

A portrait of State Senator Scott I. Rupp, a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark pinstripe suit, a blue shirt, and a yellow and blue striped tie. He is looking slightly to his right.

State Senator

2008 Capitol Report

scott I. Rupp

Inside:

Illegal Immigration

Cyber Harassment

Property Tax Reform

Autism

Consumer Protection



Senator Rupp is vice-chair of the Senate Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws Committee and vice-chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.

Senator Rupp also serves on these committees:

- Appropriations
- Education
- Small Business, Insurance and Industrial Relations
- Joint Committee on Education
- Joint Committee on Public Employee Retirement
- Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight
- Senate Select Committee on the Missouri Housing Trust Fund (Chair)
- Children's Services Commission
- Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders

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A Message from Senator Rupp

Dear Friends,

The second regular session of the 94th General Assembly was a successful and productive one as we focused on several legislative priorities. I was very pleased with the number of groundbreaking measures enacted to improve the lives of Missouri citizens.

One of the major accomplishments was reforming our state's property tax system to protect homeowners from being taxed out of their homes. In addition, we honored a commitment to fight illegal immigration activity and position our state as a leader in addressing this national issue, which is costing taxpayers millions of dollars in lost benefits and services each year. My measures to find solutions to address the problem in Missouri were incorporated into House Bill 1549.

Creating a law to deal with cyber harassment was the aim of legislation I successfully advanced (Senate Bill 818) to ensure there is a punishment to match the crime of harassing or stalking someone through electronic communication devices. In addition, Missouri passed some of the toughest laws against child pornography while adding more protections and buffers for children against sexual crimes with the passage of Senate Bill 714.

Empowering families who are living with autism was another legislative priority of mine that met with success. Senate Bill 768 creates a statewide commission to address the urgent needs of families affected by autism spectrum disorders, and will make it easier for families to access services and support.

Education was again a top priority of mine. I am very pleased Missouri lawmakers once again put education as our best investment of your tax dollars — over the past three years, a total increase of more than \$602 million without a tax increase. That includes a \$48.7 million increase this year in Access Missouri scholarships — a program we enacted last year — to build upon the program's success in helping more Missouri students pursue a college education.

Veterans also benefit from legislation endorsed by the General Assembly this year, including tuition caps at higher education institutions for eligible combat veterans.

As always, thank you for your support. I appreciate the opportunity to serve as your state senator and represent you in Jefferson City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Rupp".

Scott T. Rupp
State Senator, District 2

Fighting Illegal Immigration



Illegal Immigration In Missouri

Estimates based on the U.S. Census Bureau's March 2005 population survey suggest that there are between **35,000-65,000** illegal immigrants living in Missouri.

An Immigration and Naturalization Service estimate from 2000 found that the illegal immigrant population in our state rose **38 percent** in a four-year period and **175 percent** in a 10-year period.

In 2007, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported **8,980** illegal aliens from a six-state area that included Missouri.

Since the State Highway Patrol began checking the legal status of anyone presented for incarceration in August of 2007, approximately **307** illegal immigrants have been detained.

Eighteen Highway Patrol Officers have received ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) training since June of 2008.

Missouri's comprehensive new measures to fight illegal immigration — which I successfully advanced through the state legislature this session — are some of the strongest in the country. I am very proud to say our state was not afraid to take on this tough issue or become a leader in addressing this huge and financially-crippling problem that has been costing American and Missouri taxpayers millions of dollars in jobs, benefits and services each year.

The key provisions of this groundbreaking legislation, which were incorporated into House Bill 1549, include:

- Punishing employers who misclassify workers with penalties of \$50 per day per misclassified worker, and up to a maximum of \$50,000 in fines.
- Punishing Missouri employers/contractors if they knowingly employ illegal workers by canceling state contracts, tax credits, grants, licenses or loans.
- Barring the state from issuing drivers licenses to illegal immigrants.
- Imposing criminal penalties for assisting illegal immigrants in obtaining drivers licenses.
- Requiring public agencies to verify legal status of applicants for welfare benefits.
- Requiring verification of legal employment status of all public employees.
- Establishing citizenship checks on every individual presented for incarceration.

The new law also prohibits Missouri from creating “sanctuary cities” — a practice by some U.S. cities that sidesteps the law by adopting ordinances that ban police from asking individuals about immigration status. The new law also gives the State Highway Patrol authority, training and resources to help enforce immigration laws.

