

FROM PAGE 1A

HUNGER

supply by two-thirds, McAfee-Bryant said.

And analyses of the GOP megabill have found it would slash between \$211 billion and \$300 billion for SNAP over 10 years.

To qualify for SNAP benefits, households typically must be at or below 130% of the federal poverty line. Less than 40% of the 120,000 people experiencing food insecurity in Jackson County qualify for SNAP assistance, McAfee-Bryant said.

“The rest, they’re the

working poor,” she said. “People who are doing gig jobs, caring for their loved ones, navigating unstable housing, and the ones who fall just outside of the safety net but they still cannot make ends meet.”

The impact of deep cuts to SNAP would be devastating, she said. Organizations like her own and others that combat hunger in the community, like Harvesters food bank would be unable to fill in the gaps.

“Not with local dona-

tions, not with volunteers and not with goodwill alone,” McAfee-Bryant said.

FOOD INSECURITY IN KC

Experts say SNAP benefits provide nine meals for every one that a food bank or community kitchen can. The proposed cuts to SNAP would result in a reduction of between 7 billion and 9.5 billion meals a year, according to the Feeding America food bank network.

“Being poor is a full-time job. And being poor, it’s not like you can take a weekend off. You’re going to be poor and hungry

those days,” said U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, a Kansas City Democrat, at a news conference Friday.

The budget bill passed the House last month, but Cleaver said he’s optimistic that Republican infighting will derail it from becoming law.

“We have a chance of making repairs in the Senate,” Cleaver said. “If there are any changes in the legislation, it will have to come back to the House. And I doubt seriously if it can get out of the House, because the Senate is going to make some changes that the Freedom Caucus will not accept.”

Last month, after being picked by Trump to oversee Department of Agriculture nutritional benefits programs, including SNAP, Kansas state Rep. Patrick Penn, a Wichita Republican, promised to crack down on benefits fraud. He said he’s ready to “make a couple people cry.”

Asked to respond Friday, Cleaver shook his head mournfully.

“People are crying. He’s got that right,” Cleaver said. “People are crying because they’re hungry and parents are crying because they are not going to be able to sufficiently feed their children.”

Terry, the homeless

Kansas City resident, said there are many misconceptions about the kind of people who wake up in the morning not knowing where their next meal will come from.

“If someone is hungry or broke, it might not be their fault,” Terry said. “It might just be mitigating circumstances that prevailed against that person, and just because a person is hungry doesn’t necessarily mean that they’ve made improper decisions in their life. Feed someone if you can.”

Matthew Kelly:
316-268-6203,
@Matt_Kelly22222

FROM PAGE 1A

MCINTIRE

be prosecuted. You will spend decades behind bars. It is not worth it.”

The intensity of the federal response reflected the aims of President Donald Trump, who in March said he considered acts of vandalism against Tesla to be “terrorism.” Trump’s comments were made at a time when Elon Musk, Tesla’s CEO, was a high-profile advisor to the administration at the newly formed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

Their relationship has frayed in recent weeks as the two men traded blows on X and Truth Social following Musk’s departure from the White House. But their political alliance was strong when the Justice Department took up McIntire’s case and a handful of other cases involving Tesla vehicles and vandalism.

That has put McIntire in a position few defendants in local cases encounter: facing federal charges with severe penalties in a prosecution where the victim is — or, at least, was — a close associate of the president.

The Department of Justice declined to comment.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OWEN MCINTIRE

McIntire grew up in Parkville, the only child of two music educators. His father, David, a retired college professor and experimental composer, runs a small classical music label from home. His mother, Michelle, teaches voice and piano and directs community theater productions. The McIntires did not respond to requests for comment.

As a kid, McIntire trained in ballet, participated in Scholar Bowl, and worked on robotics teams. At the time of his arrest, he was studying physics at the University of Massachusetts. He’s tall and rail-thin (6 foot 1, 140 pounds) with long hair that falls halfway down his back. According to court filings, he has long managed a set of diagnoses that includes autism, ADHD and depression.

McIntire was back in Kansas City on spring break the night of March 17. Musk had been in the news. His fervor for firing federal workers in the name of government efficiency had sparked protests across the country and already led to some vandalism directed at Tesla cars in other cities. One week earlier, Trump had stood next to Musk at the White House and declared that he would label violence against Tesla dealerships “domestic terrorism.”

According to prosecutors, McIntire drove his parents’ Subaru from Parkville to a house a block away from the Tesla dealership near 103rd Street and State Line Road. He proceeded on foot to the dealership, wearing dark clothes and a light-colored brimmed hat with a black ribbon. He carried a bottle of Bragg’s apple cider vinegar with gasoline and a rag stuffed inside — a Molotov cocktail.

A little after 11 p.m., a

Kansas City police officer noticed a small blaze in the parking lot of the dealership. The officer approached the scene and saw that the flames were coming from an empty Cybertruck. KCFD arrived soon after and extinguished the fire, which in the meantime had spread to a second Cybertruck. Two nearby charging stations were also damaged. The dealership had been closed for four hours, and no human beings were anywhere near the fire. The damages were later estimated to be around \$215,000.

The next day, officials with the ATF, the FBI, and the Kansas City Police Department descended on the dealership to begin an investigation. By the end of the week, they had linked the firebombing to McIntire through surveillance footage and witness testimonies. A month later, he was arrested in Boston.

