



# State Senator Luann Ridgeway

*Capitol Report*  
*Fall 2005*

## **INSIDE:**

*Workers' Comp*

*Tort Reform*

*Education  
Funding*

*Medicaid  
Reform*

*Say "goodbye"  
to license  
bureau blues*

*...and something  
for the kids!*



Dear Friends,

The progress we made this session was remarkable. Among our many accomplishments, we enhanced Missouri's job climate, reformed workers' compensation laws, sent a responsible budget to the governor and put more money toward education.

What made it easier to advance so much priority legislation so quickly were term limits, which voters approved a little more than a decade ago. Legislators elected to the General Assembly after November of 1992 can serve a maximum of eight years in the Missouri House and eight years in the Missouri Senate. By the time the 2004 elections came around, 24 senators were termed out. Some of these retired senators had been in office for decades.

Term limits allow a steady influx of fresh leaders to serve you. A cap on the number of years lawmakers can serve puts new lawmakers with crisp outlooks into leadership positions within the Legislature.

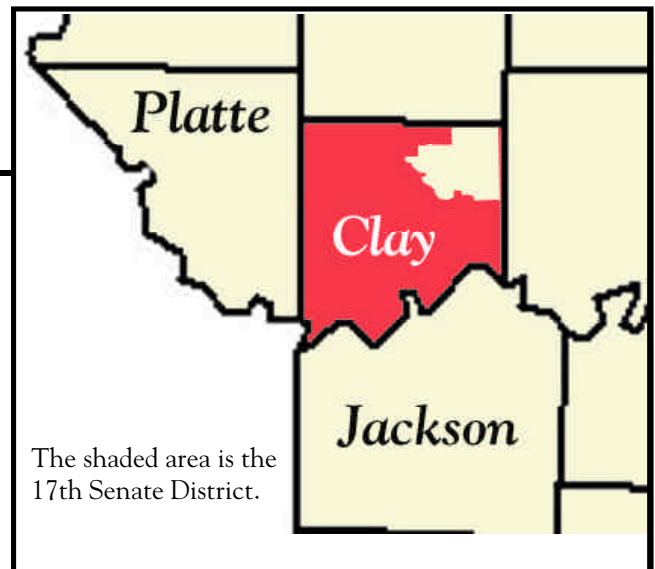
When voters approved term limits, they knew what they were doing. They wanted leadership that reflects their beliefs and values. They wanted progress, and as this newsletter will show, there was plenty of it. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

Sincerely yours,

Luann Ridgeway  
Senator  
17<sup>th</sup> Senate District

## Where You Live: The 17<sup>th</sup> District

There are approximately 160,000 people in each State Senate District in Missouri. You reside in the 17th District, which is all but the northeast corner of Clay County. A map outlining the district boundaries is shown here. If you are a Clay County resident and live in or near Smithville, Nashua, Kansas City, Liberty, Gladstone, Missouri City, Pleasant Valley, Claycomo or North Kansas City, you are in the district represented by Senator Luann Ridgeway.





Sen. Ridgeway was designated as Legislator of the Year at the State VFW Convention, which took place at the end of June in Columbia, Mo.

## Ridgeway—VFW Legislator of the Year

In June I was named Legislator of the Year by Missouri's Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. This award recognizes lawmakers for their legislative efforts in the name of the brave men and women who risk their lives for this country.

I am very appreciative for being chosen for such a distinct recognition. But my efforts are nothing compared to those of the thousands of selfless men and women who defend the freedom of this great nation every day. *Those* are the efforts worth recognizing, and that is why I proudly represent them in Jefferson City.

This past session, I crafted a resolution exempting veterans' organizations from property taxes. Senate Joint Resolution 19 sailed through the Senate, but the House ran out of time to consider it before the session ended.

Veterans' organizations have earned the right to be exempted from paying property taxes. I will continue working to get this measure, along with other legislation that is beneficial to the veterans of Missouri, passed so our noble veterans' organizations are fairly treated and our brave soldiers are justly served.

