



# MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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## Sen. Jason Crowell Discusses Accomplishments Benefitting Missouri Seniors

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JEFFERSON CITY— Sen. Jason Crowell (R-Cape Girardeau), today (7-2) addressed a group of area seniors on legislation that is easing the stress on their finances. Sen. Crowell spoke at the Cape Girardeau Seniors and Lawmen Together (SALT) Council's Senior Celebration at St. Mary's Cathedral Gym in Cape Girardeau.

"The seniors of this state are some of our most valuable citizens," said Sen. Crowell. "I am proud to be able to talk about some of the accomplishments we have made over the past four years for these deserving individuals."

In 2007, Sen. Crowell championed legislation that phases in an exemption on state income taxes on Social Security benefits, Social Security disability, and non-private retirement benefits. This includes pensions for firefighters, police officers, railroad workers, teachers, veterans, and some federal employees. The phase-in, which is taking place over a six year period, is applicable up to the maximum Social Security benefit. In 2008, the second year of the phase-in, 35 percent of applicable benefits are exempt from state income tax.

This year, Sen. Crowell supported sweeping property tax reforms passed by the General Assembly to prevent Missourians, and especially seniors, from being taxed out of their homes. As well as closing taxing loopholes that allowed homeowners to be taxed at a higher rate, the legislation expands tax relief programs for seniors. This includes eligibility and award expansions on the Property Tax Credit Claim (Circuit Breaker). Previously, those qualifying for the credit could receive an award up to \$750, but homeowners can now receive up to \$1,100. Income thresholds have also increased for homeowners to \$30,000 for singles and \$34,000 for married couples.

"Many seniors are living on a fixed income, while at the same time, trying to deal with the rising costs of medication and fuel," said Sen. Crowell. "I will continue to work to make sure the government is not reaching into senior's pockets in our state."

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