



*Nothing is politically right  
that is morally wrong.*

**MISSOURI SENATE**  
JEFFERSON CITY

*Free and fair discussion  
is the firmest friend of truth.*

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Rebuilding Missouri's Foundation

Op-Ed Piece Submitted by: Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood  
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In this age of do-it-yourself home improvement, many of us have had the experience of renovating, remodeling or building a home. We all know that with any project you have to start with the foundation. That is exactly where we started during this year's legislative session.

With majorities in both the Senate and House, and a republican governor to boot, we have rebuilt Missouri's foundation. From schools, to work, to a day in court – Missourians will see changes that make our lives better.

I'm working to make Missouri the best place to live, work and raise a family. The legislation we passed this year is the first phase to realizing that goal.

First and foremost are our children. We protected their health, education and future in every way possible.

The current school funding formula that distributes state tax dollars to elementary and secondary schools was broken. We created a new formula that distributes money to schools based on students' needs rather than local wealth. We found the right balance so that all of our children, no matter their public school district, now have an equal opportunity for a great education.

We also increased funding for K-12 education by a total of \$170 million. \$113 million counts towards the cost of the new formula.

I sponsored legislation reforming and saving the First Steps program guaranteeing 8,000 developmentally disabled children will continue to receive early intervention services at a savings to taxpayers.

We have also continued supporting one of the nation's most expansive children's health insurance programs covering children in families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but can't afford private health insurance. At the same time we ensured children, pregnant women and the blind will continue to receive all Medicaid services.

While protecting our children, we also protected taxpayers by adequately funding the critical functions of government without raising taxes. At the same time we passed reforms that create more jobs.

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An electronic version can be found at:

[www.senate.state.mo.us/05info/members/mem15.htm](http://www.senate.state.mo.us/05info/members/mem15.htm) (Current News Releases Link)

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We protected employees who have been injured on the job. But when work is not the cause of the injury, employers will now be protected from fraudulent claims and the higher insurance premiums they cause.

We protected both a plaintiff's and defendant's access to a fair day in court. By capping ridiculous money awards and ending venue shopping we've put an end to Missouri's "litigation lottery" keeping doctors and access to quality healthcare in Missouri.

We created incentives for businesses to expand or relocate here by letting them invest a portion of their employee withholding taxes back into their growing company if they offer fair wages and foot half their workers' healthcare bills.

These changes are tremendous. They are Missouri's new foundation. But we've just completed phase one of construction.

In phase two we are dedicated to creating a new healthcare system for the state of Missouri to replace Medicaid as we know it. It will be a system that will protect our most vulnerable people and better serve recipients, providers and taxpayers.

We will also work to update our early 20<sup>th</sup> century tax structure to meet the needs of our 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

I invite you to join us on the ground level in these efforts - Missouri is only building up from here.

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