

State Senator Gary Nodler

District 32 Capitol Report

INSIDE:

Reforming
Higher
Education

A Better
Place to
Do Business

Missouri's
Money





From the Desk of Senator Gary Nodler

Dear Friends,

The 2007 legislative session was filled with challenges and successes. I am pleased with the progress we have made to make Missouri a better place to live, work, and visit. By the time session ended on May 18, we had sent 133 bills to the governor. This included bills making monumental reforms to higher education, creating tax credits and exemptions to improve Missouri's businesses, and making needed changes to state-sponsored healthcare.

This year, the General Assembly also completed work on the state budget, a fiscally responsible spending plan that included no tax increases for Missouri's taxpayers. Missouri's prospering economy allowed us to include a \$200 million reserve in the spending plan in case future revenue projections ever dip below expectations.

The following pages are a synopsis of the accomplishments of the first regular session of the 94th General Assembly.

It is an honor to represent the 32nd Senate District, and I look forward to continuing my service to you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Nodler".



Senator Nodler Appointed to Chair Appropriations Committee

Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons appointed Sen. Nodler to serve as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which is largely responsible for crafting the state's budget that is constitutionally due each year.

Senator Nodler was appointed to the appropriations committee following his initial election to the Senate in 2002. He then became vice-chairman in 2004 under then-chairman Sen. Chuck Gross, who recently retired from the Senate.

"I am very pleased with this new appointment," said Sen. Nodler. "Over the past five years, I have worked with great appropriations chairmen, Senators John T. Russell and Chuck Gross, who established high standards of leadership for this committee."

As appropriations chairman, Sen. Nodler will now oversee the budget-writing process, making sure the state's spending plan continues to be presented balanced and on time.

"Every year, the appropriations committee deals with billions of dollars of Missouri's money, making sure it is spent responsibly," Sen. Nodler said. "In fulfilling this public trust, rest assured that each and every day, I will approach the state's budget with the understanding that these funds are ours — yours and mine — and with the assurance that they are invested in a way that meets the greatest needs we face today as well as securing the best future for our children and grandchildren."

SENATOR NODLER'S LEGISLATION



Improving Higher Education

Sen. Nodler sponsored Senate Bill 389, which makes some valuable reforms to Missouri's higher education system. The goals of the legislation are to make Missouri colleges more affordable, accessible, and accountable.

Main provisions of the bill include:



Keeping Colleges Accountable

The Joint Committee on Education will meet twice a year to review the performance of schools in Missouri and the Coordinating Board of Higher Education will have extended authority to hold Missouri schools accountable. There will also be competency tests for entry level courses, resulting in smoother transitions and transfers between schools.



Restraining Tuition Increases

Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, if a university increases their tuition at a rate greater than inflation, as defined by the Consumer Price Index, the Coordinating Board could fine the institution up to 5 percent of their state appropriation.



Increasing Scholarship Opportunities

The Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program combines two existing scholarship programs to create a need-based scholarship opportunity that will include nearly \$75 million for community college, public university, and private university students. Bright Flight Scholarships, a merit-based opportunity, will see funding increases and will be available to more students.



Campus Construction Projects



Senate Bill 389 also sells a portion of the out-of-state assets of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA). Statewide, nearly \$260 million will go to fund 28 university and college building projects, with an additional \$30 million to community college campuses, and \$15 million for business research hubs affiliated with universities. The plan is called the Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative.

Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative Projects in the 32nd District

- \$18.97 million for a health sciences building at Missouri Southern State University featuring added class and clinic space for Allied Health program graduates.
- \$2 million for the Missouri Alternative and Renewable Energy Training Center at Crowder College.
- \$200,000 for a Missouri Power Resource Center, a collaborative effort between Missouri Southern State University, Missouri Technology Corporation, University of Missouri-Columbia, University of Missouri-Rolla, Missouri State University, and an advanced technology corporation.
- \$173,000 for a dental hygiene distance learning program collaboratively run with Missouri Southern State University.

Missouri:



FOR BUSINESS

Sen. Nodler sponsored and contributed to several pieces of legislation this session that will make Missouri a better place to do business.

