



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

**District 8 – Capitol Building, Room 431 Jefferson City, MO 65101**

**Column for Week of:  
Nov. 13, 2006**

**Contact: Todd Scott  
(573) 751-1464 / (888) 711-9278**

## **With Elections over, Lawmakers Look Ahead to New Legislative Session**

Now that the election season has come to a close, newly elected and re-elected Missouri lawmakers are looking forward to returning to Jefferson City to get back to work. However, before looking forward to what lies ahead, I would like to pause to thank the voters of the 8<sup>th</sup> Senate District who have made their voices heard. Thank you for allowing me the privilege to represent you in the Missouri State Senate for another term. It is my goal to push for measures that will benefit Eastern Jackson County and the state of Missouri as a whole.

Much work remains to be done, and one of our state's most pressing issues is the conditions of our highways. In past columns, I have addressed why Missouri's state highway system is so large relative to the size and population of our state. Combined with years of simply repaving our highways and not supporting needed expansions or renovations, the poor conditions of Interstates 70 and 44 threaten the safety of Missouri motorists.

Since construction began on these interstate highways in 1956, Missouri has not significantly updated their infrastructure. Although we pour millions of dollars each year into repaving efforts, Missourians and other motorists essentially are driving on the same highways that were built 50 years ago. Further, traffic is expected to double by the year 2030, and truck traffic on I-70 is growing each year at twice the pace of all vehicles, which means that the entire I-70 corridor will be experiencing stop-and-go conditions.

With increases in traffic come more accidents. According to estimates, the number of accidents occurring along many stretches of the interstate will nearly double in the next 30 years if no changes are made in its design.

Missouri's high-traffic interstate highways cannot continue to function under present conditions. I have the privilege of serving as a member of the Senate Transportation Committee, and it is my intention to bring focus to this issue during the coming session. I would like to see I-70 rebuilt and turned into a modern transportation artery instead of the relic of the 1950s, which it has gradually become. This will take "outside the box" thinking and will be one of the biggest priorities and challenges of my next term.

Another top priority is continuing the focus on the needs of our public schools. In the past two years, lawmakers have established a new formula for funding public schools. This new formula will implement an \$800 million increase in the annual budget for public schools over the course of seven years. Yet looking forward to the next four years lawmakers need to continue to focus on making education in Missouri the very best it can be.

As we approach the beginning of a new legislative session in January, I want to again thank you for allowing me to serve as your state senator.

If you have comments or questions about any matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278.

-END-