



Gibbons Capitol Report
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By the Numbers: Better Opportunities for Everyone

Last night I spent some time talking with members of the St. Louis Young Republicans Club about the great strides Republicans have made for the people of Missouri since taking control of the Governor's office, House and Senate. In a year and a half, we have turned our economy around while protecting taxpayers. We have focused on reforms that help people help themselves. The young adults shared their enthusiasm with me on how these changes will give them better opportunities to live the American Dream here in Missouri.

A Strong Economy

The best indicator of a strong economy is the state's general revenue collection. Missouri's fiscal year begins July 1 and runs through June 30 of the next year. We just closed fiscal year 2006 with an incredible 9.2 percent growth in general revenue without a tax increase. This was double what was estimated, and growth of this level has only happened twice in the past 20 years. Both times before, it was due to significant changes to tax law, but this year's growth can be credited to the comprehensive reforms we passed, such as workers' compensation and civil lawsuit reform, and creating the Quality Jobs Act.

In the Black

That 9.2 percent growth equates a \$292 million surplus, generated without a tax increase. This is the first surplus our state has seen in more than five years. It stems from living within our means through tough budget years. Instead of raising taxes, we faced two budget years in a row where we cut the budget in order to balance it. We have focused on making Missouri's economy stronger in order to create new jobs, which broadens the tax base, rather than taxing people more.

More New Jobs

Since Republicans took control in January of 2005, more than 49,000 new jobs have been created. Unemployment has steadily dropped to where Missouri now has one of the lowest rates in the nation. But what do these numbers mean to the average person? It means more people are working at good jobs. For the young adults I met with, it means more opportunities for them to work at good jobs in Missouri. It also means that our hope for a better tomorrow is grounded in reality, that everyone is building on a firmer foundation, and our dreams can come true in Missouri.

Our goal is to put Missouri on a solid foundation for years to come. To do that, we have to help Missourians help themselves. Today, I know that the hardworking, young adults I met are better off than they were a year ago. And with their support, we will continue our reform efforts, so that Missouri will be the best place to live, work and raise a family for generations to come.