



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



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Founding and Preservation of a Nation

JEFFERSON CITY—Whenever faced with grave challenges to our peace, liberties or freedoms, our nation has never failed to produce great leaders to meet and overcome such tests to our way of life. Talk of great national leaders leads to talk of great presidents, with no such conversation being complete without invoking the names of Mr. Washington and Mr. Lincoln. And so it is that, each year, the United States sets aside the third Monday in February to collectively appreciate and commemorate the lives and accomplishments of the nation’s 1st and 16th presidents.

The lives of both men are well documented. In fact, the number of biographies on President Lincoln and President Washington rank first and second respectively among the 43 people to serve as the nation’s Chief Executive. The level of interest in Washington and Lincoln continues to soar. Published last year is David McCullough’s “1776” detailing Washington’s matchless use of military acumen and political savvy to help transform colonies under monarchical rule to states under a free nation. In “Team of Rivals,” published late last year, Doris Kearns Goodwin illuminates Lincoln’s unparalleled ability to shape a band of former political adversaries into a circle of allies forming a presidential cabinet whose efforts made a divided nation whole again. More than 1,000 books have been written on presidents Washington and Lincoln, with the prospect of another thousand narratives on each being equally plausible and welcome.

Opened last year, Mr. Lincoln’s expansive and impressive presidential library and museum draws streams of people from across the county and around the globe. Located in Springfield, Illinois, the (then) nearly frontier town most markedly honing young Mr. Lincoln’s political experience and shaping his future destiny, the library and museum arguably opened somewhat belatedly – 140 years fell between assassination and grand opening. But the long wait produced a strong attraction for casual visitors and devoted scholars alike. You can find out more about the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum online at: www.alplm.org.

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George Washington and Abraham Lincoln expended tireless, selfless, Herculean efforts on behalf of their countrymen. To be sure, their final rewards were considerably and tragically different – Washington living out a long and fruitful life as the Founding Father in the deserved and reverent glow of the nation’s gratitude; Lincoln living just weeks after achieving his objective of preserving what Washington made possible in backing the Declaration with action.

While many businesses, schools and government agencies cease operations on President’s Day, I think it fitting that the Missouri General Assembly, as it does each year, convened and worked through the widely and rightly recognized holiday. I’m not making a case for state lawmakers to stand in the same light as two great presidents – I would simply maintain that our work on the third Monday in February is perhaps the best way for us in the Missouri Senate and House to pay tribute to Mr. Washington and Mr. Lincoln.

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Senator Gary Nodler represents the people of Newton, Jasper
and Dade counties in the Missouri Senate