



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

**District 8** – Capitol Building, Room 319 Jefferson City, MO 65101

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## **Pork Laden Bill Needs Governor's Veto**

From time to time, a bill makes its way through the legislative process that just shouldn't have survived. You would think with all the committee hearings and floor debates in both chambers all the bad legislation would get weeded out, but it doesn't always work that way, as was shown with [House Bill 327](#) this past session.

During floor debate on [HB 327](#), I warned my colleagues that we as lawmakers had become drunk on tax credits, absolutely drunk. I'm not opposed to all tax credits, but we need to slow down and look at the ones that are working and the ones that are not. Each tax credit needs to be examined for its benefit to the population as a whole and to make sure it's not just a boon to a special interest group.

[House Bill 327](#) started out adding \$12 million to programs under the Quality Jobs Act but then legislators started hanging other credits on the bill making it look like, in terms we use around the capitol building, a Christmas tree. In fact, it ballooned into a nearly \$100-million-a-year Christmas tree. However, there would be no presents under the tree for middle-class taxpayers who will bear the burden of these credits for years to come.

One credit of particular concern is the Distressed Areas Land Assemblage Tax Credit. If signed into law, wealthy developers could redevelop land while being heavily propped up by public money. By the time this credit is done in 2013, the total cost to the taxpayers would be \$100 million. Other credits include money for big cattle operations and certain agriculturally-based fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel. While these may be worthy industries, if they are truly profitable wouldn't businesses be investing in them without subsidies from the government – more accurately, subsidies from your pocketbook?

The problems with [HB 327](#) were so numerous that the House and Senate spent a good portion of the last week of the legislative session trying to find creative ways to fix the flaws in a bill that'd already been sent to the governor. Going back and fixing flaws that should never have passed in the first place is a waste of time.

Next legislative session, I'm going to introduce a bill that will require all state tax credits to sunset after three years so they can be reviewed. That way we'll be able to hold these credits up to the light of day to see if they're really worth the money being spent on them. Expect Jefferson

City's entrenched special interest groups to be absolutely up in arms as their pet projects are threatened by needed public scrutiny.

In the meantime, I am hoping Governor Blunt will veto the pork-laden [HB 327](#). It's a bad bill, and he's got the chance to wipe the slate clean and let the legislature start fresh next year.

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 e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.