Tax Credits & Exemptions

Senate Bill 30, sponsored by Sen. Nodler, creates several tax cuts and exemptions for businesses in Missouri, which will encourage economic growth throughout the state. Sales tax exemptions included in Senate Bill 30 will benefit businesses such as a customer care center owned by a major telecommunications company — a \$19.3 million investment in Joplin — which held its groundbreaking in April. Other provisions in the bill include:

- Expansion of tax exemptions for common carriers to cover those who only conduct business within the state. Previously, these tax benefits were available only to interstate carriers.
- Moving companies doing business within the state will be required to get approval for any rate changes or adjustments from the state highways and transportation commission the same way that utility companies have to receive approval for rate changes.
- Tax credits for homes inherited by a person whose spouse was a public safety officer killed in the line of duty.
- State and local sales tax exemptions for expenditures on utilities, chemicals, machinery, and equipment will apply to television or radio broadcasting and mineral recovery operations.

Consumer Protection

Sen. Nodler worked on a provision this session giving the Missouri Board of Architects, Professional Engineers, Professional Land Surveyors, and Landscape Architects the ability to punish those misrepresenting themselves in these professions. The measure gives the board the ability to fine people practicing any of these professions without licensing. If a complaint to the board is substantiated, it could result in a fine of up to \$5,000 for each day of the violation with a maximum penalty of \$25,000. By instituting penalties for misrepresenting oneself as a licensed architect, engineer, land surveyor, or landscape architect, consumers can be more confident that they are receiving quality services. The provision, originally in SB 31, was included in House Bill 780.

Emergency Vehicles

Senate Bill 91 makes access to emergency vehicles such as ambulances, fire apparatus, and law enforcement vehicles easier for municipalities. The bill accomplishes this by making it easier for dealers who only sell emergency vehicles to be licensed by the state. The measure exempts these particular dealers from having to maintain a place of business in the state and from meeting a minimum yearly sales requirement.

Senator Nodler's Gubernatorial Appointments

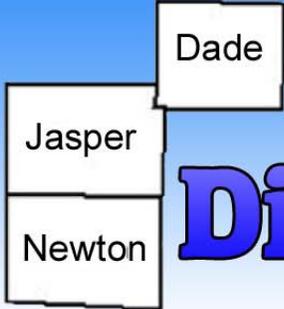


Sen. Nodler with Rudy Farber and his wife Dorothy. Mr. Farber was appointed to the State Highways and Transportation Commission.

Sen. Nodler with Andy Nimmo, who was appointed to the Missouri Fire Safety Advisory Board.



Sherrill McCormack was appointed to the Citizen's Advisory Commission for Marketing Missouri Agricultural Products. Larry D. Neff was reappointed to the Missouri Development Finance Board.



32nd District Legislation

Joplin Autism Project

The budget for fiscal year 2008 contains almost \$4 million of state funding to go towards autism research, treatment, and facilities in order to help Missouri families that struggle with the developmental disorder. Of that funding, \$500,000 will go to the Ozark Autism Center in Joplin in order to create a one-of-a-kind intensive care treatment center. The program will provide autistic children between the ages of 2 and 6 with one-on-one treatment called applied behavioral analysis. The new program can provide lifelong assistance to the development of an autistic child. The new center will open in September and will be the first center of its kind in the state.



Sen. Nodler speaks about legislation on the Senate floor.

Entertainment Districts

Until recently, Missouri law only permitted cities in St. Charles County to establish a theater, cultural arts, and entertainment district. House Bill 795 allows other counties, including Jasper County, to make similar zoning ordinances.

Landfill Fee

Senate Bill 22 will give Jasper County the authority to place an issue on the ballot allowing voters to decide on whether to impose a landfill fee. This fee will cover the upkeep and cost of any future landfills in the county.

State Conveyance

An area of 32nd Street in Joplin that previously belonged to the National Guard Armory will be given to the Landmark Hospital for its transportation needs.

