

State Senator

District 26

John Griesheimer



**Job  
Creation**

**Extending  
Unemployment  
Benefits**

**Transportation  
Improvements**



**Legislative Report 2009**

# State Senator John Griesheimer



Sen. John Griesheimer

## Committee Memberships

- Jobs, Economic Development and Local Government, Chair
- Transportation, Vice-chairman
- Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy and the Environment
- Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight
- Joint Committee on Tax Policy
- Joint Committee on Gaming and Wagering

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Dear Friends,

The 2009 legislative session was a very productive one. With the struggling U.S. and state economies in mind, we passed some real priorities, including major jobs legislation that will increase businesses' ability to create good paying jobs and provide health care coverage, plus a measure that will help sustain the state's unemployment trust fund and allow jobless workers to receive extended benefits. I was privileged to advance these critical bills, which contain many of my own proposals, through the General Assembly.

In addition, I was successful in advancing legislation to provide consumers another option for registering and titling their vehicles, in updating transportation-related legislation limiting the revenue communities can collect from traffic fines, in helping rename a Franklin County highway and clearing a last hurdle for allowing an area hospital to become a Critical Access Hospital for area residents. I also lent my support to legislation that will restore fair sewer billing to some of my constituents in West St. Louis County.

Meanwhile, the General Assembly succeeded in passing a \$23.1 billion budget that increases funding for education at all levels. With other states bleeding red ink, Missouri's budget was balanced without a tax increase by drawing on a nearly \$800 million reserve stockpiled over the last several years. For the fourth year in a row, we increased funding for higher education in support of our state's commitment to ensure our future workforce is the most educated in the nation.

This legislative newsletter highlights many of my activities during the recent session. As your state senator, I am focused on the needs and concerns of the citizens of the 26th District. As always, it is a privilege and honor to represent you in Jefferson City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Griesheimer". The signature is written in a cursive style.

## Meet My Capitol Office Staff



One of a senator's most important assets is a dependable and friendly staff. I am fortunate to have both Carolyn Case and Chris Sutherland to assist me in my office in Jefferson City. Feel free to contact them if you have questions about the Missouri Legislature, concerns about how the laws affect you, or simply want to book a tour of the Capitol for your family or group.



# Major Jobs Legislation Passes

Senator Griesheimer played a key role in advancing the General Assembly's major economic development bill of the 2009 legislative session. As chairman of the Senate Jobs, Economic Development and Local Government Committee and Senate handler of the jobs bill (HB 191), Sen. Griesheimer worked closely with lawmakers throughout the session to pass vital legislation aimed at spurring job creation and improving the state's economy.

The bill was stalled for weeks in the Senate over tax credit reform, but in the final days of the session, lawmakers worked together to reach a compromise that will provide Missouri businesses and corporations with a larger set of tools for creating jobs and helping put Missourians back to work.

## Quality Jobs Act Expanded

House Bill 191 expands the state's successful Quality Jobs Act — a proven program that provides financial incentives for employers who create good-paying jobs and offer basic healthcare. It increases the cap on this program from \$60 million to \$80 million and removes the per-company annual cap on high-impact and technology business projects, encouraging more growth in our state. The bill also expands the cap on Missouri BUILD (Business Use Incentives for Large-Scale Development) — a program that provides a financial incentive for the location or expansion of large business projects — from \$15 million to \$25 million. The program targets large manufacturing and process industries. These incentives are expected to encourage expansion by several companies, including a St. Louis-based multinational agricultural bio-technology corporation.

House Bill 191 also expands the Department of Economic Development's job training program to apply to pre-employment training. This will enhance workers' job skills and employment eligibility.

## Tax Cut for Small Business

Small businesses, the backbone of our state's economy, will receive tax relief under this economic plan through the phasing out of the corporate franchise tax. This provision exempts small businesses in Missouri with less than \$10 million in assets from paying the franchise tax. This applies to 82 percent of all businesses that owed or paid this in the last tax year, and is expected to help business owners reinvest in their companies and stay in operation.

