



*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Senators Announce Referendum Placing Education Funding
Solely Under the Governor and Legislature's Purview**

JEFFERSON CITY – Senate Majority Floor Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, Senate Education Committee Chair Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, and Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Sen. Matt Bartle, R-Lee's Summit, announced today a Senate Joint Resolution that would allow Missourians to vote to make education funding exclusively the province of the governor and the legislature, rather than a matter to be decided in the courts.

The senators, all of whom are members of the Joint Committee on Education, say Missourians should have a chance to say whether or not courts should play a role in determining funding formulas for local schools.

"We are giving Missourians an opportunity to end the cycle of their tax dollars being used to sue the state, eating up more of their tax dollars to defend the state," Bartle said. "Schools and lawmakers should be working together to reach the best outcome for our children rather than an un-elected judge dictating a formula that may not be fair."

It is estimated it will likely cost the state more than \$1 million to defend the current education funding lawsuit. Bartle says that does not include the amount of money spent by school districts involved in the suit.

"It's amazing to think that all this money could be going to better our education system rather than on court costs," Nodler said. "Especially since the legislature will complete the process of writing a new formula long before the courts would make a ruling."

Shields, who Chairs the Joint Committee on Education, says the measure would still give schools a course of action if they questioned the amount of funding they receive.

"Parents, teachers, and superintendents will always have access to their elected officials," Shields said. "We are reactive to our constituency and unlike the courts, we are responsive to the majority of Missourians."

The resolution, if approved by the General Assembly and governor would be placed on the next general election ballot scheduled for November of 2006. The measure, if approved by voters, would amend Article IX of the state's constitution.

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