



Gibbons Capitol Report
October 5, 2006

Working Together, Working for You

Two years ago the voters sent a clear message: “We want change. We want action. We want results. We want an end to the gridlock between the governor and the General Assembly.” We got the message, took action, made changes and have results that are better for the people of Missouri. Friday and Monday, I am joining Gov. Blunt and Speaker Jetton to travel our state to share with voters the good news of what we have done.

Focus on Our Children

First and foremost are our children. We protected our children by increasing penalties for sexual offenders and created a Child-Safe Internet. Now, anyone who commits forcible rape or sodomy against a child 12 years old or less is guaranteed a 30 year mandatory minimum sentence. Any sexual predator who might consider harming a child must know, that the punishment will be swift, certain, and severe. Or to put it another way, we are going to lock the door and throw away the key.

We also rewrote the school funding formula to make sure that no matter where a child lives, they have an equal opportunity for a world class education. In just two years, we have increased funding for elementary and secondary education by more than \$325 million dollars without a tax increase. We also provided universities, colleges and community colleges with a 2 percent increase, marking the first increases for higher education in several years.

Protecting and Creating Jobs

More than 54,000 new jobs have been created since Republicans gained control of the House, Senate and governor’s office. They have stemmed from changes we made. We protected employees who have been injured on the job. We protected both a plaintiff’s and defendant’s access to a fair day in court by capping ridiculous money awards and ending venue shopping, keeping doctors and access to quality healthcare in Missouri. We created incentives for businesses to expand or relocate here by letting them invest a portion of their employee withholding taxes back into their growing company if they offer fair wages and foot half their workers’ healthcare bills. And we created insurance pools to help small business owners afford to offer healthcare insurance to their employees.

What's Next

More Missourians are at work, businesses are choosing Missouri as a place to grow and invest over other states, even other countries. Missourians are also making more money. But our reforms do not stop there. We want all Missourians to have available, affordable healthcare in a system that focuses on prevention and wellness rather than only treating people when they are sick. We must also work to update our early 20th century tax structure to meet the needs of our 21st century economy.

When I became pro tem, my goal for the Missouri Senate was to work together with the House and Governor to give every Missourian the opportunity to pursue their dreams, improve their lives and make our state the best place in America to live, work and raise a family. The reforms accomplished during the 2005 legislative session have had a positive, proven effect on our economy, and coupled with the priorities we passed this year, Missourians will be on a strong foundation for decades to come. We truly are working together to work for you.