



MISSOURI SENATE

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**A Column for the Week
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Senate Approves Legislation Benefiting Local Communities

JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri Senate recently gave initial approval to legislation I am sponsoring to save taxpayer dollars and improve local services. The measures overturn laws protecting unfair labor practices and facilitate improved social services at the local level. In addition, senators sent to the House my legislation benefiting state transportation workers.

Senate Bill 339 implements the Fairness in Public Construction Act. This act prohibits state and local governments from requiring potential contractors to enter into agreements with labor organizations in order to win construction contracts. Current law states that governments can require “project labor agreements,” or PLAs, under which governments promise union working conditions for contractors in exchange for a pledge that workers will not strike or bargain for higher wages.

Union-only PLAs exclude open-shop contractors from bidding on construction projects. By reducing competition for these projects, costs are driven up at the taxpayer’s expense. Open-shop contractors should not be left out in the cold, especially when your tax dollars are being used for public construction projects.

Not only do union-only PLAs drive up costs, they also discriminate against the four out of five construction workers in the United States who choose not to be represented by unions. Under union-only agreements, workers are required to join a union if they want to take part in a job. Workers should have a right to make their own decisions about whether or not to join a union. They should not be pressured.

Furthermore, women and minorities are under-represented in unions and more often work for smaller, open-shop companies. As a result, union-only agreements unfairly discriminate against more diverse businesses.

SB 46 creates the Faith-Based Organization Liaison Act, which calls on the state's social services department to designate regional department employees to serve as liaisons between faith-based organizations and citizens in their respective regions. Liaisons will communicate with and promote faith-based organizations as a means of providing services for individuals who would otherwise require public assistance.

Under this act, Missourians in need will be better able to receive help. The state will work with faith-based organizations to expand the scope of assistance to those in need while saving taxpayer dollars by utilizing and promoting these organizations. The legislation prohibits liaisons from discriminating against any faith-based organization.

These two bills require final Senate approval before being sent to the House.

SB 127 allows Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) employees to buy into the transportation and highway patrol retirement system. Currently the system is restricted to uniformed personnel in the Missouri State Highway Patrol. The legislation is currently in the House.

These measures protect taxpayer dollars, improve services to local communities and benefit deserving transportation officials. I will continue working to see these vital bills through the legislative process.

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Senator Robert Mayer represents the people of Wayne, Ripley, Butler, Stoddard, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Dunklin counties in the Missouri Senate.