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## **Merry Christmas**

JEFFERSON CITY — Most of the time, I like to use this column to talk about pending legislation we have been working on in your State Senate or the different services the state offers. But this week, I'd like to spend a little time to focusing on this joyous time of the year and pause to think about the true meaning of Christmas.

Around the holidays, many of us get taxed down with the trips to the mall, rushing around to different school functions and activities, planning and going to the various holiday parties, and trying to get presents for everyone on our list. But as we fill up our schedules with the material side of the season, let us not forget those who are not as fortunate or cannot spend the holiday with their loved ones.

As we pass by the bell ringers at the front of stores, let's remember to drop an extra dollar in their shiny red kettles. As we gather with friends and loved ones, let's remember the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who stand guard at some lonely outpost on the edge of nowhere, protecting America from those who would do us harm. As we wrap presents in brightly-colored paper, remember the child who might only get a gift if we choose to participate in a program sponsored by our church, work, or civic club. As we prepare to gather around our holiday tables filled with the bounty our country offers, let's remember and to try to help those less fortunate and perhaps make their Christmas a little brighter.

Most importantly, let's remember why we celebrate. Let's recall that the special glow that seems to surround this time of year is a reflection of the good news brought by angels to shepherds who tended their flocks more than 2,000 years ago: "For there is born unto you this day...a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!'"

From our family to yours — Merry Christmas. May we all hold the true meaning of Christmas within our hearts each day of the coming 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

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