

State Senator

32nd District

# Gary Nodler

2008 Capitol Report

A Balanced  
Budget

Funding for  
Southwest  
Missouri

Honoring  
Ethan  
Cory



32<sup>nd</sup>  
Missouri

# STATE SENATOR GARY NODLER

## Committee Memberships:

- Appropriations, Chairman
- Education
- Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws
- Joint Committee on Capital Improvements and Leases Oversight, Chairman
- Joint Committee on Education
- Joint Committee on Government Accountability
- Joint Committee on Legislative Research, Vice Chairman
- Joint Committee on the Life Sciences
- Joint Committee on MO HealthNet
- State Records Commission
- Second State Capitol Commission, Vice Chairman
- Senate Select Committee on MO HealthNet Provider Rate Equalization, Chairman

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*Dear Friends,*

*During the 2008 legislative session, my colleagues and I in the General Assembly had the opportunity to create policies that are currently benefitting Missourians throughout the state.*

*As the Senate Appropriations Chairman, I worked hard to make sure that we crafted a state budget that is fiscally responsible while providing funding for valuable programs and services used by citizens in our state.*

*We were also able to make progress for Missouri through legislation. This year, the governor signed bills protecting Missouri jobs and services from being abused by illegal immigrants, increasing fairness in property taxes, and making it safer for children visiting privately-owned water parks.*

*As your state senator, I am focused on finding ways to improve our area. In this newsletter, I outline many of the laws and fiscal policies that are directly helping Southwest Missouri.*

*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". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SENATOR GARY NODLER REPRESENTS THE CITIZENS OF  
DADE, JASPER, AND NEWTON COUNTIES.

# MISSOURI'S SPENDING PLAN

The budget for the 2009 fiscal year (which began on July 1, 2008) was balanced and delivered on time. As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Sen. Nodler played an important role in helping to craft the 13 bills that make up the state's core spending plan. Creating the budget is one priority the Legislature is constitutionally obligated to address every year.

1 The budget process begins before the previous session even ends as committee members begin looking at priorities and legislation that will affect the next fiscal year. In December, a series of public hearings are held to allow citizens to raise issues or concerns about the way state programs are funded.

2 Shortly after the legislative session begins in January, the governor sends his budget requests to the House Budget Committee. The House Budget Committee then develops a proposal to send to the Senate. During this time, the Senate Appropriations Committee is independently reviewing the governor's requests.

4 Once the plan is approved by the Senate, differences are ironed out through the conference committee process. When the House and Senate agree on a final plan in May, it is sent to the governor.

3 When the House budget bills arrive in the Senate, the Appropriations Committee and staff have already examined every area of our state budget. The Senate Appropriations Committee then amends the budget bills in a way that reflects the best and most current information available to the committee.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2009 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET INCLUDE:

- ➔ A 7.8 percent increase for higher education for a total appropriation of \$1.3 billion.
- ➔ A 2.4 percent increase for elementary and secondary education for a total appropriation of \$5.3 billion.
- ➔ A 10.1 percent increase for transportation for a total appropriation of \$2.5 billion.
- ➔ A 7.4 percent increase for the Department of Corrections, including \$3.7 million to provide a pay increase to certain corrections staff.
- ➔ A 3.7 percent increase for the Department of Social Services, including a \$73.3 million increase for MO HealthNet pharmacy services.

**MORE BUDGET DETAILS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES...**

# THE BUDGET BREAKDOWN

The 13 bills that make up Missouri's core spending plan are broken down into a series of categories. Within these bills, there are appropriations that meet Missouri's most pressing needs while staying cognizant of the constraints of fiscal responsibility. Some of these specific appropriations include:

## Elementary and Secondary Education

- ➔ A \$121 million increase to fully fund the state's Foundation Formula.
- ➔ A \$3.48 million increase for the A+ Schools Program.

## Higher Education

- ➔ A \$48.7 million increase for the Access Missouri Scholarship Program.

## Transportation

- ➔ A \$483 million increase to the construction program from bond proceeds.
- ➔ A \$22 million increase for maintenance on Missouri roads.

## Economic Development

- ➔ \$21 million for multiple year programs for plant and animal science research.
- ➔ A \$3 million increase for the Division of Tourism.

## Public Safety

- ➔ \$29.4 million for a new interoperable radio system for the Highway Patrol and statewide mutual aid channel.

## Mental Health

- ➔ A \$7.4 million increase for autism based programs.
- ➔ \$2.2 million to fund the Serving Our Veterans Program.

## Health and Senior Services

- ➔ \$29.4 million to increase per hour rates for in-home providers.

