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Unseen Responsibilities

Throughout the legislative year snapshots of senators and representatives schedules are frequently highlighted by our media outlets. Typically, these focus on the legislative session which begins in January and adjourns in May. Little information may be mentioned of the other seven months of the legislative year.

These "unseen" months truly yield the fruit for the next legislative session. One of these responsibilities that I want to share more about today is on the work of the Joint Interim Committee Veterans Issues. I have the distinct honor of serving on this bipartisan committee with four other senators and five representatives.

The purpose of this committee is to take testimony, deliberate and deal with issues confronting the Veterans' homes in Missouri. In addition, this committee has a role of assisting returning veterans and making sure they receive their entitled benefits. To accommodate needed input, four hearings were held across Missouri in the month of September in Jefferson City, Kansas City and St. Louis areas.

After review of all information from the public testimony presented, numerous recommendations were made to improve the services to our veterans. A brief overview of the first four recommendations include; commit full and adequate support to the continued operation of all 1350 beds at Missouri's Veterans homes, ensure the veterans commission trust fund is adequately supported, establish the family military relief fund to provide services to returning veterans and their families, establish a veterans ombudsman program within the veterans commission to coordinate a one-stop clearing house for information on all veterans benefits for family members and deployed service personnel.

As a result of the changing environment surrounding Missouri's veterans and the necessity to assist the recently deployed men and women in our armed forces, legislative action is needed. Our nation's observation of Veterans Day, November 11, is a small and important part of our responsibility to those who have and are defending our liberty. Following through on these interim committee recommendations for improvements will be an important action point this legislative session. We continue to be indebted to the willing faithful service of so many who have and continue to answer America's call to defend freedom.

If you have questions or comments about this or other issues please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by email at delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us.