## New Markets Tax Credit Program Expanded

The comprehensive jobs bill also increases the cap on the New Markets Tax Credit program from \$15 million to \$25 million. This economic tool encourages



*Sen. John Griesheimer worked tirelessly and in a bipartisan effort to advance the jobs bills critical for Missouri.*

investment in small businesses located in distressed communities.

## Historic Tax Credits Capped

Another important feature of the jobs bill that drew a lot of attention from the St. Louis community was the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program. The financial incentive program was threatened with major cuts, but in the end the program was preserved with a reasonable cap of \$140 million per year, with smaller, residential projects exempted from the cap.

## "Big Government Get Off My Back Act"

Another important measure in the jobs bill bans the increase in user fees and prevents new regulations on companies with less than 25 employees for four years. It's called the "Big Government Get Off My Back Act" and is designed to provide relief to small business owners who have taken a hard hit from the recent financial crisis and have struggled to remain in operation.

# Senator Steers Transportation Legislation

## More Options for Titling & Registering Cars

Senator Griesheimer's legislative proposal to provide Missouri consumers another option for titling and registering vehicles passed in the General Assembly's transportation-related bill — House Bill 683.

The measure allows motor vehicle dealers to collect and remit sales taxes for the initial sale or lease of motor vehicles by allowing the Missouri Department of Revenue to appoint motor vehicle dealers to act as agents for collecting motor vehicle sales taxes for all vehicles sold by that motor vehicle dealer.

This will provide a “one-stop shop” for consumers who need to pay their vehicle taxes and registration fees and would be up to the car dealers whether they want to participate.

## 'Macks Creek Law' Revision Curbs Traffic Fine Profits

House Bill 683 also contained Sen. Griesheimer's proposal that limits the amount of traffic fines kept by a city.

The measure makes a revision to the “Macks Creek Law,” named for a small town near the Lake of the Ozarks that was once known as one of the state's worst speed traps and collector of traffic fines.

The legislation will impact all cities in Missouri, particularly the community of Foristell, which has been cited by a national association as the number one speed trap in Missouri with the state's highest level of traffic fines.

The legislation requires a city that receives more than 35 percent of its annual general operating budget from traffic fines and court costs for traffic violations occurring on state highways to direct that additional money to the Department of Revenue to be distributed to the state school system.

This bill should stop any temptations to make huge profits on traffic fines in all areas of the state, especially those communities along interstate highways.

## New Street Name to Aid Sullivan Hospital

A portion of the state highway system located within the city limits of the City of Washington, formerly

referred to as Highway 47, has been renamed “Franklin Street” following a proposal by Sen. Griesheimer that was approved by the General Assembly in HB 683.

Senator Griesheimer introduced the legislation to change the road's name to assist Missouri Baptist Hospital in Sullivan in securing Critical Access Hospital designation.

A Critical Access Hospital (CAH) is a hospital that is certified to receive cost-based reimbursement from Medicare. The reimbursement that CAHs receive is intended to improve their financial performance and thereby reduce hospital closures.

The CAH designation will mean several million dollars annually to the hospital and help contribute to the local economy. Guidelines followed for this designation have specific requirements regarding the distance between the applicant facility and other hospitals as well as the types of roads between them.

The name change will have no impact on the maintenance of the road and removes the final barrier for the hospital to receive the CAH designation.



## Senator Offers Bill to Help Missouri Winemaking Industry

Legislation proposed by Sen. Griesheimer (Senate Bill 171) to put the Missouri wine industry in line with common wine manufacturing practices by making it legal for wine manufacturers to share the use of their facilities was amended to House Bill 132, which was passed by the General Assembly.

