



# WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler  
District 32



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Week of April 24, 2006

## The Last Leg of Session is a Busy One

**JEFFERSON CITY**— Beginning next Monday, there are only 10 days remaining in the Second Regular Session of the 93<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly. The pace has significantly picked up in the past few weeks as lawmakers focus on getting their legislative priorities passed before the Legislature adjourns for the year at 6 p.m. Friday, May 12. But responsibilities as a state legislator extend beyond the walls of the Senate chamber.

During the end of session, we see an increase in Capitol visitors who want to meet with lawmakers to discuss their legislative concerns. This week is proof of just how busy this time of year can be. A group of area representatives from the Missouri Farm Bureau came by to express their support for the Legislature's efforts to return the scope of eminent domain to its original intent. They are on board with preventing the rights of property owners from being bulldozed by private developers. Monday evening, I attended a reception for the Missouri Association of Counties to discuss how this year's legislation will affect county governments.

To educate the public about how to safely share the roads with large trucks and buses, the Governor declared April 25, 2006, as "Don't Hang Out in the No-Zone Awareness Day." The Missouri Motor Carriers Association and Sitton Motor Lines Inc. brought an 18-wheeler displaying the No-Zone logo to the Capitol. Visitors were able to see where vehicles disappear from the view of the truck drivers. I commend those who participated in addressing this important public safety concern.

Missouri's Electric Cooperatives hosted a fish fry on the Capitol lawn on Wednesday, and on Thursday, several staff members and volunteers from the Southwest Chapter of the American Red Cross visited my office, as did members of the Missouri Rural Water Association. Unfortunately, I have not been able to personally meet with everyone who has taken the time to stop by. The majority of what I do during session takes place outside my office. Because I am Assistant Majority Floor Leader, I am in a handful of meetings each week to go over each day's agenda with other members of Senate leadership.

I also am chairman of the Senate Education Committee and vice-chairman of the appropriations committee, as well as a member of the Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight and the Ways and Means committees.

Much of my time in Jefferson City is spent in these committee meetings, where we hold public hearings for bills that fall into the panel's purview. Once a committee approves a bill, the measure then goes to the Senate floor for debate by the full body.

Last week the Senate approved a \$20.8 billion budget, which is contained in House Bills 1001-1013. Because the Senate's version differed from that of the House, a dual-chamber bipartisan conference committee of which I am a member has been meeting throughout the week to come to an agreement on a 2006-2007 fiscal plan. We finished ironing out the differences on Thursday, so now the budget bills will return to the House and Senate for final approval before being sent to the Governor.

We also advanced significant measures from the floor. We approved a House measure implementing a 10-percent ethanol standard for unleaded gasoline. This mandate will help Missouri farmers, bring gas prices down, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and protect the environment. The bill has been returned to the House. Both chambers must approve identical versions of the legislation for it to be sent to the Governor, who has expressed support for an ethanol mandate.

The Senate also approved two measures protecting the best interests of legal Missouri citizens. Senate Bill 1250 gives more power to state law enforcement so illegal immigrants living or working in Missouri can be effectively identified, detained and deported. Senate Bill 1014 requires that most voters show state-issued photo identification before they can cast a ballot. Whether we're talking about saving state taxpayer money or preserving our system of democracy, it is important to prevent people from undermining the fundamental rights of U.S. citizenship

As this session is coming to a close, the legislative process continues at a rapid pace. Although committee meetings and fulfilling my duties in the Senate Chamber keeps me busy, I continue to welcome and encourage visitors to my Capitol office.

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