



## *2006 Capitol Report*



### State Delegation Excels

St. Charles County's state delegation members worked diligently on a variety of issues important to county residents.

The Missouri Senate's newest member, Senator **Scott Rupp**, representing state senatorial District 2, joined forces with Sen. Gross in pushing for stronger laws dealing with undocumented workers.

Sen. **Chuck Gross**, Senate Appropriations Committee chairman, with Rep. **Carl Bearden** on the budget conference committee, put through a balanced operating budget without a tax increase.

A much improved economy, greater fiscal responsibility in recent years, and ongoing efficiencies allowed for targeted increased spending with public education receiving the lion's share of state revenues

Rep. **Tom Dempsey's** ethics bill brings greater transparency to the campaign process. Sen. Gross added that professional lobbyists must report expenditures at the local government level.

Reps. **Cynthia Davis** and **Joe Smith** advanced a measure authorizing our local elections director to determine how many ballots to print rather than use a formula that results in the costly destruction of thousands of unused ballots after each election.

Reps. **Vicki Schneider**, **Sally Faith** and **Kevin Threlkeld** shepherded through the House measures sponsored by Sen. Gross to simplify the county's setting of its tax rate, support a county municipal court, and allow updating of the state's radiation safety rules. Rep. **Sherman Parker** helped put through legislation allowing small business greater access to group health insurance for their employees.

## Vehicle Emissions Testing Streamlined

*Decentralized program beginning September 2007 will test fewer vehicles.*

With federal Environmental Protection Agency approval, Senate Bill 583 will allow computerized vehicle emissions testing at any certified auto shop and requires fewer vehicles be tested. Generally all light duty gas and diesel vehicles with a model year of 1996 or more recent, with some exceptions, will require testing at a cost not to exceed \$24.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

Vehicles exempted from testing:

- Newest four model years if driven less than 40,000 miles at two-year safety inspection.
- All vehicles driven less than 12,000 miles between biennial safety inspections.
- Vehicles manufactured before 1996, as they will have a gas-cap pressure test with the required safety inspection.
- Heavy-duty vehicles with gross weight ratings over 8,500 pounds.

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## Eminent Domain Reform Enacted, TIF Reform Fails

*“All of our freedom is built upon the right of private property, and without private property right no other rights or freedoms are possible – they are merely illusory.”*

*— Robert J. Smith, Competitive Enterprise Institute*

The 2005 U.S. Supreme Court ruling supporting the taking of private property for private development using the governmental power of eminent domain ignited state legislatures into action.

Unfortunately, in passing HB 1944, the Missouri General Assembly failed to address the underlying problem of defining blight and chose to retain Missouri's vague definition. Private property can be taken to eradicate blight, and public tax dollars can be redirected from government funded services to develop blighted property.

While economic development cannot be the sole purpose for using eminent domain, blighted property can still be condemned for government-approved redevelopment. Farmland can no longer be deemed blighted.

Owners are to receive 25 percent more

market value in damages if their home or adjacent property is taken or 50 percent more if the property had been owned by the family or small business for at least 50 years.

At their best, these reforms give owners greater notice and participation in the condemnation process and require relocation costs be paid. An entire redevelopment area cannot be condemned unless more than half of the parcels are deemed blighted. If a condemning

party fails to negotiate in good faith, the action is to be dismissed and the owner reimbursed for his costs.

*Senator Gross voted no.*

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The House and Senate failed to reconcile differing tax increment financing bills, and TIF reform failed.

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# Voter I.D., Campaign Ethics Strengthened

*New safeguards enacted to assure fair elections.*

Senate Bill 1014 requires photo identification, such as a Missouri driver's or non-driver's license, passport, or military ID, beginning November 2006. Voters without proper identification may cast provisional ballots until November 2008, when only voters born before 1941, or who are disabled, or who have a religious objection can cast provisional ballots without photo IDs.

Photo IDs for voting purposes will be provided at no cost, and voters will not be able to simply check one box to vote straight-party tickets.

Additional safeguards include requiring voter registration solicitors to register with the state, prohibiting the paying of a "bounty" to

register voters, and making the intimidation or harassment of voters a felony.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

HB 1900 requires candidates file full disclosure reports electronically and eliminates individual contribution caps to more accurately reflect donors as opposed to large sums being funneled through political committees.

