

CAPITOL REPORT

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Eric
Schmitt

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MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY
ERIC S. SCHMITT
15th District

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It has been nearly a year since I was elected your state Senator. On January 7th, 2009, I was sworn in to represent you, my neighbors and our community in our state capitol. I take that responsibility seriously and have worked hard to find solutions to the complex problems we face together.

This past legislative session, we were able to pass meaningful legislation for the good of the people. Moving forward, we can accomplish even more. To that end, and in the interim, I am serving on two committees charged with mapping out Missouri's long-range vision for job creation and economic growth (Job Creation 2020 Committee) and health reform (Healthy Missourians 2020 Committee, which I chair). For too long, Missouri has been mired in the middle of the pack of so many economic and health indicators. For example, Missouri ranks 33rd in median family income, 38th in health status and 30th in the number of 25- to 34-year olds with a post-high school degree. We must change that reality.

Imagine a Missouri as a leader in job growth. Imagine a Missouri at the forefront of decreasing the rate of diabetes or other diseases by promoting wellness and prevention. Too often, government operates year to year without a long-term vision. No business would operate without a strategic plan—why should state government? We all deserve better so that our families and future generations can benefit from forward-thinking and innovation.

In the end, we are all part of this great experiment our Founding Fathers created more than 200 years ago. Our system of government is unique to the world. This first year in the Senate has reaffirmed one of my core beliefs—that we all have far more in common than what sets us apart. By working together, respecting one another and committing ourselves to solving the problems we face together, we can and will accomplish anything. We owe it to our children to provide real hope and opportunity in our time and ensure we leave our corner of the world a better place.

Please feel free to contact me any time at 573-751-2853 or at eschmitt@senate.mo.gov

Sincerely,



Sen. Schmitt with his family.



Sen. Schmitt with Sarah Schwegel, former National Goodwill Ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association from Kirkwood.



Sen. Schmitt with Jack Shea from Kirkwood, who was at the Capitol to be honored for his artwork on Missouri Fine Arts Day.



Sen. Schmitt visiting with Boy Scout Troop 165, Seven Holy Founders Parish, Affton.



Promoting Fairness & Accountability in Property Assessments

Senate Joint Resolution 5 Expected on November 2010 Ballot

Senator Schmitt worked this session to fulfill his promise to fundamentally reform the property assessment process in St. Louis County with the passage of Senate Joint Resolution 5. His work became especially pertinent as property values throughout Missouri fell dramatically this year. The constitutional amendment, if approved by voters, would require the assessor in St. Louis County to be elected, rather than appointed.

Senator Schmitt believes the current property reassessment system has failed St. Louis County property owners. Senate Joint Resolution 5 will let voters decide whether to require the St. Louis County Assessor to be elected, or not.

Senator Schmitt believes having an independent, elected assessor attacks the problem of unfair assessments on the front end, ensuring the assessment process is more open, transparent and—most importantly—accountable to voters.

Assessors are elected in more than 100 other counties in the state, including suburban St. Charles County. The State Tax Commission and University of Missouri-St. Louis Public Policy Research Center have pointed out that St. Charles County has the highest assessment accuracy

in the state. Senator Schmitt believes St. Louis County taxpayers deserve better.

Senate Joint Resolution 5 is expected to appear on the November 2010 ballot.

“The assessor’s job should only be to fairly assess property values and for those values to reflect market conditions. The status quo is unacceptable. We need an independent office accountable to voters.”

-Senator Eric Schmitt

Fighting Crime in Missouri

This year, the Legislature passed the first large crime measure in recent years. House Bill 62 includes provisions to:

- Ban certain sexual offenders from being an athletic coach, manager, or trainer for any sports team with children younger than 17 years old.
- Ban the use of a false or misleading college degree in connection with any business, employment opportunity, trade, or public office.
- Expand the patrol areas of university police officers to respond to emergencies or natural disasters off campus and provide services when requested by other law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction.
- Create an education and awareness program to help protect senior citizens from financial exploitation.
- Help crime victims by letting them request that a photograph be taken of an incarcerated individual prior to his or her release and a copy be provided to the victim.
- Hold the owners of dogs that cause injury responsible under new penalties and give an absolute defense against civil liability or prosecution for killing or injuring threatening dogs.
- Deny driving privileges to anyone convicted twice within a five-year period of a DWI.
- Ban the use or possession of an alcoholic beverage vaporizer.



Sen. Schmitt debating legislation on the Senate floor.

Making Missouri a Leader in Common-Sense Healthcare Transformation



Senator Schmitt Sponsors First-of-its-Kind Legislation to Promote Transparency in Healthcare Costs and Fight Fraud

This year, Sen. Schmitt filed Senate Bill 549 to create the MO HealthNet (Medicaid) Data Transparency Program and successfully amended House Bill 577 to include the landmark legislation.

