



UNITED STATES CONGRESSWOMAN  
**VICKY HARTZLER**  
MISSOURI'S FOURTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
★★★★★



This past week I kicked off my "[Drug Free MO](#)" anti-drug initiative in our district. This effort is aimed at preventing drug use among our younger population, implementing recovery programs for current users, and bringing communities and leaders together to fight the scourge of drug abuse in our neighborhoods. It is my goal to put an end to this crisis in Missouri's Fourth District and beyond.

## **Community Involvement**

The week also included a number of stops around our district to meet with local leaders, law enforcement officials, and other anti-drug stakeholders to discuss the problem, what has been done, and what needs to be done. These roundtables provided a good forum to bring interested parties together and to engage on solutions to this devastating issue.



This busy week began with a stakeholders' meeting in Lebanon with members of law enforcement, drug counselors, elected officials, the faith community, and others. Additional stakeholders meetings were held in Pulaski County and Dallas County, with many good people involved in the fight against drug abuse offering their views, perspectives, and best practice ideas for tackling the issue.

Some of the stories shared were heartbreaking, especially those involving children who learned to abuse drugs as a result of their parents' addictions. There are a lot of organizations and individuals offering assistance. In addition, drug courts – one of which is set to begin this fall for Laclede County – offer an alternative to jail time for those who can make much of their lives if given a second chance. But one of the themes I heard during the discussions was that it would be best if we were able to stop drug addiction before it starts.

We also discussed the fact that the addiction problem goes beyond illegal drugs – it involves opioids and other legal drugs that are addictive and sometimes lead to abuse. I shared that I had supported legislation in Congress to allow individual counties to institute drug monitoring programs to provide safeguards against doctor and pharmacy shopping. The Missouri General Assembly is, of course, working on state legislation to monitor prescription drugs. I am watching those developments closely.

## **Youth Prevention**

In addition to the stakeholders meetings, I held a number of assemblies with high school students from around our district – in Waynesville, Sedalia, Nevada, El Dorado Springs, Warrensburg, and Windsor. Students were able to hear compelling stories from speakers who had experienced drug addiction in their lives and who lost loved ones as a result of drug use.



My goal with these assemblies is to stop the problem before it starts. I challenged these students to be the first generation to go beyond saying 'no' to drugs and say 'yes' to life and better choices. The plain truth is that drug abuse has devastated so many Missouri families. This is a self-made crisis. But the good news is we have the power to stop it. It starts with us – in our cities and towns.



During these assemblies, I was joined on stage by Christine McDonald, an author, speaker, and inspiration to many. She has survived human trafficking, homelessness, and addiction. For 17 years Christine faced those challenges which brought 103 arrests and seven stints in prison. She is now a person in long-term recovery, having been clean for over 13 years and has gone on to be a loving mother of two. She shares her powerful story to inspire, guide, and help others.

Dr. Wayne Williams is a former professor emeritus at the University of Central Missouri. In 2016, at the age of 22, Dr. Williams' daughter, Jessica, lost her battle with heroin and died of an overdose. Following her death, Dr. Williams has courageously been willing to share his family's story to bring light to the issue of drug abuse facing our country and challenge other young people to not succumb to drug use.



Lieutenant Kevin Schoenfeld is a member of the Mid-Missouri Drug Task Force, a 10-year veteran and Deputy Sheriff of Camden County who shared the hard things he has seen and the lives devastated through drug use. Lieutenant Schoenfeld is an expert in drug recognition, using this skill to spot impaired driving. His stories were powerful reminders of how drugs can ruin lives.

Captain Kip Bartlett, Commander of the Mid-Missouri Drug Task Force, spoke at some of the assemblies, as well. The students really listened to his first-hand accounts of drugged individuals and how important it is to never start using drugs. I appreciate all of the speakers and their willingness to share their personal stories. My hope is that every person who heard their accounts will choose to live drug free and change the future of our state as a result.



This was a very powerful week working on an extremely important issue. I am encouraged by the response we got from the students and the progress being made in local communities but know that much more can and should be done. Local leaders, faith leaders, and parents are key to this issue.

**I encourage every parent to talk with your child about the problem.** One website, among many, that has a plethora of resources is: [shatterproof.org](https://shatterproof.org). It contains parent resources, drug information, and the latest evidence-based programs to combat the drug problem. You can also access my [Drug Free Missouri Toolkit](https://hartzler.house.gov/drug-free-mo) which lists local resources in the MO-4<sup>th</sup> District, faith-based programs, and best practices at: <https://hartzler.house.gov/drug-free-mo> **Together, let's decide it's time to end the drug problem and live drug free!**

## Academy Nominations

Since we last communicated, I had the honor of hosting a reception, in Lebanon, for the Class of 2021 MO-4 appointees to the United States Service Academies and the families of the appointees.



Congratulations to Kaylynn Harvey of Whiteman Air Force Base, who will report to the U.S. Air Force Academy; Adam Lance of Columbia, who is looking forward to attending the U.S. Naval Academy; Peyton McGuire of Butler, who will study at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Mason Michels of Fort Leonard Wood, who is headed to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point; Robert M. Moore of Clinton, who is on his way to the U.S.

Naval Academy; and Jonathan Petree of Tipton, who will make his mark at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He was unable to attend our ceremony but was represented by his parents, Robert and Holly Petree.

**It was an honor to present each of these outstanding young Americans with a certificate and a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol in their honor as they begin their careers in service to our country.**

Following the reception, I hosted our annual Military Academy Information Day for students considering applying to attend a Service Academy school.



Dozens of students and their families attended this session to hear from representatives of the Service Academies and others on hand to provide information. It is heartening to see so many young people looking into the possibility of making a commitment to serving their country and, at the same time, receiving a top quality education from some of the best colleges and universities anywhere in the world.

The application process for the Service Academies will open on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Information regarding eligibility and other qualifications is available at <https://hartzler.house.gov/services/service-academy-nominations>.

Yours in service,



Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress

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