Appropriations Benefitting Dade County

- Schools in Dade County will receive approximately \$4.4 million, based on enrollment totals in previous years, from the Foundation Formula, a revised school funding formula that was passed two years ago.
- The Department of Agriculture will receive \$108,100 to expand the meat and poultry inspection program. This program is geared towards smaller producers, making it easier for these farms to have their products inspected, resulting in more profits for the producer.
- A total of \$198,000 will fund cattle disease control efforts through animal identification. These funds also allow for markets to update their equipment with electronic hardware and software, allowing agriculture in Missouri to stay current.
- There will be \$400,000 in funds for the Adult Agriculture Education Program, an opportunity for farming and agriculture professionals to improve their farms through education.



Educating For Life

House Bill 1055 is an important piece of legislation passed this session that will help to protect the rights of the unborn in Missouri. The bill includes a provision prohibiting any person that provides abortion services from supplying course material or instruction during sexual education courses in public schools. The measure also gives schools the option to teach that abstinence is the only 100 percent effective way of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. Similar provisions were originally in Sen. Nodler's SB 432, and were later incorporated into HB 1055.

The bill also creates the Missouri Alternatives to Abortion Services Program, which funds organizations that provide services to pregnant women, mothers, and women looking for adoption services. This program will help groups such as Lifechoices Pregnancy Crisis Center in Joplin, which provide life-affirming services to women who are in need. Funding is not available to organizations that perform abortions. HB 1055 creates the Abortion Public Awareness Program in which state agencies will publicize alternatives to abortion.

In addition, the legislation will hold abortion clinics to the same strict safety standards as surgical centers. The bill also enacts penalties for anyone unlawfully inducing or helping to induce an abortion.

MO HealthNet

For several years, state-sponsored healthcare has faced difficulty ranging from cost to abuse. Legislation passed this session will make some major changes to the program in order to improve effectiveness and accessibility. The reforms begin by changing the name to MO HealthNet.

Senate Bill 577 creates a new model to better manage the operations of the program. This new system will change the focus from reactive treatment to proactive care. The bill also includes provisions to prevent and punish fraud in the healthcare program and asks healthcare providers to keep records tracking accountability.

The program also includes extended coverage for women's health and expands the state's Ticket-to-Work Program, giving disabled workers the chance to work while maintaining healthcare coverage.

English as the Official Language

In some states, communities that have large populations of non-English speaking people have begun conducting official meetings in languages other than English. In order to prevent that from becoming a problem in Missouri, Sen. Nodler sponsored Senate Joint Resolution 4. The legislation was incorporated into House Joint Resolution 7, which was passed by the Legislature. Upon voter approval, the resolution would make English the official language of official proceedings in the state.

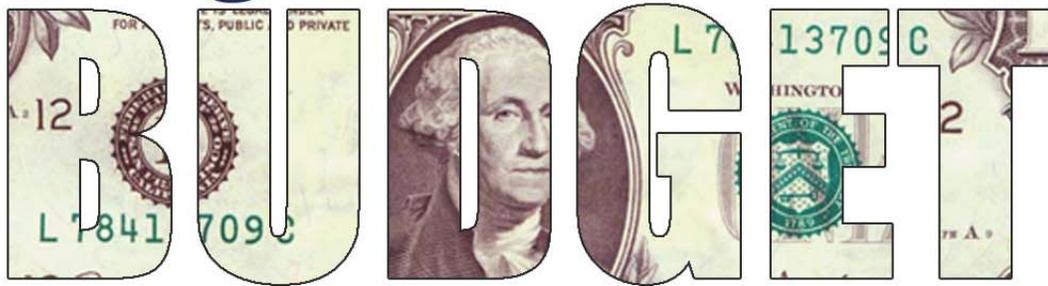
Current law in Missouri recognizes that English is the common language of the state and that fluency in English is integral to American culture. The constitutional amendment would use more concrete language and would not be able to be overturned in court.

If voters approve the measure, official meetings, including state proceedings and public meetings such as city council or school board meetings, would be required to be conducted in English. The law does not prohibit translators in applicable situations such as court proceedings. The resolution would, however, require local and state governments to communicate in English and use English as the language of record so that all Missourians will be able to understand official proceedings in the state.



Sen. Nodler discusses legislation with Sen. Chuck Gross on the Senate floor.

