

Senator

32nd District

Gary Nodler



2009 Capitol Report

From State Senator Gary Nodler

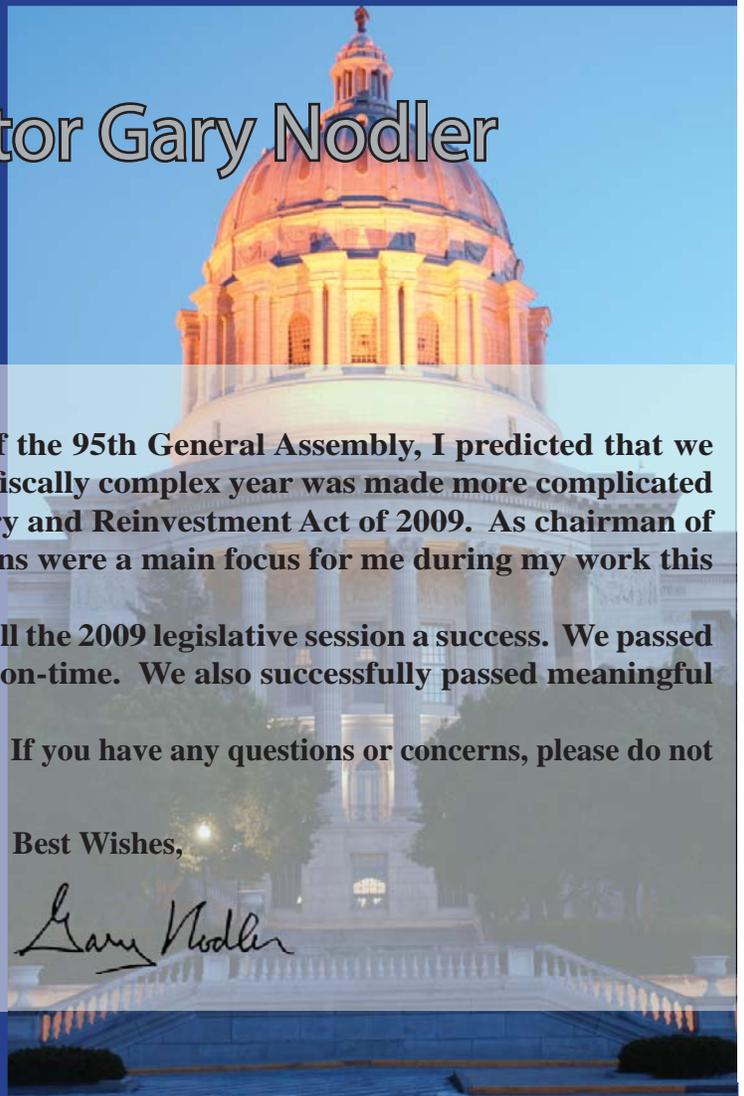
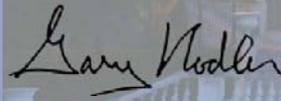
Dear Friends,

At the beginning of the First Regular Session of the 95th General Assembly, I predicted that we would be facing a challenging legislative session. A fiscally complex year was made more complicated by the influx of funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, these concerns were a main focus for me during my work this session.

Despite the challenges we faced, I am proud to call the 2009 legislative session a success. We passed a fiscally responsible budget that was balanced and on-time. We also successfully passed meaningful legislation to better our state.

It is an honor to represent the 32nd Senate District. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Best Wishes,



Committee Memberships:

- Appropriations, Chairman
- Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions and Ethics, Vice-Chairman
- Education
- Joint Committee on Capital Improvements and Leases Oversight, Vice-Chairman
- Joint Committee on the Life Sciences
- Joint Committee on MO HealthNet
- Joint Committee on Legislative Research
- Joint Committee on Government Accountability
- State Records Commission
- Second State Capitol Commission

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The Federal Stimulus Plan in Missouri

The actions taken by the federal government this year only complicated the challenges the state faced in allocating funds for state programs and services in these economically difficult times. The stimulus package and bailout policies implemented by the federal government created problems that could affect generations of Missourians. The core spending plan (the portion of Missouri's budget that is directly controlled by the state legislature) has been built using stabilization and stimulus dol-

Throughout the budget process, I kept in mind that our children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren will be affected by the spending we do today with tomorrow's tax dollars.

lars in a sustainable way. As the General Assembly originally crafted the spending plan, Missouri saved approximately \$900 million in federal dollars to use for future spending obligations.

