



Important Committee Assignments Mean Influence for District Residents

JEFFERSON CITY — The 2007 session continued taking shape this week as senators were appointed to legislative committees by Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood. I am very pleased with the importance of the committees I've joined, and I believe my strengths will be put to good use as I represent the people of the 2nd Senate District on these legislative panels.

Senate committees take up bills they have been assigned by the Senate president pro tem. They hold public hearings on legislation and make recommendations for or against the measures according to the merits of the bills they've examined. Bills reported favorably from committee are then considered by the full Senate.

I am honored to serve as vice chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. As we all know, transportation issues have been at the forefront of public policy in recent years, especially for those of us in St. Charles and Lincoln counties. The Transportation Committee works with all matters relating to roads, highways, bridges, aviation, railroads and other means of transportation, as well as motor vehicles and driver's licenses. With the Missouri Department of Transportation continuing its campaign to improve Missouri's busiest roads and highways, these issues are especially relevant. Further, construction plans for Highway 40 are keeping our attention on roadway issues.

In addition to the Transportation Committee, I hold a vice chair seat on the Senate Committee on Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws. This committee addresses all retirement, pension and veterans issues. These matters are profoundly important to aging Missourians and our veterans and retired military. We owe our gratitude to both of these groups of Missourians, and I will represent their interests on this vital Senate committee.

Education could be the most important issue in the 2007 session, and I am proud to serve on the Senate Education Committee this year. School choice and funding for higher education already have been highlighted as top priorities for lawmakers, and my service on this committee will allow me direct access to helping shape these matters of public policy.

Finally, I will be a member of the Committee on Small Business, Insurance and Industrial Relations. This body covers a wide variety of subjects, including the operation of small businesses, all forms of insurance, urban housing and renewal, labor management, and workers' compensation. As a small-business owner, I feel my experience will give me a head start on this committee.

Each Senate committee is important in its own right, but I feel I am the perfect fit for those I've been assigned. I look forward to a good year of committee work.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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