



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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2007 Legislative Session Underway

JEFFERSON CITY – Reforming health care and addressing the crises in failing school districts will be a couple of priorities for lawmakers as the First Regular Session of the 94th Missouri General Assembly gets underway. Lt. Governor Peter Kinder gave the session to order on opening day Wednesday, and one of the first official acts in the Senate was the election of Michael Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, as Senate President Pro Tem.

In his opening day address, Gibbons said the top priority for lawmakers is their continued effort to reform the healthcare system in Missouri. He said an emphasis must be made on consumer choice as well as wellness and prevention, rather than just treating people when they are sick.

Gibbons also called on the Senate to reform Missouri's failing school districts.

"The students in failing districts need us to act now," he said. "Their lives and futures depend on us. We should be open to any solution that will improve the opportunities for these students."

To date, senators have filed 221 bills and 13 resolutions for consideration this year. These bills and resolutions will be read on the senate floor and assigned to committee, where senators will hear testimony from those for and against each proposal. Bills that are voted out of committee return to the senate floor for debate and perfection. Once a bill is perfected, a final vote is held, and measures receiving approval are sent to the House, where the process begins anew. Typically, just a fraction of the bills introduced by lawmakers are approved by both houses and sent to the governor.

As I mentioned in previous columns, I am sponsoring legislation this year to provide eye exams for children in kindergarten and first grade, to increase payments to sheltered workshops, and to authorize volunteer transportation services to the elderly, among other things.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.