



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



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Week of May 14, 2007

Another Successful Session *A Review of Senator Gary Nodler's Legislation*

The last day of the 2007 Legislative Session is May 18, which will conclude another successful session in the Missouri Senate. This year, we were able to deal with several important issues such as improving access to higher education, increasing funding to public schools, and fostering further economic development. As always, my priorities this session were focused on the people of the 32nd District and the state of Missouri.

Reforming Higher Education

Senate Bill 389, which I sponsored, will make colleges in Missouri more accessible, affordable, and accountable. The legislation implements a plan to sell some of the out-of-state assets held by the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA) to construct and maintain buildings on Missouri's university, college, and community college campuses. Over \$21 million will go towards projects benefiting the 32nd District. The legislative package also combines two existing scholarships to create Access Missouri. Funding for the needs-based scholarship program will grow from \$25 million to nearly \$75 million.

Another aspect of the bill is a measure giving the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education more authority. This includes oversight of tuition increases, which will be restrained to the Consumer Price Index beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. The Coordinating Board could fine institutions up to 5 percent of their state appropriations for not observing the provision. The bill will also establish competency tests for entry level courses throughout the state, resulting in smoother transitions and transfers between schools. The bill also increases information accessibility to students, including making them aware of which professors will be teaching their classes.

Tax Credits and Exemptions

Senate Bill 30, which I also sponsored, creates several tax cuts and exemptions for businesses in Missouri, encouraging economic growth throughout the state. SB 30 expands tax exemptions for common

carriers to cover those who only conduct business within the state. Previously, these tax benefits were available only to interstate carriers. Moving companies doing business within the state will be required to get approval for any rate changes or adjustments from the state highways and transportation commission. SB 30 will also give tax credits for homes inherited by a person whose spouse was a public safety officer killed in the line of duty. State and local sales tax exemptions for expenditures on utilities, chemicals, machinery, and equipment will apply to television or radio broadcasting and mineral recovery operations. Other sales tax exemptions will benefit businesses such as the AT&T customer care center, a \$19.3 million investment in Joplin which held its groundbreaking in April.

Consumer Protection

I also worked on a provision this session giving the Missouri Board of Architects, Professional Engineers, Professional Land Surveyors, and Landscape Architects the ability to punish those misrepresenting themselves in these professions. The measure gives the board the ability to fine people practicing any of these professions without licensing. If a complaint to the board is substantiated, it could result in a fine of up to \$5,000 for each day of the violation with a maximum penalty of \$25,000. By instituting penalties for misrepresenting oneself as a licensed architect, engineer, land surveyor, or landscape architect, consumers can be more confident that they are receiving quality services.

I look forward to continuing to serve Missouri during the interim as well as in next year's session. Thank you for the opportunity to represent your interests in the Missouri Senate.

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