



SENATOR MATT BARTLE

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

**Column for Week of:
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Thanksgiving: A Time for Reflection

Here's a column that I've run before, but it captures my thoughts about the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, so I share it once again. Happy Thanksgiving.

We are just now entering one of the most wonderful and yet most hectic times of year. Like a roller coaster poised on the brink of a steep plunge, we are staring six weeks of barely organized chaos squarely in the face. With the realization that the holidays are upon us, and with just about 30 days left until Christmas, there is much to be done. There are Thanksgiving dinners with family and friends, a long list of Christmas gifts to be purchased, decorations to be hung, cards to be sent and a host of other details to be squeezed into our already busy lives.

Yet in spite of the busyness and the long "to do" lists, perhaps we all need to take a few precious moments to count our blessings and reflect on why we celebrate. Earlier this month we paused to cast our ballots to elect government leaders to represent us. Despite the typical political bickering these elections proceeded smoothly. There were no riots in the streets and no attempted coups, proving once again that our American experiment of self-rule is strong and stable. Last Sunday many of us found ourselves in church, worshiping God according to the dictates of conscience. We feared no interference by unruly mobs or secret police. We live in homes where there is food in the cupboard and with the flip of a switch the climate is automatically adjusted to keep out the chill. Though we often take these and a thousand other blessings for granted, for much of the world today these things are in short supply.

During this Thanksgiving holiday my mind goes back to the early days of this nation when the Pilgrims arrived on America's shores. We've all heard the accounts of how they left England in the hopes of finding a place to worship God freely and without interference. Yet their hopes of finding a better place to raise their families in the New World were nearly shattered by the harsh reality of the New England winter, which many pilgrims did not survive. History tells us that the colony itself might not have survived at all without the assistance of local Native Americans such as Squanto.

As a boy, Squanto was kidnapped by traders and taken across the sea to Europe. After many years, with the assistance of a man in England who had compassion on young Squanto, he was able to find a ship headed back to America. But when he arrived, he found that his village had been destroyed by a plague. In what was perhaps the greatest miracle of the first Thanksgiving, it was Squanto who met the weary Pilgrims, greeted them in their own language and helped teach them how to grow crops in the New England soil. Without him, the fledgling colony might never have survived.

Thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of early Americans such as Squanto, the first Pilgrims and the thousands of immigrants who were to follow, we enjoy unprecedented bounty in our nation today. So before we become totally engulfed in the chaos that often accompanies this time of year, let's count our own blessings. Let's remember those who are less fortunate, those who are even today fighting in our armed forces in distant lands, and most of all let's pause to thank God for His blessings to each of us.

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 or by phone at (888) 711-9278.

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