

Missouri Reprieve Power

The Missouri Constitution empowers Governor Parson “to grant reprieves, commutations and pardons, after conviction, for all offenses except treason and cases of impeachment, upon such conditions and with such restrictions and limitations as he may deem proper, subject to provisions of law as to the manner of applying for pardons.” MO CONST Art. 4, § 7. The words “for all offenses” contemplates the use of reprieves outside the death-penalty context. See generally *Lime v. Blagg*, 131 S.W.2d 583, 585-86 (Mo. 1939) (discussing reprieves to those serving sentences of confinement).

Like many state constitutions, Article 4 § 7 refers to statutory regulation of "the manner of applying for pardons," but not the manner of applying for reprieves. Although a Missouri statute provides that “[a]ll applications for pardon, commutation of sentence or reprieve shall be referred to the board for investigation,” Mo. Ann. Stat. § 217.800. The language of Article 4 § 7 suggests that a reprieve takes legal effect regardless of whether the board has concluded its investigation.

In short, Missouri aligns with a broader trend, across all states, that the reprieve power shall remain unfettered to allow for swift action in times of emergency.