Lobbyists must report expenditures in more detail and report expenses on behalf of elected officials of larger local governments. Candidates for state legislative and statewide offices cannot accept contributions during the legislative session.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

## Upcoming Elections

### *Elected Positions*

- United States Senator
- United States Representative - Districts 2 & 9
- State Auditor
- State Senator - District 2
- State Representatives - All Districts
- Circuit Judges - Divisions 3, 4, 5 & 7
- Associate Judges - Divisions 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12
- County Executive
- County Council - Districts 1, 3, 5 & 7
- Assessor
- Collector of Revenue
- Elections Director
- Prosecuting Attorney
- Sheriff
- Central Committees

### *Ballot Measures*

- Constitutional Amendment 1: Ten year re-authorization for 1/10th percent sales tax for soil and water conservation and state parks.
- Constitutional amendment to exempt veterans' organizations from property taxation.



Sen. Gross (r) discusses the floor debate with Sen. Michael Gibbons (l) and Sen. Delbert Scott.

- Constitutional amendment to prohibit public officials convicted of a felony or removed for misconduct from receiving a state pension.
- Various initiatives, if they become certified, relating to: eminent domain, state spending limit, human cloning, stem cell research, and a tobacco tax.

For more elections information:  
Election Director at [www.saintcharlescounty.org](http://www.saintcharlescounty.org)  
Secretary of State at [www.sos.mo.gov/elections](http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections)



## State Budget Highlights

*Constitutional obligations met to first pay the public debt and next use no less than 25 percent of state revenues to fund public education.*

**OVERALL** the budget for fiscal year 2007 grew by 8.2 percent.

**HIGHER EDUCATION** received \$20 million more for colleges and state universities. The Lewis & Clark Career Center in St. Charles received a \$1 million state match for expansion and renovation.

**HOMESTEAD PRESERVATION** Tax Credit was fully funded, providing an additional \$2.96 million in property tax assistance to eligible seniors and the disabled.

**MEDICAID** spending increased over \$200 million. Optional services were expanded and rate increases went to service providers for the elderly, disabled, and children in state custody.

**PUBLIC EDUCATION** received 35.28 percent of

the state's general revenues, representing a \$180 million increase with public schools getting more in state aid and small school grants, and including increases to transportation, Parents as Teachers, First Steps, and the A+ program.

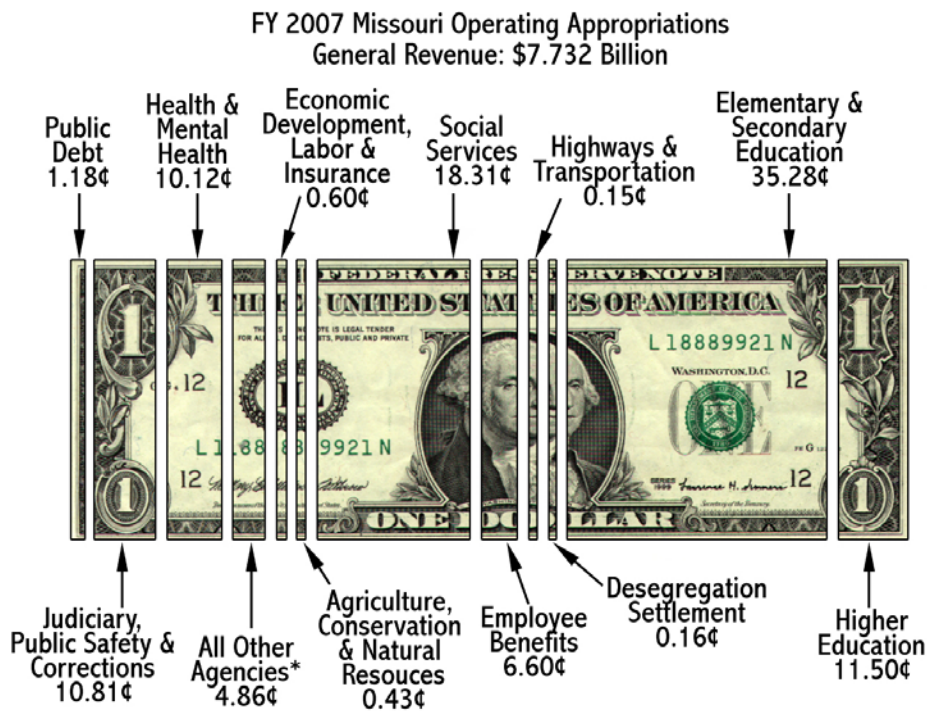
**SENIORS** also benefit from an additional \$1 million for home-delivered meals.