When House Bill 577 was signed into law, Missouri became the first state in the nation to require the posting of all Medicaid payments made to providers online, with recipients' information protected and de-identified. For the first time, anyone can see what providers charge for their services with just the click of a mouse.

Senator Schmitt believes consumers have a right to know the cost and quality of their care, which is why he created this first-

of-its-kind web portal. Posting this data online will also help Missouri crack down on fraud and abuse. Nationwide, outright

fraud accounts for as much as 10 percent of all healthcare spending. That is nearly \$200 billion every year. In 2005, the *Kansas City Star* estimated that fraudulent Medicaid claims could total up to \$575 million a year in Missouri—

that's the amount of Missouri tax dollars going to crooks. This is why Sen. Schmitt fought hard to make Missouri a leader in cracking down on Medicaid fraud with the MO HealthNet Data Transparency Program.

Plus, the information collected can be used to guide public policy. For example, every woman over the age of 40 should have a yearly mammogram.

With the database, policymakers may discover that only 40 percent of women over 40 are receiving mammograms, thus triggering policy changes that encourage outreach awareness.

“The amount of money lost to provider fraud in our state’s Medicaid system is a problem we must aggressively address and root out. Making these costs transparent is a big step in helping us catch those providers who cheat the system, essentially stealing precious tax dollars that could go to care for our state’s most vulnerable citizens.”

-Senator Eric Schmitt



Sen. Schmitt discusses the MO HealthNet (Medicaid) Transparency Program at a press conference.

Healthcare Fraud in Numbers

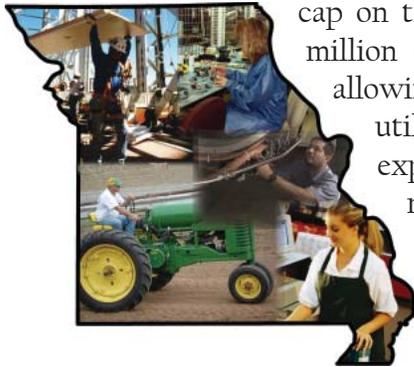
- Outright fraud accounts for as much as **10 percent** of all healthcare spending nationally—nearly \$200 billion every year.
- Medicaid currently serves more than **860,000** Missourians with a price tag of more than **\$6 billion** a year.
- In 2005, the *Kansas City Star* estimated that fraudulent Medicaid claims could total up to **\$575 million** a year in Missouri.



Encouraging Job Creation & Economic Development

House Bill 191 is the wide-ranging economic development measure passed this year to encourage businesses to move to Missouri or expand existing operations here.

One important aspect of the legislation expands the Quality Jobs Act that provides tax incentives to businesses that create jobs that pay above the county-average and foot the cost for at least half the employee's health insurance premiums. The bill expanded the cap on these incentives from \$60 million to \$80 million per year, allowing more businesses to utilize the program and expand. House Bill 191 also removed the per company cap for high impact and technology companies to allow for even more job creation in these important fields. The Quality Jobs Act expansion is estimated to create 30,000 jobs; the program has created 22,000 jobs since 2005.



Other expansions to help businesses include:

- Increasing the cap for New Market Incentives from \$15 million to \$25 million per year. This program is a companion tax credit to a federal tax credit used to provide gap financing to distressed area companies.
- Increasing the cap for BUILD (Business Use Incentives for Large-Scale Development) Tax Credits from \$15 million to \$25 million per year.
- Expanding state job training programs to include pre-employment training with new or expanding industry training.

Helping Small Businesses: Tax Relief and Freedom to Grow

More than 95 percent of Missouri's businesses employ less than 50 people. Small businesses are truly the backbone of Missouri's economy, and House Bill 191 provides direct help to them.

One provision of the bill, known as the "Big Government Get Off My Back Act", specifically applies to companies with less than 25 employees. The measure bans increases in user fees imposed by the state for four years and prohibits new regulations regarding administrative costs, fees and procedures for obtaining a small business license for four years.

The legislation also phases out the Corporate Franchise Tax. The measure increases the asset threshold from \$1 million to \$10 million, resulting in tax relief of \$12 million for 12,000 of Missouri's 15,000 small businesses. Providing this tax relief frees up Missouri businesses to reinvest their revenues in hiring new employees and growing their business.



Sen. Schmitt and Rep. Rick Stream of Kirkwood meet with a group of small business owners from the district who visited the capitol on April 20th.