Senator Griesheimer's measure requires that any person, partnership, association or corporation that produces more than 200 gallons of wine each year obtain a state wine manufacturer's license, and allows wine manufacturers to legally produce wine for other manufacturers who have a federally approved manufacturing label.



# Unemployment Legislation

During the legislative session, Senator Griesheimer advanced major legislation to extend the length of time workers can collect unemployment benefits, and to sustain the state's unemployment trust fund. Many of his proposals were incorporated into House Bill 1075 — legislation the senator successfully advanced in the Senate and helped pass in the General Assembly.

The legislation will allow Missourians who are out of work to continue receiving unemployment funds and will provide eligible families with several more weeks of unemployment compensation. The state's unemployment rate continues to mirror the national unemployment rate, with more than 278,000 Missourians out of work. That number includes 9,100 St. Louisans who lost their jobs in June.

In June, the governor signed legislation that relies on \$65 million in federal stimulus money to extend unemployment benefits. Some of that money will give jobless residents up to 20 additional weeks of benefits.



When the average total unemployment rate exceeds 6.5 percent during a three-month period, unemployed Missourians could qualify for an additional 13 weeks.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Labor turned down Missouri's request for federal stabilization funds to cover a new group of individuals eligible for unemployment compensation because the provisions of the bill were set to expire after one year unless reauthorized by the General Assembly.

House Bill 1075 also includes Sen. Griesheimer's proposal to remove the \$450 million cap on the amount of money the state's Board of Unemployment Fund Financing may borrow and or issue in bonds to sustain state unemployment benefits.

Senator Griesheimer believes this proposal gives the state a couple of years of ensuring that unemployed Missourians continue to receive unemployment benefits; while work continues to address the unemployment trust fund issues.

## Cell Phone Funding for Emergency Services On Hold For Now

Senator Griesheimer's Senate Bill 119, which would have established a fee of up to 25 cents per month on every wireless telephone number to fund emergency dispatching facilities across the state (subject to statewide voter approval), did not pass during the legislative session, but the issue remains a priority for the senator.

Currently, funding for 9-1-1 Service and Enhanced 9-1-1 Service in Missouri comes primarily from sales tax, general tax revenue and, in large part, from land line taxes; but not from cell phone usage. The bill would have charged wireless telephone users a fee to fund emergency dispatching facilities — commonly referred to as Public Safety Answering Points or PSAPs — that provide or upgrade to Enhanced 9-1-1 Service. Enhanced 9-1-1 Service allows 9-1-1 calls to be tracked to an accurate location.

More and more emergency calls today are from cell phones. This bill would have served to increase safety in our state, and would have had the wireless industry contribute its share to fund emergency services.

“The time has come to bring Enhanced 9-1-1 Service to all of Missouri.”

— Sen. John Griesheimer

Under the bill, the Department of Public Safety and the Office of Administration would have been responsible for creating a formula to distribute funds for PSAPs that provide or upgrade to Enhanced 9-1-1 Service.

Currently, Missouri is the only state in the nation that hasn't implemented a wireless funding mechanism of this kind.

The time has come for Missouri to bring Enhanced 9-1-1 Service to areas that don't currently have it, and to modernize or consolidate our existing systems to prepare for the future, so he will keep pushing for this legislation so that our state is able to achieve this needed goal.



# CWIP Bill Sparks Energy Debate

Senate Bill 228 is a measure Sen. Griesheimer advanced in the Senate as a member of the Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy and the Environment Committee that would have allowed eligible power plants to charge customers through their utility rates for the cost of construction of certain types of clean energy plants.

Also known as the “CWIP” or construction-while-in-progress bill, the hotly-contested proposed measure was eventually taken out of consideration after the St. Louis utility that proposed it — in order to build a second nuclear plant in Callaway County — decided not to pursue building the plant. The legislation was on the ropes anyway after there were major efforts to derail it and an orchestrated misinformation campaign against it.

