



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of Oct. 13, 2008**

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Constitutional Amendments

JEFFERSON CITY – In just a couple of weeks, Missourians will head to the polls to cast their votes for President, Governor, half of the state Senate and all members of the House. Missouri voters will also decide two proposed amendments to our state Constitution and three statewide referendums. This week I want to discuss the two constitutional amendments on the November ballot; next week I'll address the three propositions on the ballot.

Constitutional Amendment 1 on the November 4th ballot asks voters if they want to amend the state constitution to make English the official language of all governmental meetings where public business is discussed, decided, or public policy is formulated. It includes meetings conducted in person or by conference calls, video conferences, or Internet chat or message boards. A “yes” vote will amend the constitution; a “no” vote will not change our constitution. The Secretary of State’s office says the proposed amendment will have no costs or savings to state or local governments.

Constitutional Amendment 4 deals with the financing of storm water control projects. The proposed amendment asks voters if they want to change the way those projects are funded by limiting the availability of grants and loans to public water and sewer districts only; by removing the cap on available funding and existing restrictions on disbursements; and by requiring loan repayments to be used only for stormwater control projects.

The Secretary of State’s office says the proposed amendment is estimated to cost state governmental entities anywhere from \$0 to \$236,000 annually. It is estimated state government agencies will save approximately \$7,500 for each bond issuance. The proposal may lead to savings for local governments, although the amount is unknown.

This is shaping up to be one of the most important elections in my lifetime. I urge everyone to make sure their voter registrations are up to date and correct, and to go to the polls on November 4th.

We are truly blessed to live in a country where the citizens determine who will represent their interests in their local, state and national governments. Please make your voice heard by casting your ballot this November.

If you have any questions or comments about this or any other issue, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.