

CAPITOL REPORT

SENATOR HARRY KENNEDY

MISSOURI STATE SENATE – 1ST DISTRICT

SERVING ST. LOUIS CITY AND COUNTY



Spring 2005

Dear Neighbor,

As you may know, I was recently elected to the State Senate by the citizens of the 1st District. As the former senator for the 3rd District, I had the pleasure of serving some of you in my previous term. Due to redistricting, I now represent South St. Louis County and a portion of South St. Louis City. I look forward to serving all of you over the next four years.

The following pages will give you a look at my legislative priorities this year. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions and have included a form on page 4 for your feedback.

Protecting Missouri's military families

This year I again introduced the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund bill, which would help offset the financial strains placed on Missouri families of National Guard and Reserve members called into active duty. If passed, the fund would come from donations through tax filings or direct contributions.

We should do everything we can to help these families reduce the unexpected financial burden that comes when one of the breadwinners is off serving our country. They have answered our call; now we must answer theirs.

Fighting for school funding

Our local schools have been hurting for years and need some relief. We can't expect our students to meet certain standards without providing them the means to do so. I introduced three bills aimed at getting more equitable state funding for St. Louis area schools.

Senate Bill 474 would create the Accurate Assessment Act, which would require that new members of the Missouri State Tax Commission be licensed real estate appraisers. The commission verifies the accuracy of local appraisers. Property assessment is a major factor in the foundation formula, which determines the level of state funding each school district receives. A foundation formula that depends on property values is inherently flawed if the property assessments are not accurate and consistent. The current formula, or any formula, will not be fair until we address this issue.

Senate Bills 475 and 473 would help local hold-harmless schools get more state funding. The hold-harmless provision of the foundation formula keeps certain schools at the same funding level they had in 1992-93, with some increases to provide for higher numbers of at-risk students.

Making our streets safe

Senate Bill 340 would authorize a one-year pilot program allowing the City of St. Louis to install cameras at dangerous intersections. The cameras, which would be mounted on traffic signals, would photograph vehicles going through an intersection after the light has turned red. Citations would be mailed to the vehicle owner. The noncriminal violations would assess a \$50 fine but no points on the driver's record. This bill is modeled after North Carolina's program, which has seen major reductions in red-light-related accidents.

The 2005 legislative session will adjourn on May 13. As always, please feel free to let me know your thoughts regarding proposed legislation and issues that need to be addressed. It is an honor and a privilege to be your voice in the Missouri Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harry Kennedy".

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Highlights of my 2005 legislation

Bills I am sponsoring:

Senate Bill 13: Authorizes tax check-off for donations to Missouri Military Family Relief Fund. *See page 1 for details.*

SB 340: Authorizes St. Louis to create a pilot program to install cameras at dangerous intersections. *See page 1 for details.*

SB 363: Includes unborn children within the definition of children for eligibility in the Children's Health Insurance Program.

SB 401: Repeals the three-child limit and modifies the death benefit to surviving spouses in police pension systems. This bill passed in the Senate and will be debated in the House.

SB 473: Provides an inflation increase for hold-harmless school districts. *See page 1 for details.*

SB 474: Requires state tax commissioners to be licensed real estate appraisers. *See page 1 for details.*

SB 475: Alters hold-harmless calculation in foundation formula. *See page 1 for details.*

SB 518: Creates the Assistive Technology Trust Fund to aid disabled citizens, at no cost to the state. This bill passed in the Senate and will be debated in the House.

Bills I am co-sponsoring:

SB 160: Prohibits human cloning.



SB 202: Merges the administrative law judge retirement system into the state employees' retirement system. This would eliminate abuse of the system that has resulted in exorbitant pensions for those serving as administrative law judges. This bill passed in the Senate and the House.

SB 232: Modifies special motion to dismiss in Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPP). This bill, which would protect the freedom of speech for Missouri citizens, passed in the Senate.

SB 277: Allows small-business employers to obtain medical coverage

through the Missouri Consolidated Health Plan. Many small-business owners have expressed concern about rising health-care costs, and this bill would alleviate the problem by allowing them to participate in a widely used, low-cost plan.

SB 301: Increases the maximum amount of compensation payable to St. Louis police officers.

SB 317: Modifies the highway patrol retirement system. This bill passed in the Senate and will be debated in the House.

