



# MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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Maida Coleman  
5<sup>th</sup> Senate District

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## **Sen. Coleman Strongly Condemns Nominee to State Board of Education**

JEFFERSON CITY— Sen. Maida Coleman, D-St. Louis City, on Thursday voted against the reappointment of Peter Herschend of Branson to the State Board of Education. Sen. Coleman spoke against the nomination for more than 40 minutes in committee Wednesday and for nearly an hour on the Senate floor Thursday.

“In the committee hearing yesterday, Mr. Herschend told me I should be embarrassed of my school district,” Sen. Coleman said. “I think Mr. Herschend should be embarrassed that he has decided to play politics with the children of my district. He should be embarrassed that he callously disenfranchised the citizens of my district by turning control of the St. Louis School District over to the state.”

In March 2007, the St. Louis Public Schools lost their accreditation when the State Board of Education voted 5-1 to rescind the accreditation after concluding that the district had met only four of the state's 14 academic performance measures. Peter Herschend was serving as President of the State Board of Education when the decision to strip the school district of local control was made.

At the time the state board voted to classify the St. Louis Public Schools as unaccredited, several other school districts possessed 2006 Annual Performance Review ratings that were equal to or below the scores assigned to the St. Louis City School District.

“It makes me wonder why Mr. Herschend has taken no action to reclassify other low-performing school districts,” Sen. Coleman said. “There seems to be no apprehension by Mr. Herschend or the Board that they are disenfranchising the voters of a predominantly black city. We are still forced to pay taxes, so we have taxation without representation.”

Additionally, Sen. Coleman expressed reservations about any person serving such a lengthy term on a state board or commission. Peter Herschend has served on the State Board of Education for 16 years, and with his confirmation by the Senate today, will serve another eight years on the board.

“Is it a good idea to allow anyone to sit on what is arguably the most important board in state government for 24 years?” Sen. Coleman asked her colleagues on the Senate floor today. “If someone were to serve the maximum amount of time in the General Assembly, they could only serve 16 years. If the citizens of Missouri think it’s a good idea to limit the terms of their elected representatives, surely the length of service of an unelected official should be limited as well, especially one who wields so much influence over our children’s education.”

Members of the Missouri Senate affirmed the reappointment of Peter Herschend to the State Board of Education Thursday on a voice vote.

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