



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



Room 433 – State Capitol Bldg. – Jefferson City, MO 65101 – Contact Barbara Mustoe (573) 751-2306

Week of January 2, 2007

A New Year, A New Session

Missouri lawmakers gathered this week at the state Capitol to begin the 2007 legislative session. I was sworn in for my second term along with 16 other new or re-elected members, during a ceremony that took place in the Senate chamber. The Legislature will be in session from now until May 18.

This session, domestic issues will be in the spotlight. My personal priorities of reforming higher education and the state health-care system are shared by many of my colleagues, so I expect this year to be a turning point in both those realms.

As chairman of the Senate Education Committee for two years, I have been directly involved with legislation strengthening Missouri's system of education. Having already created a new funding mechanism for K-12 public schools in 2005, now is the time to focus much of our efforts on increasing access to a college education, including how to adequately fund public colleges and universities. Along those same lines, the governor has proposed selling a portion of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority's (MOHELA) assets to raise \$350 million for campus construction projects. Lawmakers might be called into a special session to run concurrently with regular session to focus on this proposal.

Because quality health care is not a luxury but a necessity, we will once again look into ways to expand medical coverage for the underinsured and uninsured. High on our agenda is revamping the state-funded Medicaid program to promote consumer choice, personal wellness and preventative care. We also will most likely consider legislation cracking down on medical provider fraud and offering incentives to small businesses to provide health insurance to their employees.

In light of the recent tragic fire that led to the death of 11 residents of Anderson Guest House in southwest Missouri, I expect legislation to be offered that would deal with improving group and nursing home safety regulations.

I will keep you up to date on these and other topics as the session continues. I am looking forward to four more years of representing the best interests of the citizens of the 32nd District.

*Senator Gary Nodler represents the people of Newton, Jasper
and Dade counties in the Missouri Senate*