SB 343: Extends cap on appropriations for redevelopment projects. This bill would make necessary changes in current law to benefit St. Louis development.

SB 349: Makes various changes relating to prevailing wage law.

SB 506: Provides consumer protection for computerized personal information.

SB 546: Creates a sales and use tax refund for certain Missouri vehicles.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 4: Encourages legislative support of increasing physical education programs in our public schools.

on the web

For a complete look at my 2005 legislation, visit the Senate web site at www.senate.mo.gov.



Representative Jack Jackson, Missouri Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder and Illinois Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn joined me in St. Louis on April 1 for a news conference about my legislation creating the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund.

Social programs under attack

Over the past months, Medicaid and other social service programs have been a source of constant debate. While we are all on a mission to eliminate waste and fraud in government programs, we must protect the citizens and families that truly need help.

As a pro-life Democrat, I am proud to promote and protect human life. However, the value and sanctity of life do not disappear once a baby is born. We must continue to promote life — from childhood to retirement; from school into the workplace and beyond.

In these tight budget times, proposals have been made to cut some services offered by the state and privatize others. As a fiscal conservative, I want to ensure that your tax dollars are spent wisely without neglecting our most vulnerable citizens. This year we are facing a lot of difficult decisions, and I am doing my best to ensure that quality services are provided at reasonable costs.

on the web

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Find the governmental services you need at: **www.missourihelp.com**



St. Mary Magdalen, my alma mater, came to Jefferson City for its annual eighth-grade field trip March 8. Unfortunately, the school will be closing at the end of this year.

How a BILL becomes a LAW...



1) Introduced in the House or Senate...



2) Read for the first and second time, then assigned to a committee...



3) Presented in a public hearing before a committee where both sides are heard. The committee then makes its recommendations...

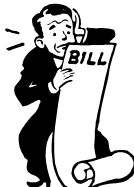


4) Placed on the perfection calendar, and amendments are debated and voted on.

If passed, then perfected and printed...



5) Read a third time, debated again and voted on...



7) Sent to governor for approval...



6) Sent to the other legislative body, either the House or the Senate, for approval...



8) The bill becomes a law if:

- The governor signs it OR
- The governor vetoes it, but at least 2/3 of the Legislature votes to override OR
- The governor takes no action.



Above: I sponsored Joseph Frank's appointment to the Missouri Veterans Commission. Mr. Frank, of Sunset Hills, is a U.S. Army Vietnam veteran.

Other appointments I sponsored include: Michelle Esswein, Missouri Women's Council; Michael Marx, Seismic Safety Commission; and Donald McNutt, Petroleum Storage Tank Insurance Fund Board of Trustees.

My 2005 Senate committees

Aging, Families, Mental and Public Health
 Economic Development, Tourism and Local Government
 Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws
 Financial and Governmental Organizations and Elections

Other committees

South St. Louis Region Bipartisan Caucus - Chairman
 Joint Committee on Corrections
 Joint Committee on Economic Development Policy and Planning
 Joint Committee on Gaming and Wagering
 Joint Committee on Public Employee Retirement
 Joint Committee on Terrorism, Bioterrorism & Homeland Security
 Advisory Council of the Missouri Kidney Program
 MO Advisory Council on Pain and Symptom Management
 Missouri Assistive Technology Council
 Missouri Sportsmen's Caucus

What's on your mind?

The political process depends on the cooperation of citizens and lawmakers. I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on how I can better serve you and the people of Missouri. As always, I also welcome your calls, e-mails and letters. My contact information can be found at the bottom of this page. I look forward to hearing from you.

Comments:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

If you're planning a trip to Jefferson City, please let us know. We can schedule tours at attractions such as the Capitol, Governor's Mansion or Supreme Court. These places are most popular from January through May when the legislature is in session, so it is best to schedule tours during this time at least three months in advance.



Two students from the Mehlville School District visited the Capitol on Feb. 21.



Representatives from the Mehlville School District visited on Jan. 25. From left: Tim Ricker, superintendent; Cindy Christopher, School Board president; Greg Diekemper, co-chairman of Families for a Fair Formula; me; and Mike Heins, School Board member.

MISSOURI STATE SENATE
 Senator Harry Kennedy
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