

Senator Stouffer on the State of the State

History was in the making as Governor Matt Blunt took the dais in the House Thursday. It is the first time in history the Missouri Governor has given a prime time state of the state address. It is also the first time in eighty years the people of Missouri have entrusted a Republican executive and legislative branch.

Upon having two students stand and be recognized by the General Assembly, the governor explained how one student's school was spending \$13,000 per pupil and the other only \$5,000. A promise for a new foundation formula with fair and adequate school funding for every student will include a \$170.6 million increase in funding. New ideas included distributing gaming money on a per pupil basis, and allowing local schools options on using and identifying new or alternative sources of funding for education.

The governor outlined a plan to reduce Medicaid spending without ignoring the needs of our children and expecting mothers. Today, Missouri is second in the nation for Medicaid spending. In the 1980s, eight to ten percent of the budget was allotted for Medicaid. With these cuts, 26 percent of the budget will still go to Medicaid, ranking Missouri 15th in the nation.

There will also be a \$2 increase in wages for home health care providers. People, who receive care in their homes, live longer and healthier lives while costing the state less. The Senior Rx program will also receive full funding.

The governor committed support to ethanol and other renewable fuels. This is very important to this district with ethanol plants in Malta Bend and Macon. This not only helps farmer but brings jobs to rural Missouri.

In creating a more business-friendly environment, the governor reiterated his commitment to reforming worker's compensation and tort reform.

Reforming Medicaid, auditing departments, promoting growth in renewable fuels, and making our children's education as our highest priority we can make Missouri a better state.

I encourage you to get involved in government by commenting or asking questions about these issues or any other issues that concern you. Please call my office toll free at 866-768-3987 or email at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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