



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

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

**Column for Week of:**  
**August 27, 2007**

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## The Special Session

For the past couple of weeks, lawmakers have been back in Jefferson City for a special session to address two issues: speeding up the state transportation department's plan to fix Missouri's ailing bridges and an expensive tax credit bill to replace the one the governor vetoed. We came up with two measures on these subjects... one I supported, and one I did not.

The tragic bridge collapse in Minneapolis-St. Paul brought to the forefront the problems we have with bridges here in Missouri. Long before that tragedy in Minnesota, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) had been developing the "Safe & Sound" bridge improvement program to get more than 800 of Missouri's most worn-out bridges in good shape and keep them that way for 25 years. In the Kansas City area, about 150 bridges are on that list.

What we have done with passage of [House Bill 2](#), which I supported, is give the state transportation department the bonding mechanism needed to get "Safe & Sound" going as soon as possible. In the end, hundreds of bridges will be brought up-to-speed in the next few years, instead of the current method of fixing just a handful at a time. This will keep us from falling further and further behind in the maintenance of these important structures.

The Senate also took up and passed a tax credits bill, [House Bill 1](#), and sent it back to the Missouri House of Representatives where it now has received final approval. While I supported some parts of the bill, I was compelled to vote against the overall measure based on my belief that it put government in the position of picking winners and losers in the marketplace using your tax dollars.

In the past, I have asked a room full of people whether or not they get tax credits. The vast majority did not raise their hand. This means that they (and most people reading this column) are in fact paying for someone else to get a tax credit. I believe the State of Missouri has overused this tool and is unwisely spending our tax dollars to benefit any number of special interest groups.

During the 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. This will allow all tax credits to be held up to the light of day to see if they're really worth the money being spent on them.

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

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