## Department of Social Services

- ➔ \$56.6 million for an increase in nursing home reimbursement rates.
- ➔ \$12.96 million for the Women's Health Services Program.



Senator Nodler speaks at a Senate Appropriations Committee meeting.

## Distribution of Each Tax Dollar

FY 2009 MISSOURI OPERATING BUDGET

All Funds: \$22.4 Billion



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

Source: Senate Appropriation Committee

# FUNDING FOR SOUTHWEST MISSOURI

While helping to craft the state spending plan, Sen. Nodler also focused on the priorities in the communities of Southwest Missouri.

## Jasper

- Missouri Southern State University (MSSU) receives \$25.6 million.



*Missouri Southern State University.*

- MSSU also benefits from \$450,000 for a collaborative dental hygiene distance education program. This distance education opportunity allows students to earn an associate's degree in dental hygiene.
- The Joplin Innovation Center, which helps new businesses in the area get started, receives \$275,000.
- A total of \$625,000 goes towards the Missouri Power Resource Center, a facility that will partner with industry-leading Missouri companies to focus on cutting-edge technology related to power and next-generation batteries.
- An additional \$2 million goes towards a dual-use storm shelter at MSSU. This building will serve as a sporting facility for the university, but will also be available as a shelter in case of severe weather.



*Senator Nodler on the dais of the Missouri Senate.*

## Newton

- Crowder College is a quickly expanding community college known throughout the nation for its alternative energy program. Crowder College receives \$4.9 million in funding for the current budget year.

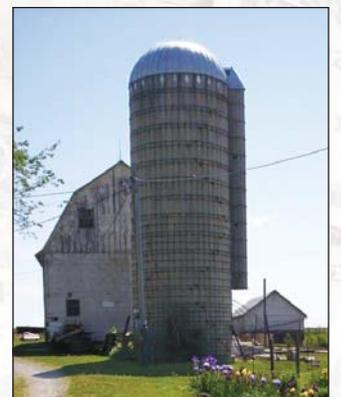


*Crowder College.*

- The State Highway Patrol Crime Lab in the area will be moving from Joplin to Carthage and \$1 million will contribute to the renovation and purchase of the new facility.

## Dade

- Agriculture in Dade County benefits from \$142,803 to expand animal health disease control programs. The department runs several disease control programs for cattle, swine, and poultry.



- The budget includes increased funding for meat and poultry inspection. An increase of \$161,036 goes towards this program, which is geared towards smaller producers. The program makes it easier for these farms to have their products inspected and, in turn, creates more profits for the producer.

# ETHAN'S LAW

In July of 2007, Ethan Cory drowned at a private water park in Joplin during a trip. The park did not have liability insurance, and thus did not have any sort of oversight because it was outside of a municipality and was privately owned. After their son's death, John and Lauren Cory worked with local lawmakers to require tougher rules for privately owned water parks.

Senator Nodler served as the Senate sponsor for Rep. Marilyn Ruestman's House Bill 1341. The legislation requires water parks to carry liability insurance. Owners that do not insure their parks could be charged with a Class A misdemeanor and be subject to a fine of \$250 per day of violation. Insurance companies underwriting these liability policies would then require parks to follow regulated safety precautions.



## SAFE SERVICES FOR THE MENTALLY DISABLED

Senate Bill 1081, sponsored and passed by Sen. Nodler, standardizes and supports quality assurance and safety for facilities and programs serving the disabled in our state. The provisions of SB 1081:

- Add mental health workers to the Family Care Safety Registry, making it possible for families to get background information on these workers before placing a developmentally-disabled family member in their care.
- Require direct care staff from the Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) to report suspected abuse in the same manner as physicians, nurses, and psychologists are already required to do.
- Require any employee of a group home or residential facility for the developmentally disabled that has been placed on the MRDD's Disqualification Registry to be terminated.
- Standardize the regulations and training for all group homes and residential facilities for the developmentally disabled.
- Implement a provider assessment on intermediate care facilities similar to the fee currently placed on hospitals, pharmacies, nursing homes and Medicaid-managed care organizations. The funds collected by this fee could draw an estimated \$2.7 million in additional federal dollars, the bulk of which strengthens quality assurance and safety efforts by adding approximately 56 staff members responsible for quality assurance of MRDD community providers. (Private facilities that fall under MRDD will receive fee reimbursements.)

# PROPERTY TAX REFORM

## Stopping Unexpected Increases

Many Missourians are facing hardships from unexpected tax increases due to reassessments. Senate Bill 711 protects taxpayers from “back door” tax increases by mandating tax roll backs, closing loopholes, informing taxpayers, and expanding tax relief to seniors and the disabled.