When Missouri lawmakers passed this bill during the final hours of the 2008 session, I felt confident we presented a very strong approach to providing solutions to stop the harmful economic impact of illegal immigration activity.

Without a doubt, we are a nation of immigrants. As part of our rich heritage, we have always welcomed and will continue to welcome immigrants who legally follow the road to get here.



Sen. Rupp successfully advanced illegal immigration reforms under intense debate during the 2008 legislative session.



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, autism strikes one out of 150 children in this country — more than AIDS, juvenile diabetes and cancer, combined.

**Missouri Office
of Autism Services
573-526-3848
or visit
www.dmh.mo.gov**

Property Tax Relief Programs Expanded

Missouri Property Tax Credit Claim (‘Circuit Breaker’ Program)

Increased maximum credit from \$750 to \$1,100 for eligible senior and disabled homeowners with incomes up to \$30,000 (singles) and \$34,000 (married couples).

Homestead Preservation Tax Credit

Guarantees some level of property tax assistance for eligible senior citizens and 100 percent disabled homeowners.

**For more information,
Call: 1-800-877-6881
Online: www.dor.mo.gov**

Autism Support for Missouri Families

Today, almost everyone can put a face to the name of autism. Missouri is now taking more aggressive steps to enhance autism healthcare services and empower families living with autism following the passage of legislation I successfully advanced.

Senate Bill 768 creates the Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders. The newly-created commission will advise the governor, members of the General Assembly, and state agencies; and develop a statewide comprehensive plan for an integrated system of training, treatment and services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

The creation of the Office of Autism Services within the Missouri Department of Mental Health is also authorized under the new law. The office will serve as an entry point to help direct families to diagnosis and care services, making it easier for them to navigate the system and more quickly find the resources they need.

Last year, while serving on the Senate Appropriations Committee, I was able to more than double funding for autism diagnosis and treatment, helping reduce the waitlist for services. This year, we have approved a \$7.4 million increase.

With passage of this groundbreaking legislation, Missouri intends to become a leader in the 21st Century in adopting the best practices in training, research and family support for individuals and families affected by ASD.

Property Tax Reforms & Relief

A Senate bill protecting Missourians from tax increases caused by reassessment was a key piece of legislation signed into law earlier this year.

Senate Bill 711 closed tax-increase loopholes, requires earlier notice and more information, and expands tax relief to seniors and the disabled.

The new law mandates that all taxing jurisdictions, regardless of whether they are operating at or below their tax rate ceiling, must roll back their tax rate to counter reassessment increases.

Previously, only taxing jurisdictions operating at their tax rate ceiling were required by Missouri’s Constitution to roll back to protect taxpayers, leaving taxing jurisdictions operating below their ceiling to approve back-door tax increases without voter approval.

For example, in our neighboring St. Louis County, ONLY 15 of the 80 taxing jurisdictions rolled back their property taxes. That resulted in a \$46.6 million tax increase on St. Louis County homeowners without voter approval. We put a stop to that practice before it became a problem in our area.



Protecting Consumer Credit

More than eight million Americans fall victim each year to identity theft. Now, the assets victims of identity theft have worked to earn will be protected following legislation I sponsored that was passed by the General Assembly this year.

My measures, incorporated into House Bill 1384, allow consumers at the first sign of identity theft to request a “security freeze” or “lock” on their credit file to prevent anyone from trying to receive credit, loans or services in their name. Consumers are then able to temporarily lift, or “thaw,” freezes when they want to make use of their own credit files, such as when applying for credit or loans, by contacting their consumer credit reporting agency.

Credit freezes work because most businesses will not issue new credit or provide goods and services for later payment without checking an applicant’s credit history. Credit freezes save consumers time, headaches and money by controlling who gets access to personal and financial information contained in their credit files.

Instructions for placing a security freeze are available online at the three major credit reporting agencies. Or, contact the Missouri Attorney General’s Office at 1-800-392-8222 or by email at consumer@ago.mo.gov.



Keeping Children Safe From Sexual Predators

The General Assembly approved groundbreaking legislation this year that provides more buffers and protections for kids from Internet predators and child pornographers — making Missouri’s child-protection laws among the toughest in the nation.

Senate Bill 714 expands information in the state’s sex offender registry, strengthens the severity of charges for sex crimes and attempted sex crimes against children, and targets more dollars to the state’s highly successful Internet Cyber Crime Grant (ICCG) Program used to capture and convict online predators.

