



## **Moving Missouri Forward**

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*Pension Reform, Vaccination Safety & Truth in Tuition Legislation Advances*

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### **Pension Reform**

This week three bills that I sponsored took important steps towards becoming law. One of them is Senate Bill 202, which abolishes the Administrative Law Judge and Legal Advisors Retirement Plan. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 32-0, and now moves onto the House of Representatives. If approved by the House, it will be sent to Governor Matt Blunt who will sign it into law.

The legislation halts the sweetheart retirements of administrative law judges and commissioners by preventing them from receiving large pensions for as little as one day of work. Under the legislation, all new administrative law judges' and commissioners' retirements will be placed under the Missouri State Employee Retirement System (MOSERS). Currently, administrative law judges and legal advisors become vested immediately upon employment. Under MOSERS, they would be required to serve for five years before becoming eligible for retirement benefits, just like all other state employees. Pensions in the private sector are based on length of service and that's the way it should be in state government too. Taxpayers should not bear the cost of these outrageous golden parachutes.

### **Vaccination Safety**

I am also sponsoring legislation that would prohibit immunizations containing mercury from being administered to children less than 8 years of age. A mercury-based compound called Thimerosal is currently used as a preservative in immunizations. Although scientific studies do not establish Thimerosal as a direct cause, research exists illustrating a relationship between Thimerosal and neurological impairments such as Asperger's Syndrome and Autism. Mercury is a known neurotoxin and in no way is it good for the developing body. We should not be using such a dangerous element in immunizations, which are meant to cure, not harm. Immunizations are good, they do help people, they just need to be safe.

Alternative measures exist, such as using single-dose immunization vials that are used up in one shot. These vials do not need preservatives and therefore do not contain Thimerosal.

## **Truth in Tuition**

Additionally I introduced Senate Bill 231 in an effort to shine the light of knowledge on tuition increases and what those increases go for. The legislation would require universities to give public notice of proposed tuition increases, greater than the rate of inflation, at least six months prior to the beginning of any academic year. Universities must also conduct a public hearing about any tuition hike. Another provision of the bill requires the University of Missouri system to submit a detailed budget to the general assembly for approval. Although the legislation may make it more difficult for universities to raise tuition, I am going to side with the students and parents rather than the universities.

Senate Bill 49 and 231 were both heard in committee this week and once they receive approval, they will be sent to the Senate floor for debate by the full body. Summaries, full text, and status of the bills are available online at <http://www.senate.mo.gov>.

## **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 or you may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, email me at: [jcrowell@senate.mo.gov](mailto:jcrowell@senate.mo.gov) or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>. They are available to help you with any of your constituent needs.

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.*