discrimination, current political practices, and the socioeconomic conditions present in the District impact the ability of African-Americans in FFSD to participate equally in Board elections,” Sippel wrote.

The ruling could have tremendous impact on school districts in the St. Louis region. In fact, it’s endemic of the entire region’s disenfranchisement of young, black students, many of them living in areas of poverty with little political clout.

On Sunday, in writing about the St. Louis Public Schools having to shut off drinking water access in 30 schools because of high lead levels, I contrasted that sad reality with the situation in Ladue, a few miles away, where the district is actually selling naming rights for its drinking fountains.

The majority of readers who responded to the column — at least in calls and emails to me — recognized the power of the water fountain as a metaphor for this region’s serious problems with historic division.

But some — mostly parents of students at Mann Elementary in the city, and defenders of the Ladue district in the county — thought I unfairly singled out their schools.

This thoughtful note from Thomas Kickham, a city resident who teaches at St. Louis University High School and taught for 27 years in Rockwood schools, fairly summarizes some of those criticisms:

“I think you were unfair to Ladue patrons in your column. They did not create the system of inequity between districts. They are just doing all they can to do best by their children and their district. Certainly, it would help the city schools to have white, middle-class parents to invest their children in the district. Where these children go always improves the district for everybody. However, you made your investment of children in Rockwood … a great district. By doing so, you perpetuated the strength of the district rather than investing your children into a struggling city district to improve it.”
The letter writer is correct. It’s not today’s Ladue parent that created the problem, nor today’s Rockwood parent. My wife and I moved to Wildwood specifically so our children would have the educational opportunity they are receiving in great schools with excellent teachers, principals and facilities.

But guess what?

I recognize that I am part of the problem. My decision to invest my money in a suburban school district has a ripple effect on the entire region. I get that.

The solution, then, is to fix the system, and that’s what the column was about. It’s also what Sippel wrote will be necessary to cure the Voting Rights Act violations going on in the Ferguson-Florissant district.

“I encourage the parties … to work together in the remedy phase to devise a solution that effectively addresses the current inequalities impacting the electoral process and accommodates the special characteristics present in the FFSD population,” the judge wrote.

Here’s my solution to both problems:

Tear down the school district boundaries. In Ferguson-Florissant, in Ladue, in Rockwood, in St. Louis. Tear them down so that my tax dollars, and those from Ladue to Ferguson, are invested in all of the region’s children.

The current system, by its very existence, with school districts in St. Louis divided so that parents and taxpayers are invested only in their own kids’ schools, is inherently oppressive to children who live in poorer ZIP codes.

Back to my letter writer. The most important sentence was the one in the middle:

“Certainly, it would help the city schools to have white, middle-class parents to invest their children in the district.”
Were all the public schools in the city and county combined into one district, the student enrollment, based on most recent figures from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, would be 179,027. That would make St. Louis only the 13th-largest district in the country.

If we were all invested in every student, none of them would be drinking lead in their water. If we were all invested in every student, my child might have access to one less turf field on a football stadium in exchange for students in the city all having brand new textbooks or digital tablets. If we were all invested in every student in the district, then our pride for our district would extend beyond the four or five schools within a few miles of our house.

How’s this for a new future for St. Louis free of systematic oppression: Twenty years from now, when that most St. Louis of questions — where did you go to high school? — is asked, what if there was only one answer: I went to school in St. Louis.