



# THE LOUDON TIMES

**Senator John Loudon**  
Senate District 7

**Capitol Building, Room 422**  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**Column for Week of:**  
Jan. 30, 2006

**Contact: Nick Bengston**  
(573) 751-9763

---

## Providing a Future for Missouri Children

### High Education Loans and Area Jobs

The 7<sup>th</sup> District received good news this week when the board of the Chesterfield-based Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA) voted to sell approximately half of its assets to generate an estimated \$450 million for capital-improvement projects, new scholarships and endowed professorships at universities throughout Missouri. Gov. Blunt's original plan would have sold the entire non-profit agency to the highest bidder. Fortunately, the new plan keeps MOHELA, and its approximately 300 jobs, in Chesterfield.

MOHELA is an invaluable resource for Missourians. It provides low-interest loans to send our young men and women to college, and its discounts to students are ranked among the best in the nation. Further, the agency's approximately 586,000 loans are processed by Missourians right here in the 7<sup>th</sup> District.

The current plan to sell approximately half of MOHELA's assets will provide an estimated \$450 million for projects throughout the state. Approximately \$300 million will go toward capital-improvement projects, \$100 million will be invested in student scholarships, \$30 million goes toward enhancing growth and development of technology businesses near college campuses and \$20 million will provide for endowed professorships at state universities.

Although this plan looks to be an excellent opportunity to improve higher education in Missouri while maintaining a vital resource for student loans, it will require further investigation to ensure it is right for Missouri and members of the 7<sup>th</sup> District. I am confident that the efforts of the governor, the MOHELA board and fellow lawmakers and I will come to a final agreement that will benefit members of the 7<sup>th</sup> District and our state as a whole.



Sen. Loudon debating the MOHELA issue on the floor.

## **Protecting Our Children**

As the MOHELA deal will prove a positive step for Missouri's young men and women, citizens showed their support for Missouri children as they gathered at the Capitol this week to celebrate Child Advocacy Day. The event offered workshops and exhibitions and culminated with a march on the Capitol in support of Missouri's children. It was a fitting tribute, because legislation I have filed to provide greater protections for Missouri youths is advancing in the Legislature.

Lawmakers are making sex-offender legislation a top priority and we met this week in a roundtable discussion to put together a comprehensive sex-crimes bill. This has been my number-one issue in 2006, and the solidarity I have seen among lawmakers to crack down on these heinous criminals is encouraging. My legislation requires lifetime supervision and electronic monitoring of those who have committed the worst sex crimes. It also strengthens penalties for certain offenders and enhances penalties against those who lure children over the Internet.

As criminals figure out new ways to prey on our children, we must counter with stricter and more effective punishments. The efforts of my fellow lawmakers and I will lead to better laws to protect Missouri's most valuable resource, our children.

If you have questions or comments about these issues or any other topic, please call my Capitol office at (573) 751-9763. Thank you for your support.

## **Quote of the Week**

“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”  
Benjamin Franklin