A key provision of the legislation requires registered sex offenders to update their information on the state sex offender registry with email addresses, cell phone numbers or any other online identifiers. With this in place, parents and the general public can compare online identifiers with information contained on the sex offender registry. The State Highway Patrol also has the authority to share the online information with electronic and computer businesses in order to pre-screen users and compare information.

Another registry-related provision expands the list of sex offenders prohibited from being within 500 feet of schools or child-care facilities to include offenders from other states, countries or military jurisdictions. Sex offenders from other states are now also prohibited from moving within 1,000 feet of a school.

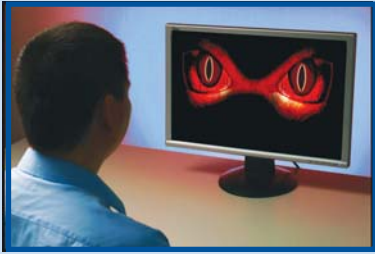
More Consumer Protections

Protections from Mortgage Fraud (HB 2188) - Creates civil and criminal penalties for residential mortgage fraud. Real estate brokers, agents and appraisers can be fined or have their professional licenses revoked if they make false statements or fail to disclose material facts in their professional duties.

Copper Theft Protection (SB 1034) - Provides more protections for farmers, homeowners, businesses and utilities from the theft of industrial metals by requiring stronger recordkeeping by scrap dealers and increasing the penalties for theft.

Senate Bill 714 Crimes & Punishments

- ♦ Attempted sexual misconduct with a child — *up to 4 years in prison.*
- ♦ Failing to register as a sex offender — *4 to 7 years in prison.*
- ♦ Misrepresenting age on the Internet to engage in criminal sexual conduct with a child — *up to 4 years in prison.*
- ♦ Possession of child pornography — *up to 15 years in prison.*
- ♦ *Eradicates parole as an option in certain pornography cases.*



New law covers harassment by computer, text messages and other electronic devices.



In 2006, Missouri led the nation in the number of lives saved on America's highways. In 2007, there were also fewer highway deaths recorded.

New Cyber Harassment Law

The General Assembly supported more protections for Missouri children and adults from being harassed or stalked over the Internet — or through other means of electronic communication — by passing legislation I authored to expand the definition of current stalking and harassment laws to include cyber-related communications and to increase the penalties for related crimes.

Senate Bill 818 was inspired by the case of Dardenne Prairie teenager Megan Meier, whose suicide in 2006 may have been influenced by a case of cyber harassment. Prior to this, there was no law on the books to address this kind of situation.

The new law upgrades the charge of harassment from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class D felony, when the perpetrator is an adult preying on a minor. Class D offenses are punishable by up to four years in prison with accompanying fines. Repeat harassment offenders, regardless of ages involved, will also be charged with a Class D felony. Prior to this measure, repeat offenders could only be charged with a Class A misdemeanor.

The legislation also elevates the penalties for second offenses of stalking and aggravated stalking from misdemeanor to felonies regardless of when the first offense was committed. The new measure also requires school boards to add Internet stalking to the list of crimes they must report.

Toughening the penalties for harassment and stalking sends a strong message that Missouri takes this crime seriously and offenders will be punished accordingly.

District 2 Transportation Projects

As vice-chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee and a member of the Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight, I am pleased with the number of Missouri Department of Transportation road and bridge improvements underway across the state and in the 2nd Senate District. Here are some of the local projects:

Lincoln County

- **Route 79** – Resurfacing of 17 miles of Route 79 from Pike County line south to Route 47 near Winfield. (Near completion.)
- **Route 47** – Widening of Route 47 between Route 61 and Main Street in Troy to include two lanes in each direction and a center turn lane. The intersection of Route 47 and Lincoln Drive also will be widened and new signals installed at the intersection of Route 47 and Routes H and J. (Estimated completion: Nov. 2008.)
- **Route 61/U Interchange** – Construction of an interchange between Route U and Mette Road on U.S. 61. (Estimated start date: Spring 2009.) South Lincoln Drive interchange to be constructed in 2013.

St. Charles County

- **I-64 and Route 370** – The project is underway and features sensors and cameras along I-64 from Route K to I-70 and Route 370 from the Missouri River to I-70. (Estimated completion: Late 2009.)
- **Route 40/61** – Elimination of all at-grade crossings and construction of a new interchange, with overpass, at Prospect Road. East 40 traffic will be on new pavement in the fall of 2008. (Estimated completion: Fall 2009.)
- **Route 364, east and west of Harvester Road** – Extension of Route 364 and the one-way outer road system, plus building of an overpass for Harvester Road. Traffic to shift from Route 94 to the new Route 364 during the fall of 2008. (Estimated completion: Fall 2009.)

