



NEWS RELEASE

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



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SEN. GARY NODLER TESTIFIES ON BEHALF OF LEGISLATION THAT WOULD RENAME MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE COLLEGE AS MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY - JOPLIN

JEFFERSON CITY -- A Missouri Senate committee on Tuesday heard testimony on legislation sponsored by Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, which would rename Missouri Southern State College as Missouri Southern State University – Joplin.

“Missouri Southern is doing the quality of work that a university does, it just lacks the name,” Sen. Nodler told the Senate Pensions and General Laws Committee. “We believe that the name change is vital to compete in the educational environment of our region.”

In addition to changing Missouri Southern’s name, Senate Bill 55 would alter residency requirements for members of the MSSC Board of Regents. Currently, board members must be residents of the college’s district.

Under SB 55, board members would be required to be residents of Missouri and residents of the area within a 60-mile radius of the district in which the college is located.

“This change in the Board of Regents reflects the changes that have taken place at Missouri Southern,” Sen. Nodler said. “MSSC is no longer simply a Joplin college, or a southwest Missouri college, it is truly a regional university.”

Aside from the importance from an academic standpoint for MSSC, this is important for the economic development and growth of the southwest Missouri region, Sen. Nodler said. When competing for new business and industries, the presence of a higher education institution is an advantage and a university is an even greater advantage. The Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Joplin have both endorsed the name change.

“This region is in a unique position because it sits right in the corner of the state and is surrounded by three other states, all with fine universities in easy driving distance from Joplin,”

said Sen. Nodler. “The change of Missouri Southern State College to MSSU-Joplin would make the area even more desirable to new companies.”

Missouri Southern is a young college, and has made a great deal of progress in a short period of time. Founded as Joplin Junior College in 1937, it expanded into a four-year baccalaureate degree institution in 1965.

“With its high quality academic programs, MSSC has reached the equal status of the other regional universities in Missouri,” Sen. Nodler said. “It’s time for it to receive the name.”

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Note to Editors: Photographs of Sen. Gary Nodler and Dr. Julio Leon, president of Missouri Southern State College, testifying before the Senate Pensions and General Laws Committee are available. To have a photo e-mailed contact Sen. Nodler’s office.