



*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2006

Senate Passes Resolution Endorsing Higher Education Spending Plan

Resolution Urges the Governor to Continue Plan for Partial Sale of Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority

JEFFERSON CITY –The Missouri Senate today approved a resolution urging Governor Blunt to go ahead with a plan to spend the \$478 million from the partial sale of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority. The spending plan, which benefits Missouri students and makes healthcare more available and affordable for all Missourians, was passed by the Senate last week. The bill was approved by the House but never forwarded to the Senate for the final vote before moving to the governor. The bill failed to pass before the constitutional budget deadline of 6 p.m., Friday, May 5.

House Bill 1022 was a comprehensive plan to invest in scholarships and capital projects on Missouri college campuses that would, in turn, have led to better healthcare throughout the state.

Senate Majority Floor Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, sponsored Senate Resolution 3048.

“We want to do the right thing for Missouri students, parents and citizens,” Shields said. “Unfortunately, the House refused to send the approved bill over, and this resolution was our only option to still show our support for this important partnership.”

The measure maintained \$327 million in university capital improvements proposed by the governor along with \$6 million in matching funding for maintenance of community college campuses. An additional \$1 million will be allocated to each of the 12 community college districts in the state which offer professional healthcare degrees like nursing, dental hygiene, occupational therapy and radiology technology.

-MORE-

MOHELA RESOLUTION

PAGE 2

The bill created a fund to provide continued scholarships in healthcare fields including medical, dental, nursing and dental hygienists. \$21.1 million was dedicated to the scholarship fund. \$2.4 million went toward medical and dental school scholarships this year, joined by \$3.6 million in House Bill 1010 for these same scholarships.

Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, said the lack of available, affordable healthcare is the number one issue facing Missourians.

"We had an opportunity to give Missouri students a free education if they returned to their hometowns to serve their communities," said Gibbons. "This resolution expresses our support for the governor to advance the General Assembly's intent."

There are 92 areas, ranging from rural counties to certain inner city areas, designated as underserved by medical professionals. Ninety counties are recognized for a shortage of dental professionals. The bill calls for a one-time investment of \$52.2 million to upgrade and maintain federally qualified health centers that are currently in identified underserved areas. Students who receive the medical and dental scholarships will work in these clinics in underserved areas in return for their education.

###