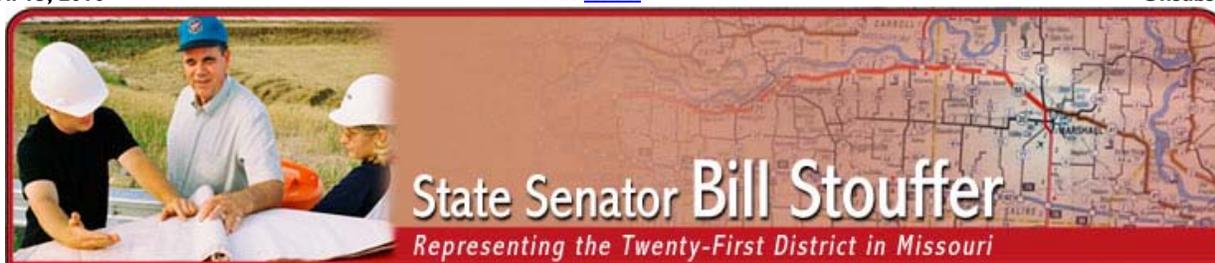


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The Stouffer Report: *Paying Teachers for Work Completed*

The Missouri Legislature is facing the toughest economic situation in our state's history. However, because of tough decisions made in the last decade, Missouri is one of only seven states in a [good financial position](#) for the future.

Addressing these challenges has required a great deal of time, patience and understanding. As I have mentioned before, your input and prayers have provided lawmakers with a firm ground to stand on during these turbulent times.

We are in the process of putting together a balanced budget for Missouri's next fiscal year, which will start on July 1, 2010. Unlike the federal government, we are not able to spend more than the state brings in from revenues — your tax dollars.

To understand Missouri's budget, it is important to know the biggest two expenditures: Social services and K-12 education. It is these two departments where we have to do the most work to balance our state's budget this year. Currently, our budget is \$1 billion behind where we were in revenue one year ago.

This year, the Legislature has put a priority on classroom funding for Missouri's students, which means keeping the funding for classroom instruction through the state's formula at the same rate as 2010.

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Not decreasing funding to Missouri's classrooms has led to cuts to state government and other types of education spending like [Career Ladder](#), a program that reimburses teachers for extra work they do to educate children outside of the classroom.



Some legislators believed we could cut funding to Career Ladder. Fortunately, we were able to reverse that decision in the current budget that I voted for. It is only right and honest to compensate teachers for work they have completed.

In addition to Career Ladder, there has also been a lot of controversy surrounding changes in teacher retirement. Unfortunately, special interest groups have led current and retired teachers to believe their retirement would be affected by a common sense solution to reform state employee retirement by changing benefits for all new employees. The retirement legislation passed ([Senate Bill 714](#)), but as promised, it did not and will not include teachers.

This session has provided lawmakers with an opportunity to reconsider all of our state's spending, as we are all doing in our homes, and improve state government. This is all being done without a tax increase. Times like these remind me why I became involved in state government and it remains my honor to serve you in the Missouri Senate.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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