



Gibbons Capitol Report
May 16, 2008

**2008 Session:
Making Life Better for Missourians**

When we began the legislative session in January, we outlined several complex issues we wanted to find solutions for. After visiting with people across the state, we believed limiting property taxation, ending illegal immigration, and expanding educational opportunities were three issues we owed it to the people of Missouri to accomplish. Many said that because it is an election year, nothing much would be accomplished. But I believed we owed it to you, the people of Missouri, to prove the wrong. And that is exactly what we did.

Protecting Property Owners from Higher Taxes

Last year, Missourians across the state were hit with big tax increases caused by reassessment. We were able to protect homeowners from these back door tax increases with Senate Bill 711. We protected taxpayers by mandating property tax roll backs, closing a tax increase loophole, and requiring that taxpayers receive their projected tax liability along with their reassessment notices. We also increased property tax relief for seniors and the disabled.

Battling Illegal Immigration on the State Level

Illegal immigration is at the core of America's frustration with Congress. Their inaction to secure our borders allows illegal immigrants from across the world to come into America. Year after year Congress has pledged to fix the immigration crisis going on across the country and year after year nothing gets accomplished. Therefore, we needed to act to tackle this problem in Missouri. We support legal immigrants who play by the rules to become citizens, but we must end illegal immigrants stealing jobs from Missouri citizens. We passed a comprehensive reform package that protects citizens' jobs, detains illegal immigrants who commit crimes, and establishes that taxpayer services are for legal residents only.

Expanding Students' Education Opportunities

Providing our children with a world class education regardless of where they live is always a top priority for us. This year we fully funded the next phase of the K-12 funding formula. The \$121.3 million increase means we have increased funding for education by

more than half a billion dollars over the past four years without a tax increase. We also expanded the number of high school students eligible for the A+ Schools Program and increased need-based scholarship funding by \$47.8 million. Now, more than \$100 million a year is dedicated to providing needs-based scholarships for Missouri students to attend college. Last year we doubled the number of students receiving scholarships to more than 30,000 and expect this year's increase to benefit thousands more.

This year, we worked diligently to pass common sense solutions that protect you from tax increases caused by reassessment, combat illegal immigration, and make education more affordable. We rose above the political posturing and put the people first. Our success on passing these important issues will improve the lives of all Missourians.