

Report from Senator David G. Klindt

February 16, 2006

Lots of talk, and action, too

There was a lot of talking on the floor of the Missouri Senate this week – most of it in the form of a filibuster on SB 849. This bill changes the rules governing union involvement in construction projects paid for by taxpayers. The aim is to reduce the impact of project labor agreements, which require contractors to give up control over such important matters as hiring and wages. Too often, the impact of a PLA is to increase the costs to taxpayers while closing off job opportunities for non-union workers.

The filibuster took us to 1:30 in the morning the first night and 12:30 in the morning the following night. Meanwhile, several senators huddled and worked on a compromise. We'll see if the compromise holds up when we return to the issue next week.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Energy, and the Environment, which I chair, voted unanimously this week to approve SB 915. This bill puts in place an ambitious target for the development of renewable energy sources for Missouri utilities. Our future must include the use of wind, solar, bio-fuels and other so-called "green" energy sources in a way that is affordable to the consumer. Failing to plan in this important arena is, without question, a plan for failure.

Our committee also held a hearing this week on SB 613, which allows the addition of cell phones, business cell phones and fax numbers to Missouri's "Do Not Call" list. We also discussed the need to crack down on a new wave of crooks – those who get their hands on lists of phone numbers called by cell phones and then selling the lists over the Internet. It's an invasion of privacy and we need to put a stop to it. I look for my committee to send a bill to the floor very soon.

The Senate Agriculture Committee this week held a hearing on SB 1008, which I'm sponsoring. The bill creates the Governor's Advisory Council on Agricultural Science and Technology. As you know, technology is critical to the future of agriculture and is linked to rural economic development. SB 1008 will help make sure Gov. Matt Blunt – and future governors – have access to a trusted group of knowledgeable advisors concerning the intersection of farming and technology.

A companion bill of mine – SB 1009 – is also in the Agriculture Committee. This bill seeks to make sure regulations concerning the sale, storage and use of seeds is uniform across Missouri. We're better and more productive farmers today because of new technologies like genetically enhanced seeds. We need to make sure Missouri doesn't end up with a patchwork of local regulations that would make it difficult or impossible to grow the crops of tomorrow.

So we had lots of talk, but some action, too. That's fairly typical for the Missouri Senate.