This year's budget also includes House Bills 21 and 22. House Bill 21 appropriates stimulus dollars for the current fiscal year. House Bill 22 mostly utilizes stabilization dollars and contains a variety of capital improvements and other projects to better the state (for a list of district projects in the budget turn to page 5).

Accountability with Senate Bill 313

Senate Bill 313, sponsored by Sen. Nodler, was the first bill of 2009 to be agreed to by both the House and Senate and went into effect with the governor's signature. The bipartisan bill works by ensuring that any temporary funding Missouri receives from the federal stimulus plan goes into one of two special funds. The "Federal Budget Stabilization Fund" takes in money the state receives to supplement on-going programs. All other funds received under the act are deposited into the "Federal Stimulus Fund."

These funds were created in order to make sure that the revenue dollars being taken in didn't merely get absorbed into the state's general funds— providing an exact record of what is received and what is subsequently spent.

Senate Bill 313 also helped during the appropriations process because the two new funds allowed legislators to easily identify what programs, services, or projects are funded by this temporary money. The federal funding will run out after next year, and the last thing Missouri wants to do is get in a situation where the state becomes dependent on a temporary funding source.



Senator Nodler speaking to Senator Joan Bray, the ranking minority party member on the Senate Appropriations Committee and co-sponsor of SB 313.

The Budget Process

The budget for the 2010 fiscal year (which began on July 1, 2009) was a balanced spending plan, completed by the constitutional deadline. As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Nodler plays 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.

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 also making sure the state stays within its means. Some of these specific appropriations include:

Elementary and Secondary Education

- A \$63 million increase to fully fund the state's Foundation Formula.
- \$24.8 million for increased reimbursement costs to school districts for early childhood special education services.

Higher Education

- \$33.6 million for one-time maintenance and repair, capital improvements, or IT improvements at public community colleges and universities in the state.

Transportation

- A \$360 million increase to the construction program from bond proceeds.
- A \$22 million increase for maintenance on Missouri roads.

Agriculture

- \$25 million for Missouri Qualified Biodiesel Producer Incentive payments.
- \$12.5 million for Missouri Qualified Fuel Ethanol Producer Incentive payments.

Economic Development

- \$35 million for flood disaster recovery assistance.
- \$11.1 million for the Missouri Job Development Fund for grants to eligible businesses to train workers.

Public Safety

- \$1.8 million to cover food and medical inflation for Missouri veterans homes.

Mental Health

- \$6.1 million for services for children transitioning from school to adulthood.

Health and Senior Services

- \$50 million for MO HealthNet to continue funding the Home and Community Based Services program.

Department of Social Services

- \$71.6 million for an increase in the Medicaid pharmacy program due to the cost of new drugs and therapies.
- \$46.8 million for an increase in nursing home reimbursement rates.



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

3 When the House's version of the 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.

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.

Funding in Southwest Missouri

Senator Nodler also worked to make sure that Southwest Missouri communities benefitted from this year's budget. These programs and services directly benefit citizens in the 32nd Senate District.



