



# WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler  
District 32



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **STATE BUDGET CUTS COULD BE LESS SEVERE FOR MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE COLLEGE**

The Fiscal Year 2004 Budget is pretty grim for Missouri's educational community, with serious across-the-board cuts. However, some colleges and universities, including Missouri Southern State College, face smaller reductions due to past mistakes.

In its recently passed budget, the Missouri Senate allocated \$1 billion for public colleges and universities, with 10.8 percent across-the-board cuts figured in.

During budget preparation, the Coordinating Board of Higher Education told the Senate Appropriations Committee – which I serve on – that in the past MSSC, Missouri Western State College, Northwest Missouri State University and Southwest Missouri State University had been underfunded. A 10.8 percent reduction would unfairly penalize these institutions.

A 10.8 percent reduction would have meant a loss of approximately \$2.1 million for MSSC, a loss that would have shut down important programs and services that are for the students at this fine school.

Upon my motion, the Senate Appropriations Committee adjusted the original baseline for all higher education institutions to reflect the equitable funding formula recommended by the coordinating board. This motion was accepted without objection by the Senate Appropriations Committee and included in the higher education budget passed by the full Senate.

Working with the coordinating board's recommendations, I was able to insure that MSSC will receive .05 percent more in FY 2004, totaling \$9,168, with their total budget appropriation coming to \$19,221,019.

None of these totals are final, since the General Assembly hasn't passed the final version of the budget. Under the Missouri Constitution, lawmakers must complete work on the budget by

6 p.m. one week before the end of the regular legislative session – this year that date falls on May 9.

The Missouri Senate continues to look for revenue generating plans that would provide additional funds for education and other essential services.

On Wednesday, approval was given to House Bill 600 which generates an additional \$166 million in revenue by making numerous one-time changes to Missouri's tax codes.

The Appropriations Committee has made a contingency plan in the budget plan that would allow the state to spend around \$200 million more if the General Assembly succeeds in passing the revenue-generating legislation. Approximately \$35 million of that would go toward higher education and I will fight to get Missouri Southern a share of that money.

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