



Column For Week of: March 17, 2008

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Calling the Senate to Order

Presiding Over a Technical Session

Last week the Senate adjourned for a mid-session recess, a chance for lawmakers to go back to their district and spend time away from the often hectic atmosphere of the Capitol. However, Missouri's constitution requires that the General Assembly not recess for more than 10 days. This provision requires the Senate to briefly convene for a technical session during weeks such as this one. I was asked to, and gladly accepted, the responsibility of bringing the Senate into session.



Sen. Barnitz on the dais presiding over the technical session held on March 20.

Missouri's constitution lays out the specifications for each legislative session. Every year, the Senate must begin meeting on the first Wednesday after the first Monday in January (January 9 this year) and adjourn before midnight on May 30th (the legislative session will effectively be complete on May 16 of this year). There are also provisions allowing the General Assembly to convene for a special session, which it did this past fall. In order for the Legislature to hold a special session, a petition must be filed specifying the

purpose of the meeting. The petition must be approved by three-fourths of the members of the Senate, three-fourths of the members of the House of Representatives, the Senate President Pro Tem, and the Speaker of the House.

The reason for the technical session held this week is the provision in Article 3, Section 20 of Missouri's constitution, which states that neither legislative body can adjourn for more than 10 days at any one time without consent from the other body. There are several occasions during the year when it is necessary to convene for a technical session, and both chambers rely on their local legislators for the operation of the General Assembly.

This week was the first time I was personally able to call the Senate to order and preside over the business of the session. By convening this week, the Senate adhered to the regulations of Missouri's constitution and was able to go forward in the legislative process. This responsibility was an opportunity I was happy to accept and enjoyed carrying out.

If you would like (a) high resolution photo(s) (jpeg) of the above image(s) contact Senate Communications at (573) 751-3824 or sreed@senate.mo.gov or visit Sen. Barnitz's online photo gallery at www.senate.mo.gov/barnitz.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to call me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2108. You can also write to me at Frank Barnitz, Missouri Senate, State Capitol, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

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