PROSECUTORS SOUGHT STRICT PRE-TRIAL ARRANGEMENT

If the severity of the charges hadn’t already made clear that prosecutors intended to bring the full weight of the federal government to bear on McIntire’s case, that became unmistakable when he made his initial court appearance in Boston.

There, prosecutors took the unusual step of arguing that the 19-year-old should be detained ahead of trial, saying he posed a danger to the community due to the alleged use of a destructive device and was a flight risk. They also cited a federal law that presumes detention for terrorism-related offenses.

McIntire’s federal public defender argued successfully that strict home confinement with GPS monitoring at his parents’ house in Parkville would sufficiently mitigate any risk.

But back in United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, where the court proceedings moved after McIntire returned home, the government appealed that judge’s order.

By then, McIntire had hired Dan Nelson and Patrick McNerney of the Kansas City law firm Spencer Fane as his defense attorneys. In their opposition to the government’s motion, they pointed to a string of recent cases involving similar or even more serious allegations where federal defendants were allowed to go free on bond.

There was James River Phillips, accused of purchasing large amounts of ammonium nitrate and planting an improvised explosive device in an Ohio sports complex parking lot; he walked out on a recognizance bond. In Colorado, a man charged in April with firebombing two Teslas using Molotov cocktails — nearly identical to McIntire’s alleged offense — was released on \$10,000 bail. In another case, a South Carolina defendant who attacked Tesla charging stations with five incendiary de-

vices was also allowed to await trial at home.

Even a former federal agent who leaked classified information to an ISIS target was granted bond, despite national security concerns and government objections.

Nelson and McNerney, who declined comment to The Star, also pointed out in their filing that the government didn’t arrest McIntire for a month after identifying him as the person who set the fire.

“The Government’s investigative conduct itself — waiting 30 days to effect an arrest — demonstrates that they have no genuine fear of public danger or flight risk from McIntire,” they wrote.

On May 29, Judge Stephen Bough sided with the defense. McIntire remains out on bond under stringent conditions. He has a location monitor and is allowed to leave his parents’ house only to work at the sandwich shop or meet with a lawyer or doctor. His trial is set for Aug. 11.

HOW CHARGES FOR TESLA VANDALISM COMPARE

What if McIntire had set fire to a car not made by the man who gave \$250 million to Trump’s campaign? What if he instead torched a couple of Tahoes in the Chevrolet lot around the corner from the Tesla dealership?

McIntire “would likely be charged in state court, not charged federally as a purported terrorist,” his attorneys argued in May.

Several Missouri defense attorneys interviewed by The Star agreed that similar acts of property destruction have typically been prosecuted in state court, where punishments tend to be less severe.

Attorney Casey Symonds described the likely state charges as Class E felonies, each carrying up to four years in prison. “Probation would be the floor, and the ceiling is eight years in prison,” he said, adding that because McIntire is a first-time offender, probation would be the most common outcome.

Tony Miller, a former county legislator and assistant prosecuting attorney in Jackson County, said that for a first-time offender with no criminal history, probation or a short jail term followed by probation would be the likely result.

“As a defense attorney, I’d be aiming for probation with no time served,” Mill-

er said. “As a prosecutor, if I were being zealous, maybe a 120-day callback. That’s basically a shock time situation where they do 120 days in jail and undergo a treatment program, a substance abuse evaluation or life skills program. And then they are released on probation.” He added that restitution for the damaged vehicles would also be a priority.

Greg Watt, a former Jackson County prosecutor who now does feder-

al defense work, agreed, saying that in a typical arson case involving property damage but no injuries, “at most he would have a 120-day callback with a restitution plan in place.”

Roughly 2% of federal cases actually go to trial. The vast majority are resolved through plea agreements where defendants plead guilty to reduced charges and receive a lighter sentence.

But federal crimes that



Fire-damaged Tesla Cybertrucks remain covered at a Tesla dealership on March 18 in Kansas City. Fire crews responded to the dealership at 1011 State Line Road the night before to extinguish the blaze.

carry mandatory minimums — such as the malicious destruction of property charges against McIntire — give prosecutors a great deal of leverage in plea negotiations. If McIntire pleads guilty to that charge, the judge has no choice but to sentence him to at least five years in prison.

A plea deal in this case could involve the government dropping that charge if he pleads guilty to the other charge of unlawful possession of an unregistered destructive device. In such a scenario, the judge would not be bound to issuing a minimum sentence.

But that assumes the Trump administration’s Department of Justice is willing to bargain. Deputy attorney general Todd Blanche — the second-highest-ranking law enforcement officer in America — said in an April press release announcing McIntire’s arrest that “the people behind these violent and dangerous attacks on private property will face decades in prison — we will not make deals and we will not negotiate.”

David Hudnall:
816-234-4172,
@davidhudnall

Senior Living at Tallgrass Creek Gives You MORE.

- 1. MORE** for your money with predictable monthly spending.
- 2. MORE** amenities, like a pool, fitness center, and restaurants.
- 3. MORE** peace of mind with on-site care should you need it.

See ALL the reasons to discover Overland Park’s premier community.

Call 1-800-578-3790 for your free brochure.

Tallgrass Creek
BY ERICKSON SENIOR LIVING®

Overland Park
TallgrassCreek.com