**STATE EMPLOYEES**, except for elected officials and judges, received a four percent cost of living increase.

**UTILITY HELP** was provided with \$6.1 million to assist low-income families with utility bills.

**VETERANS SERVICES** saw an additional \$5.4 million to operate state veterans' homes and to add more state service officers and support staff.

### How Your State Tax Dollars Were Spent



\*Revenue, Office of Administration, Elected Officials, General Assembly, Leasing

## More Bills that Passed...

### Crimes Against Children

HB 1698: Requires 30-year minimum prison sentence for violent child sexual offenders; provides assistance to local law enforcement in catching internet predators who lure children.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

### Children in Crisis

HB 1485, SB's 614 & 1229: Provide tax credits for contributions to pregnancy resource centers, to agencies helping children in crisis, and to residential treatment centers for children in state custody.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

### Assisted Care for Adults

SB 616: Requirements for assisted living facilities address staff size, training, and plans for resident services and protection. Residents are no longer required to negotiate a "pathway to safety" on their own.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

### Parental Control

HB 1182: Allows a parent or legal guardian to petition a court to extend jurisdiction of a 15 year old to age 18.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

### Child Passenger Restraint and Traffic Penalties

SB 872: Requires children under 8 years old, weighing less than 80 pounds, and under 4'9" tall to be secured in an appropriate car seat or booster seat. Children

exceeding this weight or height are to be secured by a seat belt or booster seat. School buses and public transport are exempted. Traffic penalties increased for violations endangering highway workers and for failing to move over, yield or stop for emergency vehicles and school buses.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

intermediate license can have only one teenage passenger who is not a member of the immediate family; thereafter teenage passengers outside of the immediate family are limited to three.

*Senator Gross voted no.*

### Boat Ownership

SB 778: Requires proof of paid personal property taxes when titling or registering boats. Application fees more than doubled with collections exceeding \$2 million used for state water patrol expenses.

*Senator Gross voted no.*

### 10% Ethanol Fuel

HB 1270: By January 1, 2008, all gasoline sold in Missouri is to contain at least 10 percent ethanol, provided cost is no higher than non-ethanol blends. Ethanol blend is already required in St. Louis for air quality purposes.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

### Funeral Protests and Vietnam Veterans

SB 578 & HB 978:

Restricts funeral protestors, and creates medallion program for Vietnam veterans.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

### Guard at Home Program

HB 1787: Assists spouses of active Guard members or reservists with immediate needs and employment and helps returning troops find work if job was eliminated while on deployment.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*



### License Renewals and Teen Drivers

SB 1001: Those 65 years of age or older and previously issued a Missouri non-commercial driver's or non-driver's license exempted from submitting proof of lawful presence for license renewal.

Teen drivers need 40 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction with at least 10 of those at night. Teens driving for first six months with an



## Bills that Failed...

### Cable Competition:

SB 816: Would have allowed greater competition for video cable TV service by creating a statewide franchise for providers. Cable television industry opposed phone companies' interest to compete for this business. Bill failed to come to a vote in the Senate.

### Traffic Cameras:

SB 719: Would have prohibited local governments from adopting ordinances or regulations authorizing the use of photo radar or automated traffic control systems to enforce traffic laws. Bill failed to come to a vote in the Senate.

### Illegal Aliens:

SB 1121 & SB 1250: Proposed tougher restrictions against hiring undocumented workers and misclassifying employees, prohibiting illegal aliens from attending public universities and from receiving state and local public assistance not federally mandated, and authorizing peace officers to apprehend illegal aliens and transfer them into federal custody. Various provisions passed in the Senate, but all failed to come to a vote in the House.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*

### Disabled Workers:

HB 1742: Proposed a Disabled Employee's Health Assistance Program to allow Medicaid eligibility for certain disabled workers and would have eliminated income from certified

sheltered workshop employment in calculating Medicaid eligibility. The Senate added provisions addressing Medicaid fraud, but the House failed to bring the revised bill to a final vote on the last day of session.

*Senator Gross voted yes.*



Kristen Holt, Cotteville, receives a Senate resolution for her selection as a Joanne Breckenridge Legislative Day Scholar.

