



Gibbons Capitol Report
January 10, 2008

Putting People Before Politics

On January 9, the Senate gathered again to start another session of work for the people of Missouri. This is an important year and we have much to do. Yes, it is an election year. Nationally, it is the first presidential campaign in 56 years that does not include an incumbent president or vice president, and it appears to be wide open on both sides. In Missouri, five out of the six statewide offices are on the ballot, as well as half the Senate and the entire House. Some senators are running for reelection, others are seeking new offices, and four are term-limited. But there is something more important facing lawmakers in the first four and a half months of 2008 - that is doing the work of the Legislature to make the lives of the people we serve better.

New Year Means New Opportunities

It is fitting that we begin in January, because this is the time of year that exudes hope and optimism. The New Year is here, and all things are possible. We meet people every day who come here as advocates, regardless of past disappointments, who believe this is the year their issue will succeed. We owe it to the people who care so much that they travel here to share their ideas to listen to them and take action where we can.

Fixing Problems People Care About

We owe the people being taxed out of their homes our best effort to protect them from tax increases caused by reassessment. We owe the lawful residents of Missouri our best effort to protect their safety, jobs and benefits, rather than reward illegal immigrants with jobs and public support at the taxpayers' expense. We owe the people our best effort to help them find and afford health insurance through a marketplace that puts them in the driver's seat when it comes to healthcare decisions for their families. These are some of the concerns that people bring up to me from all around our state. It's not a game to you, the people at home. You expect us to fix these problems.

Daily Reminders

In the seven years I've had the privilege of working in the Senate chamber, I've thought a lot about the historic figures documented in the paintings and stained glass window have in common. What I believe they have in common is they were all, in their own way, courageous explorers enduring hardships through the unknown in pursuit of their vision for a better future. These works of art are here to challenge the Senate's members every

day as we work through the unknowns of our time. They challenge us to be courageous, confront the unknown and act to secure a better future for all the people of Missouri.

As I said, it is an election year. Political pundits have said nothing much will happen here this year. But I believe we owe it to you, the people of Missouri, to prove them wrong. The optimism of the New Year coupled with the daily reminders in our chamber should inspire our members to rise above political posturing and put people first.