Local Resources for Families with Children on the Autism Spectrum

Senator Schmitt sponsored Senate Bill 157, which was signed into law in June. The bill ensures Autism Spectrum Disorder services in local areas meet the needs of local communities and ensures that programs and services will help better the quality of life for those on the Autism Spectrum and reach those who need them.

The bill puts into law five regional autism projects (Central, East, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest Missouri) that collectively provide Autism Spectrum Disorder services to approximately 2,500 families statewide. Under the legislation, regional projects will be run by the Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities.

The first pilot project was established in 1991 as a result of families in rural Missouri approaching legislators to ask for autism-specific family support. Services provided by the projects include assessment, advocacy training, therapy, and parent or caregiver training.



Sen. Schmitt with a group of constituents at the Capitol for Autism Awareness Month

The legislation specifies that each project would have a regional parent advisory council and that the division would establish the Missouri Parent Advisory Committee on Autism. Parent advisory councils would include seven to nine individuals who have family members with autism, including young children, school-age children, and adults.

Reach the East Autism Project:
Wainwright Building, 111 N. 7th St. 6th Floor
St. Louis, MO 63101
Phone: 314-244-8800

Education: Working for Students

This year, the Senate passed Senate Bill 291, a comprehensive education bill to improve schools in the state. The bill includes a variety of provisions, including prohibiting the use of seclusion rooms, creating the Volunteer and Parents Incentive Program, and setting minimum physical education requirements for elementary schools.

Another major part of the legislation makes sure revenues from the passage of Proposition A (2008) will go to public schools. Voters passed Proposition A last November, removing the loss limits at casinos. A fix included in Senate Bill 291 ensures that increased revenues from that change go into the Classroom Trust Fund and directly to schools. The change is expected to provide an additional \$60 million to Missouri's public schools.



Sen. Schmitt visits with a class from the Steger 6th Grade Center in Webster Groves.

Empowering Parents

Some parents of children with disabilities are unaware of the educational rights they have relating to their child's individualized education program (IEP). This is why Sen. Schmitt filed legislation to require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to produce "The Parents' Bill of Rights" to inform parents of children with an IEP of their educational rights. The provision was included in Senate Bill 291 and now requires "The Parents' Bill of Rights" to be provided to them in advance of their child's IEP meeting.

A Responsible Budget

Unlike many other states, Missouri passed a responsible budget on time. The fiscal year 2010 budget that took effect on July 1 totals \$23.1 billion. It was crafted in a way that is fiscally responsible while also meeting the crucial needs of the state.

The 13 bills that make up the state's core spending plan include:

- A \$63 million increase for K-12 schools.
- A \$40 million increase for higher education.
- \$11 million for grants to help businesses train workers.
- \$1.5 million to go to the Internet Sex Crimes Grant program.



Guidelines for Donations

This year, Sen. Schmitt handled House Bill 698 in the Senate. The bill works to make sure Missourians donating clothing or other items know exactly where their donation is going.

Some clothing and household goods donation receptacles are owned and operated by for-profit entities.



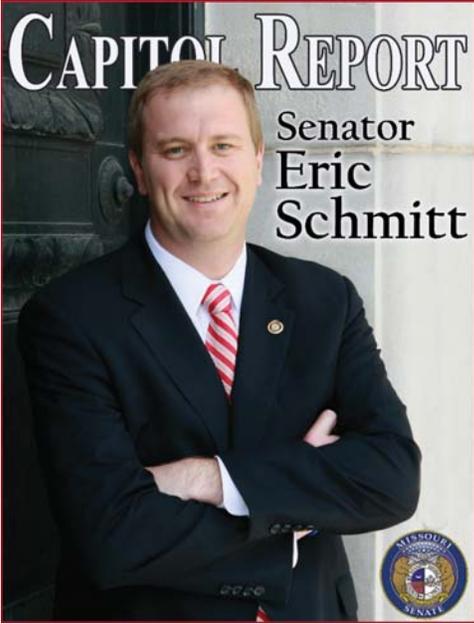
Previously, state law required that a statement be posted on certain donation receptacles regarding how the proceeds of the donations will be used. The legislation expands that requirement and makes sure the signs are easily readable to the public, like the one shown here.

