



THE LOUDON TIMES

Senator John Loudon
Senate District 7

Capitol Building, Room 422
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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Contact: Nick Bengston
(573) 751-9763

Advancing the Budget

As the 2006 session begins to wind down, senators this week turned their attention to the budget and voter fraud. The Senate advanced a budget that is both efficient and responsible, and we've passed legislation that will ensure every vote cast in Missouri elections counts.

In the budget for the 2007 fiscal year, which begins July 1, education is once again Missouri's number-one priority. Senators have approved a \$127 million increase for Missouri's K-12 foundation formula and an additional \$15 million to fund the Small Schools Grant Program. Missouri's colleges and universities will also receive the first funding increase for higher education in several years.

Lawmakers are also standing behind their commitment to improving health care. The Senate budget plan puts \$25 million into the Healthcare Technology Fund, which will be used to invest in electronic medical records, electronic prescribing and tele-monitoring. Funding will also be used to launch by Jan. 1 a Web site listing the prices Missouri pharmacies charge for the 50 most commonly prescribed drugs in the state. These health-care improvements will allow better service and prices for Missourians in need of medical assistance.

Thanks to last year's landmark workers-compensation and tort reforms, which have revitalized Missouri's economy, we now have the ability to invest in the future of our state. By focusing on education and health-care technology, we can move Missouri into the 21st century.



Sen. Loudon with a group of fourth grader students from Russ elementary school.

Cracking Down on Voter Fraud

In spite of Democratic filibusters, the Missouri Senate has approved legislation that will reduce voter fraud in Missouri. Senate Bill 1014 requires Missourians to submit a government-issued photo ID in order to vote and prohibits the use paychecks, utility bills or bank statements as valid identification.

Although the Democrats have argued that this bill would disenfranchise those who cannot afford photo IDs or who are not mobile enough to obtain IDs, those arguments do not stand up. SB 1014 requires the state to issue photo IDs to all citizens unable to obtain them for financial reasons and exempts from the photo-ID requirement some voters with disabilities and individuals born before 1941. So rather than disenfranchising voters, this bill ensures that voter fraud does not make a mockery of legitimately cast ballots.

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

“Freedom of men under government is to have a standing rule to live by, common to everyone of that society, and made by the legislative power vested in it; a liberty to follow my own will in all things, when the rule prescribes not, and not to be subject to the inconstant, unknown, arbitrary will of another man.”

-John Locke