## More Money for All Our School Districts



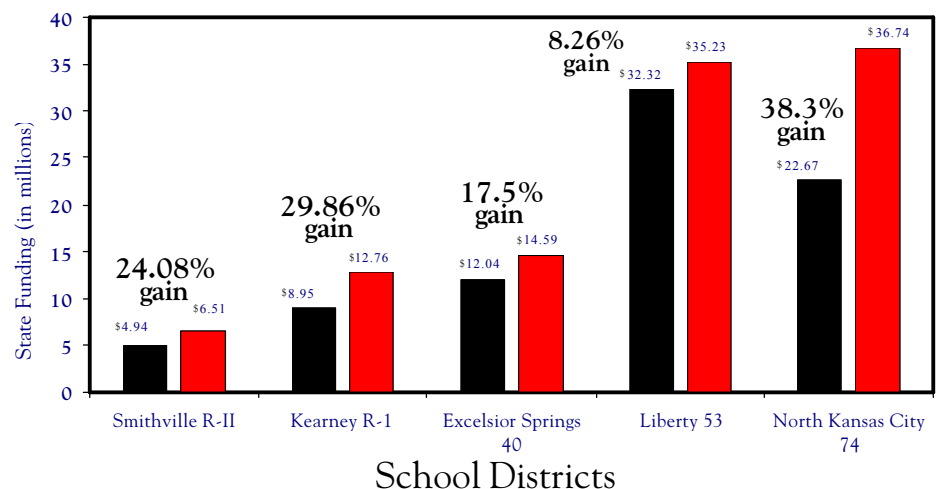
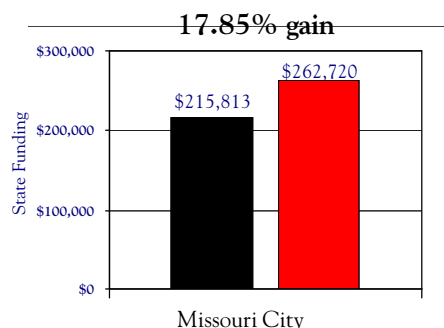
We rewrote the public school "foundation formula" to give more education money to every child in Missouri public schools. We will phase in an annual increase of \$800 million over the next seven years.

\* NOTE: Every school gets state tax money PLUS local money from your property taxes. The figures shown reflect only money coming from your state taxes.

SCHOOL DISTRICT	FY 2006	FY 2014
	Current Formula (FY 2006)*	New Formula (FY 2014)*
Excelsior Springs 40	\$12,037,447	\$14,591,573
Kearney R-1	\$8,950,636	\$12,760,893
Liberty 53	\$32,326,349	\$35,235,719
Missouri City 56	\$215,813	\$262,720
North Kansas City 74	\$22,665,544	\$36,744,689
Smithville R-II	\$4,943,711	\$6,511,324

## Funding Comparison Between Current (FY 2006) and New Formula (FY 2014) (including gain in percentage)

■ FY 2006 Current Formula ■ FY 2014 New Formula





# Senator Ridgeway Promotes Jobs

## Lawsuit Reform Bill



Excessive jury awards in civil suits of such cases as medical malpractice, wrongful death and product liability cause insurance premiums to rise. Costly insurance premiums force jobs and doctors to move out of state. With this legislation, we can achieve a better balance between culpability and financial responsibility in Missouri's civil litigation system, also known as tort law.

### The new law :

- Aims to prevent “lotto”-style jury awards by placing a \$350,000 cap on damages not actually incurred by the plaintiff, but preserves the ability of injured litigants to recover all actual damages.
- Prohibits “venue shopping,” a practice in which trials are moved away from where the actual injury occurred to jurisdictions known for awarding plaintiffs with extremely generous amounts.
- Changes the law so that defendants only have to pay for the percentage of damage they are responsible for causing, unless the defendant is more than 51 percent at fault for the injury and other defendants are insolvent.

With the new liability threshold at 51 percent, we are closer to a proportionate distribution of liability for the defendant *and* justice for the plaintiff.

