



Gibbons Capitol Report  
August 31, 2006

### **Continuing our Commitment to Missouri's Students, Parents and Citizens**

Many of you have read of the new format proposed by the governor and supported by me to move forward with the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority spending plan. The Senate passed a resolution on May 5, urging the governor to continue to work with the MoHELA board to implement the Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative so proceeds of the partial asset sale could be used to invest in scholarships and capital improvements, while improving healthcare in the state's most underserved areas.

#### **Doing the Right Thing**

When the final spending bill failed to pass both bodies before the constitutional deadline in May, the Senate approved a resolution to show our support for the important university-healthcare partnership plan. Sen. Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, introduced Senate resolution 3048 that expressed our support for the governor to advance the General Assembly's intent. The resolution encouraged the governor to go ahead with a plan to spend the proceeds from the partial sale of MoHELA assets.

#### **Investing in the Future: The Plan's Provisions**

The most recent plan to invest \$350 million from the partial sale of MoHELA assets is an enormous capital investment in Missouri higher education that improves the ability of Missouri students to get a world class education from our colleges and universities. The new measure provides \$335 million in university capital improvement projects including \$18 million for community colleges. Another \$15 million would be put in an endowment fund for the Missouri Discovery Alliance. The Alliance would be used to commercialize research at Missouri colleges and universities. In addition to the endowment and capital improvements, \$25 million from General Revenue will be spent to expand our existing scholarship opportunities for Missouri students.

#### **More Available, Affordable Healthcare**

The lack of available, affordable healthcare is the number one issue facing Missourians. There are 92 areas, ranging from rural counties to certain inner city areas, designated as underserved by medical professionals. In addition, ninety counties are recognized for a shortage of dental professionals. To help end these shortages the plan commits an additional \$2.4 million from GR in scholarship money to give Missouri students loan

forgiveness if they committed to working in an underserved area in health-related professions. The scholarships include students pursuing medical, dental, nursing and dental hygiene fields. The plan also invests \$60 million from GR to upgrade and maintain federally qualified health centers that offer affordable healthcare to everyone, regardless if they have insurance coverage.

Although these important healthcare and educational opportunities did not pass the Legislature by the constitutional deadline, we urged the governor to continue to work directly with the MoHELA board on this endeavor. And now, through a different process, Missouri students will have more scholarships and better facilities to gain a world class education from our colleges and universities.