



**Week of December 26, 2005**

## **Sen. Clemens Outlines 2006 Legislative Goals**

As we gear up for the new legislative session, I would like to share a few ideas that I will be working on.

After last session when we passed civil lawsuit reform and workers' compensation reform, it has been said that 'Missouri is open for business.' That is true, but now it is time to expand our operations as much as we can through the legislature.

Agriculture is by far the leading industry in Missouri. Just alone in our Southwest Missouri area, it is a \$3.9 billion dollar industry and involves more than 16,000 farms and related businesses. It is with this in mind that I will work to strengthen the **Right to Farm Act** laws on our books this session. It is my hope that agriculture and residential/commercial development can be good neighbors, but I will protect farming interests that are in quality operation from harmful complainers. If a working farm is doing a safe and clean job, they should not be threatened by any action of unhappy new neighbors that moved in with the knowledge of the farm next door.

Throughout the interim session my counterpart in the House of Representatives, Agriculture Chairman Peter Myers (R-Sikeston), and I have been working with county governments, the Department of Natural Resources, agricultural interest groups, and farm owners to finally find **a common sense solution to the discussion of large commercial farms**. We are getting close to that solution and soon will be filing a bill that will enhance current and future large-scale animal operations but also protect the environment and current local controls. There is a bright future ahead for these farms and the benefits they bring Missouri by operating here far outweigh the small sticking points that have held up legislation in the past.

I am also very concerned about young Missourians. It seems that everyday I hear a story about a college, or even high school, student that is walking around with \$10,000 of unsecured debt and 3 credit cards burning a hole in their pocket. Talking to students across the district, I have learned that most feel they are not receiving a good education when it comes to personal finance. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently passed a graduation requirement that says a student must have one semester of financial education starting in 2010. It is my belief that this is not enough, soon enough. With the coming introduction of **the Financial Independence Through Education Act**, I am asking for one semester of financial education every year of high school beginning in 2007. It is the least we can do for our young people to help them learn why not to dig a hole based on credit this early in their lives.

Throughout the upcoming session I will also be working on other issues and supporting our caucus efforts in **overhauling Eminent Domain laws to protect private property rights, reforming the Insurance industry in consumer friendly ways, and in completing our mission to build a new healthcare system to replace Medicaid that will truly serve our neighbors most in need.**

As always, if there are issues you would like to see addressed or if you ever have a problem finding answers from state government, my official capitol office is open for your conversation. Our toll free number is 1.866.242.0810 and our email is Dan\_Clemens@senate.mo.gov.



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