## Workers' Compensation Reform Bill

Missouri enacted its workers' compensation law in 1925 to provide medical treatment and compensation to workers who were injured while on the job and to shield employers from being hit with expensive and unpredictable lawsuits by injured workers. We have revised Missouri's workers' compensation laws to lower insurance premiums for in-state businesses to help keep jobs in Missouri.



### The new law :

- Prevents lawyers' “get-rich quick” schemes by limiting the amount they can collect from injured workers.
- Requires that work be the “prevailing factor” in the injury for the worker to receive compensation.
- Does not compensate for injuries incurred while the worker is legally drunk.

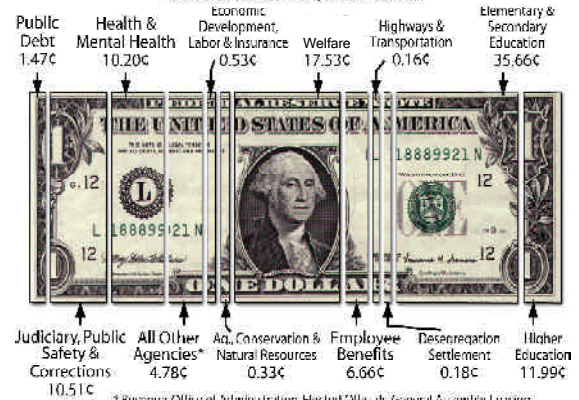
## Budget Facts

The \$19.2-billion budget we sent to the governor includes money collected from federal and state taxes. The budget includes:

- A \$113-million increase for the education foundation formula.
- Full funding of the First Steps program for 8,000 developmentally disabled infants and toddlers.
- \$13.8 million for the state's veterans' homes.
- An \$11.5-million increase for child care for low-income working parents.
- A wage increase for home and community-based workers who provide services for the elderly and adults with disabilities.

### Distribution of Each General Revenue Tax Dollar

FY 2006 After Veto Missouri Operating Appropriations  
General Revenue: \$7.159 Billion

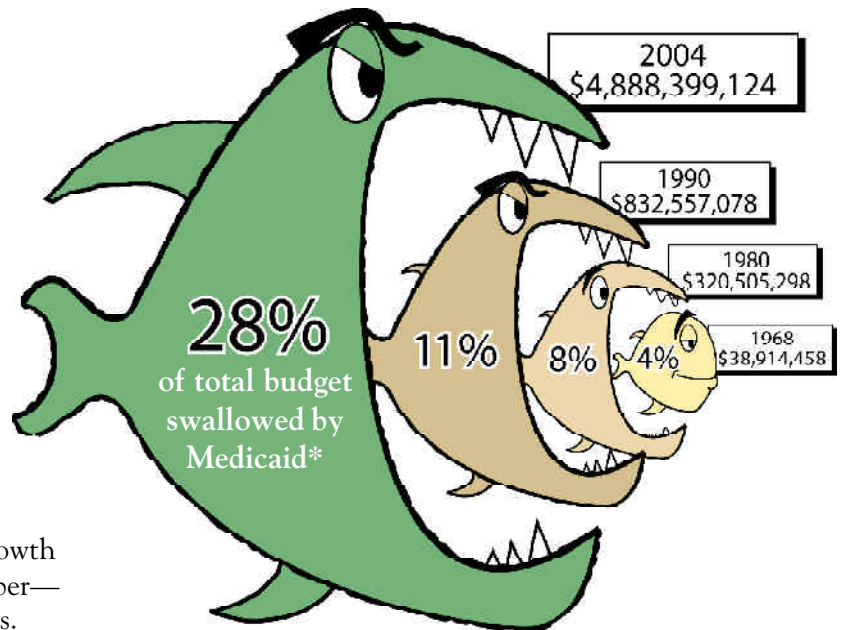


# The Hungry Mouth of Welfare Put on a Diet

Over the years, what started out as a “minnow-sized” portion of our state budget turned into a killer whale swallowing up an ever-increasing share of Missouri’s budget. There were only two choices: Raise taxes or put welfare on a diet. We chose to cut the fat, fraud and waste in welfare while preserving help for the poorest and neediest. Medicaid was restrained at the level allotted in 2002. This kept critical resources available for the needy without raising your taxes or busting the budget. The next step is completely reforming Medicaid and welfare as we know it.