Missouri Budget Keeps Education A Top Priority

While many states are looking to bail out their budgets, Missouri's General Assembly crafted a \$22.4 billion budget in a fiscally responsible manner. We were able to expand important programs while keeping within our means without implementing any tax increases.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, appropriations conference committees and the Senate Education Committee, I was pleased that Missouri kept education a priority.

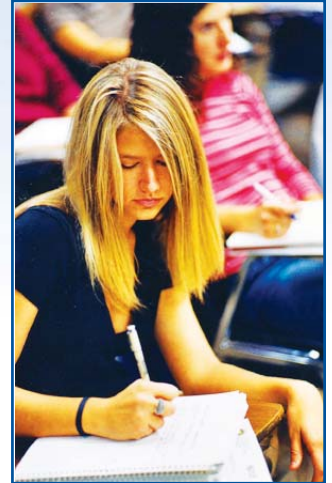
Increases For Higher Education

Higher Education received a 7.8 percent increase in funding for a total of \$1.3 billion. This included a \$48.7 million increase in the Access Missouri Scholarship Program for a total of \$91.5 million in funding. This is a program we created last year to help more Missouri students pursue a higher education. With this increase, the number of Missouri students attending Missouri colleges that will receive scholarships can grow from 16,400 students to 36,000 students!

Benefits for K-12 Education

This year's \$127.8 million increase to the K-12 budget included an increase of more than \$121 million for the Foundation Formula, which now appropriates money to local school districts based on student need, not property value. This \$127.8 million increase brings the total K-12 appropriation to \$5.3 billion. Schools in Senate District 2 will receive approximately \$158.5 million.

Last year, 1,278 students in our area utilized the A+ Schools Program, and even more students will benefit from a \$3.5 million increase, for a total A+ appropriation of \$25,337,226.



Funding for fiscal year 2009 allows more students in Missouri to pursue a quality higher education.

Other Budget Highlights

The state's transportation department budget includes a \$483 million increase in funding for the department's construction program to maintain our roads and other transit infrastructure.

In addition, the budget includes funding for health care services, such as an additional \$7.4 million for autism services (*see page 4*) and \$13 million to provide better access to health care for low-income women.

Distribution of Each Tax Dollar

FY 2009 MISSOURI OPERATING BUDGET

All Funds: \$22.4 Billion



*Revenue, Office of Administration, Elected Officials, General Assembly, Real Estate

Source: Senate Appropriation Committee

Honoring & Remembering Missouri Veterans

Veterans are and always have been an important part of our state's history and framework. During the 2008 legislative session, the General Assembly passed several measures to benefit our veterans and men and women of the armed services.

As vice-chairman of the Senate Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws Committee and a member of the Senate Education Committee, I was pleased to endorse the "Missouri Returning Heroes' Education Act" measure (SB 830) that now limits the tuition that can be charged by higher education institutions to certain combat veterans.

Other veterans' measures I supported included designating certain stretches of highway after military personnel and law enforcement officers (SB 753) and requiring all government buildings to fly the U.S. and Missouri flags at half-staff when any Missouri resident is killed in military combat (SB 806).



2008 Gubernatorial Appointments



*Sen. Rupp with Janet Henke,
Child Abuse & Neglect
Review Board*



*Sen. Rupp with Robert Kocher,
Elevator Safety Board*



*Sen. Rupp with John Orr,
Elevator Safety Board*



*Sen. Rupp with Janet Bandera,
Missouri Women's Council*



*Sen. Rupp with John Boland,
Missouri Propane
Gas Commission*



*Sen. Rupp with Ryan Sanders,
Univ. of Central MO Board
of Governors Student Rep.*



*Sen. Rupp with Ryan Epenschied,
Child Abuse & Neglect
Review Board*



*Sen. Rupp with Robert Derickson,
Missouri Emergency
Response Commission*

Senator Scott T. Rupp

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*Sen. Rupp sponsored
the appointment of
Randy Sanders
to the
Missouri Fire
Education
Commission*



Reappointments:

William Leutkenhaus,
Missouri Housing
Development Commission

Valerie White,
Missouri Women's Council

Timothy Dorsey,
Missouri Fire Education Commission