Missouri Southern State University

K-12 Foundation Formula Funding
\$104 million

Missouri Southern State University
\$25.7 million
\$1.1 million in one-time funding

Crowder College
\$4.9 million
\$666,666 in one-time funding



Crowder College



Joplin Vocational Technical School
\$3 million

Joplin Regional Center
\$1.2 million

Joplin Innovation Center
\$275,000

State School for the Severely Handicapped
\$978,534

Battle of Carthage State Historical Site
\$3,131

Juvenile Court Reimbursement for Jasper County
\$97,703



A reenactment of the Battle of Carthage



Jasper County Courthouse

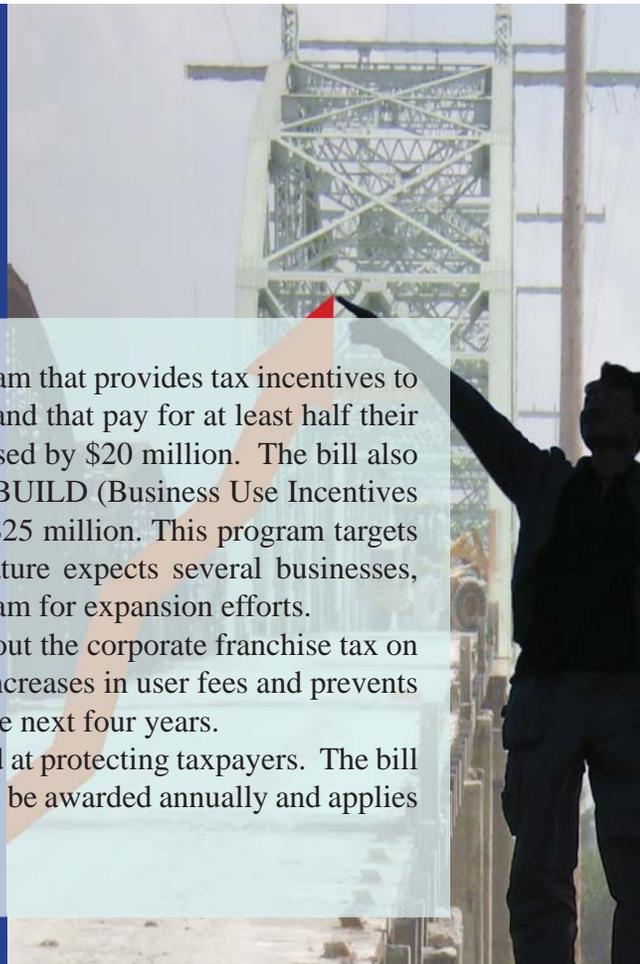
Economic Development

The Senate spent many hours this session working to expand economic development programs in Missouri. Lawmakers also reined in the state's tax credit system to ensure that businesses can truly benefit from these incentives.

House Bill 191 expands the Quality Jobs Act, a proven program that provides tax incentives to businesses that create jobs paying above county average wages, and that pay for at least half their employees' healthcare benefits. The program's annual cap increased by \$20 million. The bill also expands several other programs including increasing the cap on BUILD (Business Use Incentives for Large-Scale Development) Tax Credits from \$15 million to \$25 million. This program targets large manufacturing and processing industries, and the Legislature expects several businesses, including a high tech battery-maker in Joplin, to utilize the program for expansion efforts.

The bill also supports small business in the state by phasing out the corporate franchise tax on 3 out of every 4 Missouri businesses. The legislation also bans increases in user fees and prevents new regulations on companies with less than 25 employees for the next four years.

The bill also contains common sense tax credit reforms aimed at protecting taxpayers. The bill caps how many credits in the state's larger tax credit programs can be awarded annually and applies the state's open-records law to awarded tax credits.



