



Happy Easter

Looking Ahead to the 2nd Half of Session and Creating a Stronger Missouri

The end of March is upon us and has brought with it the season of Easter—a time of rejuvenation, rejoice and a renewed sense of duty for the Missouri Senate. I extend my best wishes to you this Easter as you celebrate your faith, your family and the season of growth. My colleagues and I will return next Tuesday from our mid-session recess and be accompanied by a reinforced motivation having already fulfilled many of our legislative priorities. We expect the second half of this session's success to mirror that of the first.

Funding public education, making prescriptions more available to the elderly and drawing up a balanced state budget are the critical issues that we will address in the upcoming weeks. Finding a more equitable way to distribute funding for public schools is my top priority. Based on recommendations from the Joint Committee on Education, we are getting closer to overhauling the foundation formula for the state's public education system for the first time in more than a decade. SB 287, which applies a minimum per-pupil dollar figure and adjusts the amount according to the districts' varying property values and costs of living, was heard by the Senate Education Committee last week. Because more than money is on the line with this important issue, I am eager to come up with a new formula that ensures equality among districts and quality education for each student.

Senate and House members have also thrown their support behind legislation allowing Missourians to get their prescription drugs from Canada. The sponsor and driving force behind the legislation is Speaker of the House, Rod Jetton. The plan aims at helping seniors afford expensive medications and would put into statute an earlier executive order allowing Missouri to join other states in the I-SaveRx program, which connects residents to pharmacies in Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

One of the biggest tasks legislatures tackle each year is writing the state budget. The Missouri constitution requires that a balanced budget be approved by May 6th. The House traditionally begins the budget-writing process, after which the Senate will consider the fiscal plan. Later, members from both chambers will convene to determine a final budget. We will do our best to protect the programs that benefit all of Missouri while eliminating waste, fraud and abuse from state spending.

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 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.