



MISSOURI SENATE

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A Column for the Week
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Investing in Our Communities

Legislation focuses on health, business, and family values

JEFFERSON CITY – With less than a month left in the legislative session, my colleagues and I in the Missouri Senate do not have much time remaining to pass needed legislation. However, I am determined to further top-priority legislation remaining to be enacted. Legislation I am supporting will make improvements in Missouri health, business, and families.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 5, which I am sponsoring, will take part in the fight against cancer. This legislation supports the Department of Health and Senior Services and the Missouri Cancer Consortium in developing the Comprehensive Cancer Action Plan. The plan calls for a review of data regarding cervical cancer, including how women can best be protected from the disease through education and screening, as well as a yearly cancer control plan to be presented to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, President Pro Tem of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The cancer control agenda would also be posted on the Missouri state Web site. This legislation would work to defeat one of Missouri's worst afflictions by educating the public on its dangers and remedies.

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Other legislation I am sponsoring, Senate Bill 365, better protects Missourians against cancer by extending insurance coverage for cancer patients. This bill requires health insurers to cover patient care costs for clinical trials for cancer treatment. The true benefit of this legislation is that it provides a two-pronged attack against cancer. It allows cancer patients to receive treatment through clinical trials and supports research of cancer drugs. These reforms will help provide for family members, friends and community leaders stricken with this terrible disease.

Legislation I am co-sponsoring works to improve Missouri's business environment by removing restrictions on public works projects. Current law requires city and county governments to award public works bids to contractors who have agreements with labor organizations. Senate Bill 185 establishes the Open Contracting Act, which prohibits discrimination against employers who choose not to enter agreements with labor organizations. Public entities, and the taxpayers who support them, will no longer have to spend more on public works simply because of labor involvement. The Open Contracting Act will reduce the burden of taxation on hard-working families who are doing all they can just to get by.

While we address health and business issues, we must not forget our moral obligations. Two pieces of legislation I am supporting provide tax credits for donations to vital community-supporting organizations. Senate Bill 550, which I am sponsoring, creates a tax credit for donations to religious and charitable organizations that provide temporary housing or medical services. Legislation I am co-sponsoring, Senate Bill 251, provides tax credits for contributions to facilities that provide counseling for women and encourage birth over abortion. These tax credits support organizations that provide for our communities and make it easier for working Missourians to contribute to charities they believe in.

These bills will work together to improve the health, well being and livelihood of Missourians throughout our great state.

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Senator Robert Mayer represents the people of Wayne, Ripley, Butler, Stoddard, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Dunklin counties in the Missouri Senate.