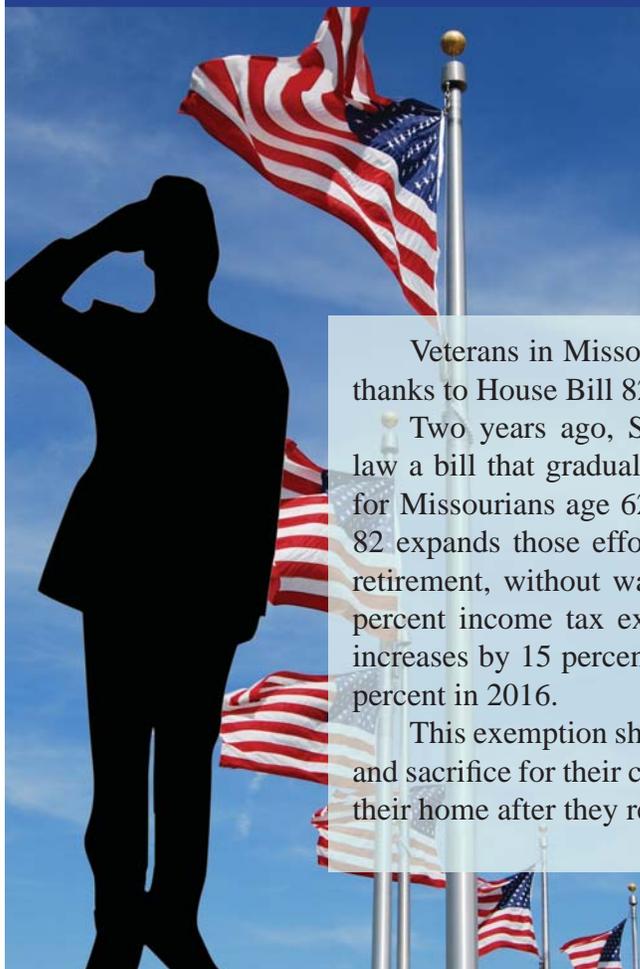
Supporting Our Veterans

This year, the Legislature continued its commitment to providing for the brave men and women who have served this country.

Veterans in Missouri will be able to keep more of their hard-earned income sooner thanks to House Bill 82.

Two years ago, Sen. Nodler supported the effort in the Legislature to pass into law a bill that gradually eliminates taxes on Social Security or public pension benefits for Missourians age 62 and older who do not exceed a certain income cap. House Bill 82 expands those efforts by exempting military retirement benefits immediately upon retirement, without waiting until the retiree turns 62. House Bill 82 phases in a 100 percent income tax exemption for veterans on their military benefits. The exemption increases by 15 percent annually beginning in 2010 until it is fully implemented at 100 percent in 2016.

This exemption shows veterans in Missouri that the state appreciates their dedication and sacrifice for their country and encourages military men and women to make Missouri their home after they retire.





Fighting Auto Insurance Fraud

House Bill 62, a comprehensive crime measure, included a provision to make sure those manufacturing and using fake car insurance cards are held accountable. The provision specifically states that any person who intentionally produces, manufactures, sells, or otherwise distributes a fraudulent document intended to serve as an insurance identification card can be charged with a Class D felony. The bill also addresses any individual who knowingly or intentionally possesses a fraudulent document intended to serve as an insurance identification card, making this offense a Class B misdemeanor.

In 2007, 18,427 tickets were issued by the Missouri State Highway Patrol for drivers failing to maintain insurance coverage on their vehicle. It is estimated that 1 out of 10 drivers on the roadway is uninsured. This number affects everyone who legitimately pays for auto insurance. When drivers break the law and do not insure their vehicle they are putting those who legitimately pay insurance at financial risk. Those individuals who take this offense a step further by actually manufacturing and using fraudulent insurance cards to avoid having to pay for legitimate insurance deserve a more serious penalty.

Addressing the Issue of Autism in Our State

Though we do not have complete information on the number of Missourians diagnosed with autism, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 150 children have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

To address this alarming statistic, there are many resources for families of children with autism available in the 32nd Senate District. Senator Nodler served on the Appropriations Committee in 2007, the same year the Ozark Center for Autism opened in Joplin. He was instrumental in making funding available for this center, which currently serves as a valuable resource for those with autism in Missouri. The center, which received \$600,000 in the FY2010 budget, offers those with autism personalized treatment plans and one-on-one instruction between teacher and students.

The Missouri Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities also maintains a regional office in Joplin. For more information on autism in Missouri, the Office of Autism Services can provide citizens with a comprehensive statewide guide. You can contact this office by dialing (573) 526-3848.

Expanding Services for the Disabled

The Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services is composed of 51 county boards that contract local services for an estimated 47,000 people with developmental disabilities in the state.

