



## MISSOURI SENATE

Jeff Smith  
4<sup>th</sup> Senate District

JEFFERSON CITY

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# Smith Fights to Restore Medicaid Cuts

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JEFFERSON CITY — State Sen. Jeff Smith, D-St. Louis, was one of three senators who offered amendments on Wednesday to the \$6.5 billion Social Services budget that would have allocated money to reverse cuts made to the state's Medicaid program. Nearly 200,000 people lost Medicaid coverage in the summer of 2005. State budget analysts estimate a \$500+ million surplus next fiscal year, \$300 million of which is slated to go to tax cuts and \$200 million to a rainy day fund.

"I joined other Democrats in trying to help people who are hurting," said Smith. "Why squirrel away \$200 million while working Missourians – many with disabilities - go without healthcare? How can we not act humanely when this money would sit idly in a bank account? We are falling short in our moral obligation to help those most in need. "

Smith offered an amendment to House Bill 11, the appropriation for the State Department of Social Services, to restore \$100 million cut from the Medicaid program. He was soon joined by fellow Democratic Sens. Chuck Graham (Columbia) and Wes Shoemyer (Clarence) who proposed larger expenditures of \$200 million. All the measures failed.

Smith said that there is a fiscal dimension to his disappointment as well as a moral one. "The federal government offers a 60-40 match for state Medicaid spending," he noted. "That means that other states are receiving the \$300 million that Missouri could have if we invested in the health of our people. To stubbornly leave hundreds of millions of dollars on the table is fiscal insanity."

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