Senator Griesheimer was in a precarious position with the legislation because his vote in committee allowed it to go to the Senate floor for debate. While the original draft did not favor consumers enough at that point, he believed it

was important to continue to discuss the issue to ensure all ideas were vetted. By doing that, he believed legislators could work toward having the best plan available to protect consumers when and if the time was right to make this move for Missouri.

In the senator’s opinion, there were only two ways the state could

address this. The first option was the state could choose to support the building of a new plant to generate power in Missouri that would create jobs and ensure future electric



*Senator Griesheimer encouraged the discussion and efforts to address the state’s energy needs.*

“I want my kids and grandkids to have affordable electric power for their futures. That’s why I believe doing nothing is not an option.”

— Sen. John Griesheimer

production. The second option was that the state could choose to not support the building of a new plant and instead buy power from other states at higher costs, meaning higher rates for consumers as well as making them susceptible to blackouts.

Also, there are new federal regulations making a new coal plant unfeasible, and wind and solar options cannot meet all the state’s needs. That leaves nuclear energy as the best option to increase in-state power production.

Even though this highly-contested legislation is off the table for now, it has sparked more energy discussion and will not end our state’s pursuit of alternatives to meet the emerging need for more energy production or to expand our renewable energy sources — and nuclear power will remain one of those options.



## Senator Supports Measure to Ensure Fair Sewer Billing

Senator Griesheimer endorsed successful legislation that restores fairness to many of his constituents in West St. Louis County who were being charged for sewer or storm water services they never received.

The measure, incorporated into House Bill 661, bars the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District from charging homeowners a storm water fee if they don’t use the district’s sanitary sewers and their runoff doesn’t flow to district storm sewers. The legislation answers concerns raised by residents in several areas of St. Louis County who were providing their own septic tanks and wells, but were being charged by the sewer district for storm water management services they did not have access to or receive.

This was truly a bipartisan effort involving nearly every St. Louis County-area lawmaker and Sen. Griesheimer was pleased the measure passed.

# Budget Breakdown

## DISTRIBUTION OF EACH TAX DOLLAR FY 2010 AFTER VETO MISSOURI OPERATING BUDGET All Funds: \$23.087 Billion



\* Revenue, Office of Administration, Elected Officials, General Assembly, Real Estate  
Source: Senate Appropriations Committee

## Missouri County Planning Act

Senator Griesheimer's proposal that would have created the "Missouri County Planning Act" to allow county commissioners to form planning commissions to draft master plans for county improvements was endorsed by the Senate but did not advance in the House before the legislative session concluded.

Senate Bill 5 sought to allow counties with assessed valuations of more than \$200 million to create planning commissions to draft comprehensive plans containing proposals and procedures for street plans and subdivisions. Proposals would have been subject to public hearings and voter approval.

Under this proposed plan, elected county commissioners could have been proactive and begun to draft plans for improving their counties before going to countywide voters for a vote. The county commission would then have had the authority to carry out that plan if citizens voted to support it.

Under the bill's provisions, the planning commission would have determined the applicability to the county of such things as land use, transportation, housing, community facilities, economic development, natural, cultural, or historical resources, human services and community design.

Streamlining and simplifying the process for most of Missouri's 114 counties to establish county planning has been a goal of Senator Griesheimer's for a number of years. He proposed similar legislation during the past several legislative sessions.

The bill would have been very beneficial for some of our state's counties, but unfortunately one of the state's largest agricultural organizations lobbied against it, suggesting that the proposal would have removed voting power from the residents in those Missouri counties affected. Senator Griesheimer will continue to promote the planning act and fight misguided opposition.





## State Senator John Griesheimer

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## 2009 Gubernatorial Appointments



*Senator Griesheimer (left) with Brian May of Eureka, Missouri Development Finance Board.*



*Sen. Griesheimer with Christopher Manhart of Union, Missouri Quality Home Care Council. Also pictured are Charles and Marjorie Manhart of Union.*

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