## Our Goals as Reform Continues:

- Preserve critical resources for the poor and needy.
- Cut fraud and waste.
- Apply means testing so those who can provide for themselves do not take needed resources away from those who cannot.



\*The graphic to the right shows the enormous growth in Medicaid since it was started in 1968. Remember—Medicaid is just one of our many welfare programs.

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# Combating Underage Drinking



Sen. Ridgeway discusses legislation with Sen. Harry Kennedy.

A shocking 4 out of 5 Missouri high school students reports having tried alcohol, and 1 out of 3 admits to being a binge drinker.

Perhaps the reason for our children’s tendency to drink while underage was Missouri’s lenient laws.

Minors were prohibited from purchasing or possessing alcohol, but were seemingly able to drink and escape legal consequences as long as they didn’t get caught with the alcohol in their hands.

With Senate Bill 402 being signed into law, we have put a more definitive lock on the liquor cabinet and a specific plug in the law’s loopholes.

## The legislation:

- Makes it illegal for minors to have a blood-alcohol content higher than 0.02. (.08 is the legal limit for adults)
- Postpones getting or takes away driver’s licenses for minors convicted of alcohol possession.
- Charges parents allowing minors other than their own children to drink on their property with a Class B misdemeanor.
- Makes it a Class A misdemeanor for anyone to make or sell fake IDs to minors.



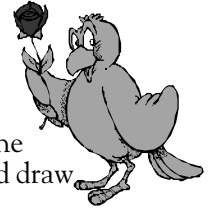


- A. CHAMBER
- B. DEBATE
- C. SHOW-ME STATE
- D. QUORUM
- E. DISTRICT
- F. JOURNAL
- G. FIDDLE
- H. DAIS
- I. BILL

- [ ] State Musical Instrument
- [ ] Number of senators required to conduct debate
- [ ] The daily record of the Senate's activities
- [ ] The large desk in the senate chamber
- [ ] A piece of proposed legislation
- [ ] Missouri State Nickname
- [ ] The area that a senator represents
- [ ] Place where legislators debate issues
- [ ] Discussion of legislation

## ...Word Find... "Bluebird"

On March 30, 1927, the native bluebird became the official state bird of Missouri. Find the Bluebird along with the other bird names in the puzzle below, and draw a circle around the word. They could be forwards, backwards, or even diagonal! Look carefully!



bluebird\*

crow

eagle

finch

hawk

robin

sparrow

\*Missouri  
State Bird

W	E	A	G	L	E	L	A	R	Z
O	J	W	R	N	H	C	N	I	F
R	D	F	T	U	I	E	T	J	U
C	M	H	A	W	K	B	G	D	P
W	O	R	R	A	P	S	O	P	B
Q	U	B	L	U	E	B	I	R	D

## Ridgeway Secures Watchdog Posts for Clay County

*Clay Countians to Serve in Important Statewide Positions*



**Mark James**  
of Liberty  
Director, Department of  
Public Safety



**Paul Vescovo III**  
of Smithville  
Peace Officer Standards  
and Training Commission



**Linda Engelmann**  
of Liberty  
Missouri Board of Examiners  
for Hearing Instrument  
Specialists



**Tom Deuschle**  
of Liberty  
Director, Department of Labor  
and Industrial Relations



## No More **DMV** Blues

*It's aggravating to wait in line for an hour to get license plates or a driver's license, only to find out once it's your turn that you're missing the necessary documents. Prepare yourself with these checklists so you don't leave the license bureau frustrated and empty-handed.*

### For NEW license plates, you need:

- ☐ The **Certificate of Title** (signed over to you) OR the **Manufacturer's Statement of Origin (MSO)**.
- ☐ Signed **application for Missouri Title and License (DOR-108)**.
- ☐ An original **paid personal property tax receipt** OR **statement of non-assessment** for the previous year for a one-year registration (two-year registration requires previous two years).
- ☐ **Proof of a safety inspection** not more than 60 days old (unless you have an MSO).
- ☐ **Proof of insurance.**
- ☐ **Payment.**

