

HOLY JOE SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The Holy Joe Society is a not-for profit with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. Its mission is:

*Using persuasion, education and litigation
to challenge
improper activities of Missouri local government*

LITIGATION. The Society has gotten involved in five lawsuits. They are:

- 1.) *City of St. Louis, Guaranteed Basic Income, Tumlin, et al. v. City of St. Louis, No. 2422-CC01579. This suit attacked the City of St. Louis' plan to disburse \$500 per month of public funds to persons selected by lottery on the basis of such criteria as race and religion. The society funded a successful challenge and the court stopped the program.*
- 2.) *City Charter Commission, Lane v. City of St. Louis, No. 2322-CC05115 (22nd Circuit). This action challenged the validity of a St. Louis City Charter amendment that purported to create a "Charter Commission" with power to submit Charter amendments directly to the voters. That is not allowed under the law. The society funded a challenge and the City's attorneys pretty much agreed with us and the city dropped the whole thing. We had hoped to get a ruling that such a Charter Commission, if the City were to revive the idea, would be unconstitutional, but the court said the matter is moot. The society's position won, but the issue is open for the future.*
- 3.) *Rothmiller v. City of Pine Lawn, St. Louis County, 23SL-CC05492. There are allegations pending of serious government misconduct in the City of Pine Lawn in St. Louis County. Allegedly the City is operating without a constitutionally required budget, and government officials may be engaged in financial shenanigans. The Society has funded a suit, with a former city alderman as the challenger. The case is early in the process.*
- 4.) *Hutchison v. Perry County Health System, 23PR-CC00064. A Board member of the Perry County Hospital System brought suit against his own Board's contractor for violations of the Sunshine Act. From press reports, it appeared that there was misconduct underway within this rural hospital system, and the situation seemed to offer an opportunity to broaden the geographical scope of the Society's activities. The Society began providing help but the suit is now stalled. The Society will likely drop out.*
- 5.) *Double AA Market v. City of St. Louis, 2322-CC01235, aff'd, 112466 (Mo.Ct.App.E.D.). Double AA Market's owner was denied government authorization to open a convenience store, because the Ward's Alderman opposed the business and for no other material reason. The City has a way of doing business called "aldermanic courtesy," whereby each alderman essentially controls development in his or her Ward. This has led to federal indictments. So far the courts have refused in our cases to address the issue on the merits, relying on legal principles involving resort to administrative remedies. The trial and appellate courts rejected Double AA's claim; a request for Supreme Court review is pending. However, there is some reason to hope that by calling attention to the issue, the litigation will have a positive effect on City practices.*

BOARD. The Board of Directors are: Emily Perez, Chair, Eric Peterson, Vice-Chair, Alan Wright, Treasurer, Bevis Schock, Secretary, and Joe von Kaenel.

LITIGATION DIRECTOR. Retired St. Louis Circuit Judge Robert Dierker continues to serve as the Society's Litigation Director. He evaluates potential cases and monitors the process.

FINANCES. Rounding to thousands, the Society'ss finances for 2024 were:

\$42K raised, with half of that from the Board,

\$40K spent with \$35K of that, 88%, on attorney's fees for the cases.

\$27K cash on hand.

Expenses. other than for attorney's fees for the cases, are only for branding, (website and receptions), insurance and minor miscellaneous. There are no salaries or office expenses.

WEBSITE. The Society has a website at holyjoesociety.org. The website updates the public on the Society's activities and solicits ideas for cases to bring and to support.

EDUCATION AND PERSUASION. In the coming year the Society will begin its education and persuasion functions perhaps by publishing a brochure for public officials outlining their ethical duties, and through engagement with the media.