Changes to Missouri's



Funds Going to the 32nd District

Missouri Southern State University	\$23,436,308
Crowder College	\$4,749,542
Joplin Regional Center	\$2,278,836
College View State School	\$785,016
MSSU Crime Lab	\$610,834
Joplin Innovation Center	\$275,000
Juvenile Court Personnel Reimbursement	\$97,703
Battle of Carthage State Historical Site	\$3,579
TOTAL	\$32,236,818

■ The budget for fiscal year 2008 totals \$21.5 billion and is contained in House Bills 1-13.

■ Missouri's prospering economy resulted in an estimated reserve of \$200 million to use if future revenue projections ever fail to reach expectations.

■ Higher education will receive a 9.9 percent increase for a total of \$1.1 billion in funding.

■ Elementary and secondary education will receive a 3.8 percent increase for a total appropriation of \$2.8 billion.

■ Two years ago, the state began to use a new funding formula in order to appropriate money to local school districts based on student need, not property value. The plan is being phased in over the next six years. This year, \$119 million of Foundation Formula funding will go to schools in the 32nd District.

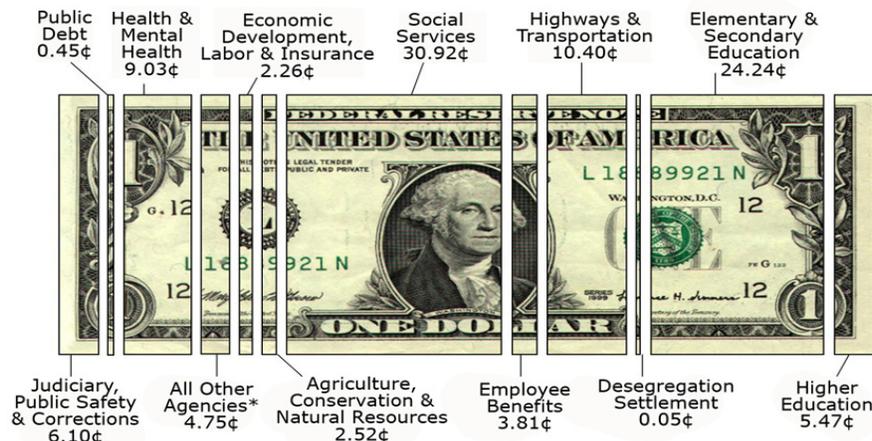
■ The Department of Economic Development will receive a 16.3 percent increase totalling \$305 million for programs such as the Missouri Job Development Program and the Missouri Downtown Economic Stimulus Act.

■ The budget also includes \$3.9 million to go towards autism research and treatment.

DISTRIBUTION of EACH TAX DOLLAR

FY 2008 Missouri Operating Budget

All Funds: \$21.488 Billion



*Revenue, Office of Administration, Elected Officials, General Assembly, Real Estate

Source: Missouri Senate Appropriations Committee



Legislation that Passed

Assisted Care — **HB 952** requires sprinkler systems in most long-term care facilities by 2012.

Health Insurance — **HB 818** establishes the Missouri Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act.

Personal Protection — **SB 257** bans authorities from confiscating firearms during a state of emergency.

Public Safety — **SB 198** makes it a Class A felony to distribute controlled substances within 1,000 feet of a public or private park.

Self Defense — **SB 62** removes the duty to retreat before using deadly force to defend against intruders.

Seniors — **HB 444** exempts certain retirement benefits from state income tax.

Tax Credit — **HB 453** gives tax credits for donations to food pantries.

Legislation that Failed

Farming — **SB 364** would have eliminated local health ordinances in large scale livestock operations and enacted statewide standards.

Gaming/Gambling — **SB 430** would have repealed Missouri's casino loss limit.

Helmet Law — **HB 155** would have allowed motorcyclists over 21 to ride helmet-less.

Identification — **HCR 20** would have called on the U.S. Congress to repeal the REAL ID Act of 2005.

Immunizations — **SB 14** would have allowed 6th grade girls to receive vaccinations for the human papilloma virus.

Public Safety — **SB 17** would have made the seatbelt law applicable to all drivers and passengers and allow primary enforcement of the law.



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