

Week of June 1, 2009



Capitol Report

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Legislative Work Continues in Interim Committees

Though most Missourians may think when the legislative session ends in mid-May that lawmakers return to their districts to focus solely on their jobs in the private sector, in reality, we have many legislative duties and responsibilities that last through the interim.

In addition to meeting with constituents at home to hear their questions and concerns and preparing legislation to introduce during next year's session, most members of the Missouri Senate serve on one or more interim committees. These special committees typically meet during the summer and fall to gather input and draft legislation for consideration in the coming session. In most cases, interim committees are created through the passage of legislation that calls for the study of a particular issue.

During the session, I was appointed by the Senate President Pro Tem to serve as chair of the recently created Missouri Senate Educated Citizenry 2020 Committee. The committee is one of three "2020" committees charged with creating forward-thinking strategies for improving Missouri's standing in the areas of education, job creation and health care coverage.

The Missouri Senate Educated Citizenry 2020 Committee is responsible for creating long-term plans and strategies for developing an educational system where students learn to be productive and successful citizens that are prepared for global competition. As a member of the committee, I am assigned the task of defining where the state's educational system should be by the year 2020.

While there are many excellent public schools in this state, Missouri still has a long

way to go, especially in terms of making higher education more accessible. Our current ranking of 30th in the nation in the number of 25–34 year-olds with college degrees is unacceptable. To get us to the level where we want to be in terms of economic prosperity and growth, we need to promote the importance of higher education and take the steps necessary to make college possible for more Missourians. As long as I am in the Senate, I will be a strong advocate for education.

I am also serving on the Joint Committee on Capital Improvements and Leases Oversight, which is comprised of five members of the Senate Appropriations Committee and five members of the House of Representatives Budget Committee. Our duties include examining all proposed state-funded capital improvement projects, monitoring new construction of such projects and reporting on capital improvement projects to the General Assembly.

The capital improvements committee is an important extension of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and I will be able to bring my financial experience to the table as we pursue significant projects that will improve the 31st District and the entire state of Missouri. Successful capital improvement projects are crucial in our goal to better public facilities, educational institutions and recreational opportunities for all Missourians.

And finally, while the fiscal year 2010 budget will be finalized upon receiving the governor's signature, the work of the Senate Appropriations Committee isn't finished. Because the state budget process is so involved and the state's financial situation can fluctuate, the Senate Appropriations Committee will still be keeping a watchful eye over the state's finances during the interim. Budgeting for FY 2011 will begin before we know it, and the committee must stay informed so that when we come back to the Capitol in January 2010, we are ready to hit the ground running.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senate District.

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