



## **Promises Made – Promises Kept**

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*Fiscal Responsibility, Tort Reform, Workers' Compensation, Eliminating Waste*

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### **✓ Fiscal Responsibility**

**Promise:** When the State of Missouri spends money on healthcare, roads, education and other programs, it's not the state's money being spent – it's your money. As taxpayers, you deserve to have your money spent responsibly and efficiently. Since 1994, Missouri's general revenue expenditures on the Medicaid welfare healthcare system increased by an average annual rate of over 17%. During that same time the state's growth in general revenue increased by an average annual rate of 5.5%. Simply put, the state's expenditures were growing at a much larger rate than the state's income. To let this trend continue would be irresponsible and a blatant neglect of my duties as a steward of your tax dollars.

**Action:** This week the Senate passed SB 539, legislation that will limit the growth to Missouri's Medicaid welfare system. I co-sponsored the legislation because it enables those most in need to continue to receive healthcare services while also putting an end to out-of-control Medicaid healthcare welfare costs.

### **✓ Tort Reform**

**Promise:** Missouri's legal system is ranked as the 40<sup>th</sup> worst in the country. It is a system that lends itself to junk and frivolous lawsuits that drive medical malpractice premiums up and physicians out of our state. The problem is not just limited to physicians, as surveys show that a state's legal environment is an important factor when businesses consider where they will locate and expand their business.

**Action:** The House and Senate agreed on legislation this week to send to the Governor that will significantly improve Missouri's tort environment. The legislation limits the practice of venue shopping, places a limit on non-economic damages (in medical malpractice cases only) of \$350,000, and requires a defendant in a lawsuit to be found over 50% at fault to be held jointly and severally liable.

## ✓ **Workers' Compensation**

**Promise:** Another issue important to Missourians is the state's workers' compensation system. The current system is out of balance as many employees receive compensation from their employers when work is not the cause of the injury. The system causes workers' compensation premiums for employers to increase, thus discouraging job creation.

**Action:** The House and Senate sent legislation to the governor this week that will overhaul the workers' compensation system. The legislation, that I co-sponsored, redefines injuries qualifying for compensation as an injury where work is the "prevailing factor" as opposed to merely a "substantial factor." The legislation also provides equitable punishment for both employers and employees that attempt to cheat the system. This is a good, solid plan that will continue to protect workers injured on the job while also protecting employers.

## ✓ **Eliminating Waste, Fraud and Abuse**

**Promise:** The Administrative Law Judge and Legal Advisors Retirement System (ALJLAP) provides retirement benefits for 58 former state employees. By all accounts, the benefits that members receive in ALJLAP are more lucrative than those offered under the Missouri State Employees Retirement System (MOSERS). The system is open to abuse because the Governor has the duty of appointing people to several positions covered under ALJLAP. Furthermore, the appointees only have to work one day to vest into the system.

**Action:** I sponsored legislation that eliminates the ALJLAP system and places all employees formerly covered by ALJLAP under MOSERS. This effectively eliminates the sweetheart retirement deals that Governors from both parties abused throughout the years. The legislation was passed in the Senate and heard this week in the House Retirement Committee.

## **Contact Me**

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: [jcrowell@senate.mo.gov](mailto:jcrowell@senate.mo.gov) or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

Thank you for your time.

*Senator Jason Crowell represents the people of Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry and Scott counties in the Missouri Senate.*