Many areas throughout the state are seeing property values rise. Every two years, the county assessor’s office conducts a reassessment, which determines the value of property. The reassessment process is designed to ensure properties are taxed fairly and accurately. The process was not designed to enable the collection of tax revenue beyond what inflation and construction growth allow.

## Mandatory Rollbacks

Most taxing entities (libraries, schools, cities, counties, etc.) are constitutionally required to lower (“roll back”) their tax levy rate if an area’s assessed value increases more than inflation. However, if the entity did not levy their maximum tax rate in the year before reassessment, they may not have to roll back their tax levy in the reassessment year. Senate Bill 711 requires entities to roll back the tax rate if revenue increases higher than inflation, regardless of whether they are at their tax rate ceiling.

Also, beginning in the spring of 2011, counties will be required to send taxpayers a projected tax liability statement to help prepare homeowners to pay their tax bill or appeal if necessary.

## Help for Seniors

An important program in our state helps elderly and disabled residents who might have trouble paying taxes on their homes. The Property Tax Credit Claim (“Circuit Breaker”) program allows these residents to receive a credit on their tax bill for the property taxes or rent that they have paid over the past year. Senate Bill 711 increases assistance from \$750 to \$1,100 for senior and disabled homeowners. The income eligibility for homeowners also increases from \$27,500 to \$30,000 for singles and from \$29,500 to \$34,000 for married couples.

*Senator Nodler speaks to Senate President Pro Tem Michael Gibbons, sponsor of SB 711.*



# CURBING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

House Bill 1549 tackles illegal immigration on several fronts, primarily as it relates to employers who hire undocumented workers.

Missouri employers are barred from hiring illegal immigrants and could lose permits or licenses if they knowingly employ illegal workers. To be eligible for state contracts, employers must participate in a federal work authorization program, including public employers. Employers who misclassify workers will be subject to penalties

of \$50 per day per misclassified worker and up to a maximum of \$50,000 in fines.

Other reforms contained in the bill prohibit communities from adopting safe sanctuary policies for illegal immigrants, bar individuals from transporting or harboring any illegal immigrant, require written tests for commercial licenses to be administered in English only and provide penalties for individuals who use fraudulent means to assist illegal immigrants in obtaining driver’s licenses.

# MORE 2008 LEGISLATION

## Legislation that passed:

**Autism** – SB 768 creates the Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

**Consumer Protection** – HB 2188 criminalizes residential mortgage fraud and makes committing the crime a Class C felony.

**Methamphetamine** – SB 724 expands the drug monitoring program and modifies existing record keeping for controlled substances and pseudoephedrine products.

**Patriotism** – SB 806 requires the U.S. and state flags at government buildings to fly at half staff for one full day whenever a Missourian is killed during military service.

**Public Safety** – SB 930 enacts tougher DWI laws.

**Recycling** – SB 1034 modifies record-keeping requirements for purchasers of scrap metal.

**Tax, Sales** – SB 1181 creates the annual “Show Me Green Sales Tax Holiday” beginning on April 19<sup>th</sup> and ending April 25<sup>th</sup> in 2009 and each subsequent year.

**Workers Compensation** – HB 1883 clarifies the duration benefits are to be paid for injuries.

## Legislation that failed:

**Capital Punishment** – SB 835 would have eliminated the death penalty in Missouri.

**Dairies** – SB 1279 would have specified criteria for when non-organic dairy products would be considered misbranded.

**Helmet Law** – SB 1067 would have exempted persons 21 years of age or older from wearing protective headgear except when riding motorcycles on interstate highways.

**Immunizations** – SB 778 would have provided that female students enrolling in sixth grade at a public school may receive, at the option of a parent or guardian, an immunization for the human papilloma virus.

**Seatbelts** – SB 884 would have required all drivers and passengers in cars or trucks to wear a seat belt and allowed primary enforcement of that law.

**Telemarketing** – SB 840 would have modified the state’s do-not-call list to include political automated phone calls, and creates “paid for by” requirements for political phone calls.

## GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS

Senator Nodler sponsored the following gubernatorial appointments:

- Richard “Dick” Walter of Joplin to the MSSU Board of Governors
- Randy M. Wheeler of Joplin to the State Blasting Safety Board
- Gary M. Little of Seneca to the Missouri Workforce Investment Board
- Dr. Robert W. Dodson of Joplin to the State Advisory Council on Emergency Medical Services



*Senator Nodler speaks to members of the press.*