Contact Information

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Jefferson City, MO 65101
(573) 751-2853
Toll-free: 866-288-2344
E-mail: eschmitt@senate.mo.gov
Online: www.senate.mo.gov/schmitt



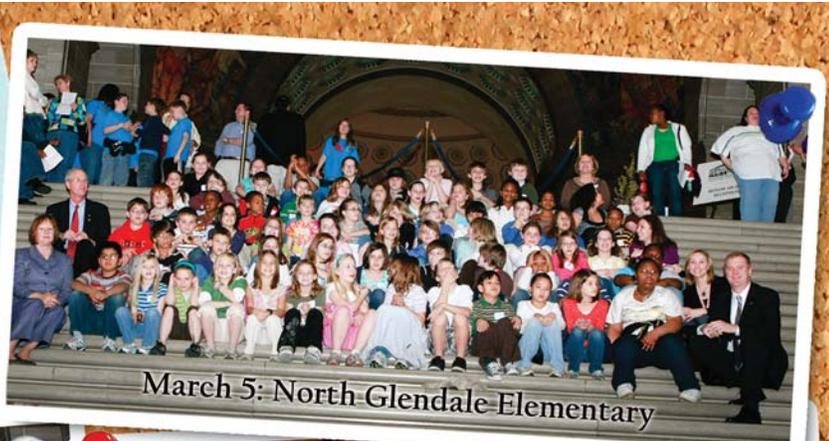
Please feel free to contact Senator Schmitt with your questions, comments or concerns.



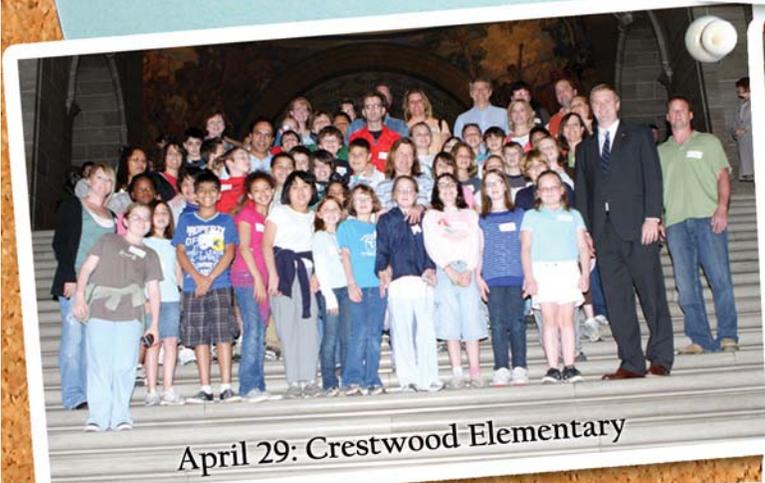
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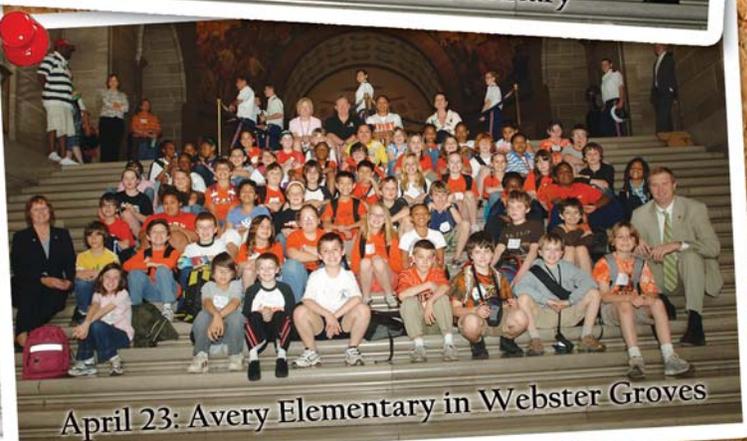
**2009
School
Groups**



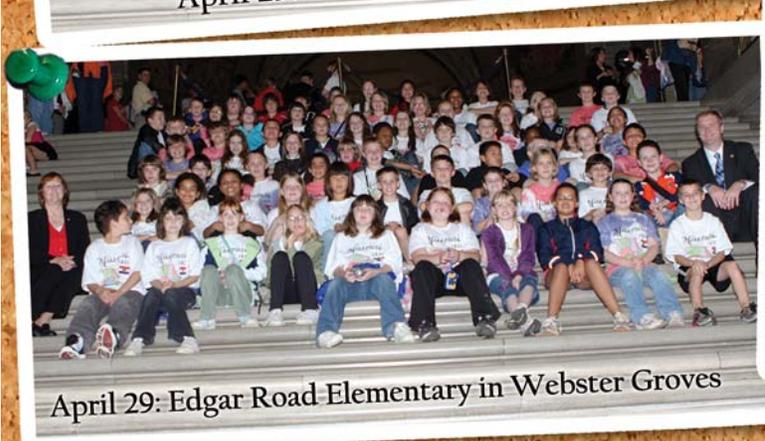
March 5: North Glendale Elementary



April 29: Crestwood Elementary



April 23: Avery Elementary in Webster Groves



April 29: Edgar Road Elementary in Webster Groves



May 13: Westchester Elementary in Kirkwood