



MISSOURI SENATE

Rob Mayer
25th Senate District

JEFFERSON CITY

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 331
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Column for the Week
of April 2, 2007**

**Contact: Irene Murray
(573) 751-3859**

Bills Affecting Labor and Agriculture Receive Broad Support

JEFFERSON CITY — This week was a success for Missourians, as two measures I have introduced in the Senate received gubernatorial and legislative approval. Legislation improving labor laws to save taxpayer dollars and improve local services was publicly signed into law by the governor. In addition, my measure benefiting biodiesel producers passed the Senate agriculture committee.

Gov. Blunt this week held a ceremonial bill signing for Senate Bill 339, which implements the Fairness in Public Construction Act. This legislation 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 public agencies promise union working conditions for contractors in exchange for a pledge that workers will not bargain for higher wages.

Union-only PLAs reduce competition for public projects, driving up costs at the expense of taxpayers. They also discriminate against the four out of five construction workers in the United States who choose not to be represented by unions. Workers should have a right to make their own decisions about whether or not to join a union, and governments should do all they can to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. I appreciate the support I have received on this measure, and I thank the governor for signing this measure into law.

Another of my bills advancing this week will offer new benefits to Missourians in the agriculture industry. SB 571, which was approved this week by the Agriculture, Conservation, Parks and Natural Resources Committee, expands the biodiesel industry in Missouri by removing from state law an unrealistic provision requiring producers to use agricultural products originating in Missouri in order to qualify for incentives. There are simply not enough suppliers in Missouri to make this requirement feasible, and many biodiesel producers are suffering as a result. By removing the in-state criteria, we will allow biodiesel industry to flourish and add value to agricultural commodities.

These measures will benefit Bootheel residents and all of Missouri's citizens, and I am pleased to see such widespread support.

-END-

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