Not all counties have a local board, and Sen. Nodler sponsored Senate Bill 460 in order to allow the Division of

Developmental Disabilities to contract directly with providers of targeted case management services for clients of the division in these areas.

This legislation was included in Senate Bill 435, which was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the governor. The bill expands services to rural areas, including clients living in Newton and Dade counties.



More 2009 Legislation

The Legislature passed 162 bills during the 2009 legislative session, including:

Alcohol – SB 26 - Prohibits alcohol beverage vaporizers.

Autism – SB 157 - Codifies into law the five regional autism projects currently providing services to approximately 2,500 families statewide.

Courts – HB 863 - Establishes the Child Witness Protection Act that applies to certain children 17 years of age or younger who are testifying in any judicial proceeding.

Education – SB 291 - Ensures new revenue received through the passage of Proposition A will reach Missouri classrooms, expands virtual classrooms, and gives districts the option to move to a four day school week, among other measures.

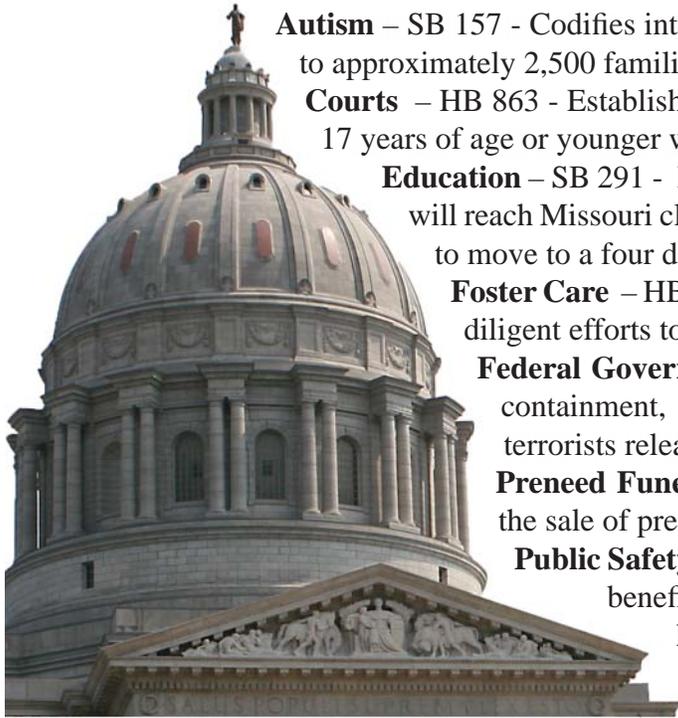
Foster Care – HB 154 - Establishes the “Grandparents Bill of Rights,” which requires diligent efforts to be made regarding the emergency placement of grandchildren.

Federal Government – HCR 16 - Strongly urges Congress to reject any asylum, containment, transport, imprisonment, or state medical care of any suspected terrorists released from United States operated foreign prisons.

Preneed Funerals – SB 1 - Establishes oversight and consumer protections for the sale of preneed funeral contracts.

Public Safety Personnel – HB 580 - Provides additional workers’ compensation benefits for public safety workers killed in the line of duty.

Real ID – HB 361 - Protects a driver’s license applicant’s privacy rights and limits use of an applicant’s personal information.



For a full list of Truly Agreed and Finally Passed bills visit www.senate.mo.gov, click on “Session Information,” and select “Truly Agreed Bills.”

Gubernatorial Appointment

Our state has more than 200 boards and commissions to which our governor appoints citizen members. For a full list, visit www.governor.mo.gov/boards. Appointees are responsible for advising the governor, lawmakers in the Senate and House, and state agencies.



Senator Nodler with Diana Willard of Joplin on April 29th at her appointment hearing. Willard was appointed to the Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities.



Welcome Special Guests

Senator Nodler, Superintendent Dr. Ron Lankford, Coach John Roderique, assistant coaches, team managers and about 65 members of the Class 4A State Champion Webb City High School football team on the dais of the Senate. The Cardinals visited the Capitol and were introduced on the Senate floor on February 4th.