## Gubernatorial Appointments

### *Area Residents Recently Appointed to State Boards and Commissions*

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| ■ <b>Richard D. James</b><br>Board of Chiropractic<br>Examiners | ■ <b>John F. Smith</b><br>Missouri Higher<br>Education Loan Authority                        | ■ <b>Edward L. Bryant</b><br>Missouri Training and<br>Employment Council                         |
| ■ <b>Deborah Demien</b><br>State Board of Education             | ■ <b>Martin J. Struckhoff</b><br>Board of Examiners for<br>Hearing Instrument<br>Specialists | ■ <b>Michael T. Force</b><br>Peace Officer Standards<br>and Training                             |
| ■ <b>Arlene Hogue</b><br>Missouri Board for<br>Respiratory Care |  | ■ <b>Penny Bennett</b><br>Board of Geologist<br>Registration                                     |
|   |  | ■ <b>Thelma G. Kinion</b><br>Board of Cosmetology and<br>Barber Examiners                        |
|   |  | ■ <b>David Poggemeier</b><br>Board of Registration for<br>Healing Arts                           |
|   |  | ■ <b>Thomas G. Heinsz</b><br>St. Charles County<br>Convention and Sports<br>Facilities Authority |



Sen. Gross presents Arlene Hogue to the Senate Gubernatorial Appointments Committee.

For online information on state boards and commissions, visit:  
[www.gov.mo.gov/boards/boards.htm](http://www.gov.mo.gov/boards/boards.htm)

## Highway Projects Update

## Summer Driving



### ROUTE 364 (Page Extension)

- ⇒ Harvester Road segment begin work 2006.
- ⇒ Flyover interchange at Page and I-270 begin 2008.

- ⇒ Interchange at I-64 operational.
- ⇒ Right-of-way acquisition, design, utility relocation and funding efforts continue for Phases 2 and 3.

### INTERSTATE 64 (Highway 40)

- ⇒ Route K to Route DD under construction.
- ⇒ Lake St. Louis Blvd. to I-70 begin work 2007.
- ⇒ Funding efforts for new I-64 bridge underway.

### INTERSTATE 70

- ⇒ Interchange at Hwy 94 completion late 2007.
- ⇒ Add auxiliary / through lanes westbound from Hwy 79 to TR Hughes begin work 2006 and eastbound Hwy K to Mid Rivers begin 2007.

### HIGHWAY 94 NORTH

- ⇒ Overlay and safety improvements near Route H to Route V begin 2006.

### ROUTE 79

- ⇒ Bridge replacements and pavement work underway.

## Opportunities for College Students

My Capitol office takes advantage of the availability of college interns during the busy legislative session. Any college student wanting hands-on experience of how state government works can contact their university for placement, or call either my Capitol or district office. Generally, interns receive college credits and gain valuable work experience for their resumé.

Motorists will experience the busiest construction season ever, with more than 1,000 work zones planned as MoDOT strives to complete the Smooth Roads Initiative a full year ahead of schedule.

Please remember your safety and that of our highway workers when traveling through work zones.

- Think ahead, allow extra time, be patient.
- Always buckle up.
- Drive sober.
- Road conditions call:  
1-888-275-6636  
or online at  
[www.modot.org](http://www.modot.org).
- Merge as directed and follow posted speed limits to avoid high fines.
- Know alternate routes.



Dan Bedell, Fort Zumwalt South High School student, spent part of his Spring Break job shadowing with Sen. Gross and his staff.

## Contact Senator Gross

*My staff and I are happy to answer questions or hear concerns you may have about state government.*

*Chuck Gross*

Senator Chuck Gross  
Room 423, 201 W. Capitol Ave.  
Jefferson City, MO 65101  
Phone: 573-751-8635  
Email: [chuck\\_gross@senate.mo.gov](mailto:chuck_gross@senate.mo.gov)

District office:  
415 N. Second Street  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
Phone: 636-949-2323

Senator Gross's press releases, sponsored bills, and additional information are available online at: [www.senate.mo.gov/gross](http://www.senate.mo.gov/gross)  
To access all state legislative information online, visit: [www.moga.mo.gov](http://www.moga.mo.gov)



Senator Gross at the dais of the Senate chamber with (l to r) district office assistant Vicky Huesemann, policy assistant Jeannie Walton and capitol office assistant Jean Kempker.

State Senator Chuck Gross  
Room 423, 201 W. Capitol Ave.  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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