For more info, call 573-751-4509 or visit:  
[www.dor.mo.gov/mvdl/motorv/buying.htm#new](http://www.dor.mo.gov/mvdl/motorv/buying.htm#new)

### To RENEW your license plates, you need:

- ☐ A signed **Renewal Application (DOR-289)**, or **application for license (DOR-184)**.
- ☐ A **safety inspection** not more than 60 days old.
- ☐ An original **paid personal property tax receipt** OR **statement of non-assessment** for the previous year for a one-year registration (two-year registration requires previous two years).
- ☐ Current **insurance identification card**.
- ☐ **Payment.**



For online plate renewal, visit: [www.plates.mo.gov](http://www.plates.mo.gov)

For more info, call 573-751-4509 or visit:  
[www.dor.mo.gov/mvdl/motorv/renewing.htm](http://www.dor.mo.gov/mvdl/motorv/renewing.htm)

### For a U.S. Citizen Driver's License, you will need:

- ☐ A **birth certificate** with an embossed or raised seal, a valid or expired **U.S. passport**, a **Certificate of Citizenship**, **Certificate of Naturalization**, or a **Certificate of Birth Abroad** (this is a onetime requirement for U.S. citizens).
- ☐ A **Social Security card** or **Medicare card** with your current name. (If the name on the Social Security card or Medicare card does not say your current name, additional documents must be presented to supply proof of your name change).
- ☐ A document showing proof of your residence, such as a recent **utility or cable bill**, a **property tax receipt**, or most recent **bank statement**, **voter ID card** etc. For applicants under the age of 21 who cannot provide proof of residence, a parent or legal guardian may provide such a document on behalf of the young person.
- ☐ **Payment.**

For more info, call 573-751-4600 or visit online at  
[www.dor.mo.gov/mvdl/drivers/idrequirements.htm](http://www.dor.mo.gov/mvdl/drivers/idrequirements.htm)

## If you have any questions, please contact me!!!!

My staff and I are available to answer your questions, listen to your ideas or concerns, set up Capitol tours for your group or provide you with educational material about the Missouri Senate.

If you would like to receive regular e-mail updates from Senator Ridgeway, please send an e-mail with the word 'subscribe' in the subject line to:

**[luann.ridgeway@senate.mo.gov](mailto:luann.ridgeway@senate.mo.gov)**

#### **By mail:**

Senator Luann Ridgeway  
Room 419, State Capitol  
201 W. Capitol Ave.  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**By phone:** 573-751-2547

**By fax:** 573-751-9771

**By e-mail:** [luann.ridgeway@senate.mo.gov](mailto:luann.ridgeway@senate.mo.gov)

**Visit online:** [www.senate.mo.gov/ridgeway](http://www.senate.mo.gov/ridgeway)





## **This is what Senator Luann Ridgeway did to fulfill her promises to you:**

✓ Reformed how lawsuits are handled to keep quality doctors in the state rather than run them off with excessive costs of medical malpractice insurance and fear of frivolous lawsuits.

✓ Revised workers' compensation laws to keep good jobs in Missouri.

✓ Passed a responsible budget that makes Missouri government operate within its means without raising your taxes.

✓ Began a process to repair and rebuild the broken welfare system; welfare tax dollars are to be reserved for our poorest and most vulnerable citizens so they have the help they need.

✓ Crafted a new public school-funding formula to provide our children with the best education our money can buy.

✓ Continued the push to direct transportation dollars toward pavement and road improvements, not more bureaucracy.

### **Passed bills to protect you from:**

- ✓ the dangers of underage drinking
- ✓ the negative repercussions from adult-oriented businesses
- ✓ methamphetamine use
- ✓ drunk drivers
- ✓ sex offenders
- ✓ identity theft

As important as what we DID do this past legislative session, is what we DID NOT do:

**WE DID NOT  
RAISE YOUR TAXES!!!**

State Senator Luann Ridgeway  
Room 419, State Capitol  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

PRESORTED STANDARD  
U. S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

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