

State Senator  
District 12

**Brad Lager**

## 2009 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Dear Friends,

The First Regular Session of the 95<sup>th</sup> General Assembly has come to a close. At the beginning of this legislative session, we knew we had several challenges before us, but we were committed to moving a legislative agenda that is good for Missouri and its citizens. By the time the final gavel fell, we were successful in passing legislation that protects Missouri's hard-working families, supports small businesses and improves the education of our school children.

With unemployment on the rise, Missouri has not been immune to the pressure of declining tax revenues. In spite of these challenges, the Legislature managed to pass a balanced budget that addresses the needs of our citizens without raising taxes on hard-working Missourians.

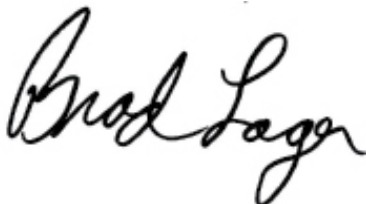
Finally, the future of energy policy in our state was the subject of much debate this session as the General Assembly discussed a number of proposals to address growing demand and rising utility costs. While a consensus was not forged on all of these proposals, I am proud that the Legislature passed critical legislation that will improve energy efficiency and reduce costs.

I have fought to use our tax dollars wisely, make government more efficient and return common sense to the public policy process. I believe we have continued to move Missouri forward and are better prepared for the future because of our actions today.

I look forward to continuing to fight for Missouri's taxpayers as we strive to make Missouri a better place to live, work and raise a family.

Although it has been an interesting year in the Legislature, I am glad to be home with my wife Stephanie and my beautiful daughter Addison.

Sincerely,



# Educating Our Future Leaders

## Senator Lager considers education his top priority.



*Students from Maryville were just one of the dozens of schools to make the trip to Jefferson City to meet with Sen. Lager during the legislative session.*

I believe our state government's number one priority should be the education of our children. This year, a number of proposals were introduced to support Missouri teachers and improve our educational system. Among the proposals that passed this year were the expansion of virtual schools, the dedication of Proposition A funds directly into the classroom and a requirement for the adoption of local teaching standards.

Among my top legislative priorities for the last few sessions has been the reform of the P-20 Council. This council is a collaboration of education and business professionals who work together to evaluate the educational processes and create programs and tools that improve achievement from the time a child enters the education system until they eventually enter the workforce. My legislation expanded the size of the council and re-structured the council as a non-profit organization that can compete for public and private grant opportunities.

In the Fiscal Year 2010 budget, we were successful in increasing education funding an additional \$77.2 million, bringing the total expenditure for elementary and secondary education to \$5.4 billion.

In this tough budget year, I fought to protect important

programs that support our students and teachers. Throughout the legislative process, professional development funding and the Safe Schools Grant were nearly stricken from the budget. These programs are used significantly throughout northwest Missouri to improve classroom instruction and create safe educational environments for the most at-risk students. I joined a number of other legislators in advocating for these programs and I am proud that we were successful in restoring these critical initiatives to the Missouri Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

As we move forward, I remain committed to ensuring

## Lawmakers have managed to increase education spending over the past four years.



*Senator Lager visited with students from Southwest Livingston County explaining the operation of government and the hectic schedule of a legislator.*

Missouri's students are given the greatest opportunity to develop their skills, secure an educational foundation and prepare to be our future leaders. While there are a number of challenges in the coming year, I will continue to work hard to support the educational programs that are vital to the success of Missouri's children.



*Students from throughout Northwest Missouri traveled to the Capitol to participate in the 2009 State Youth in Government Day.*



# Promoting Small Business

During this year of big government bailouts, I have been amazed by the amount of money thrown at multi-national corporations in the name of “saving jobs and fueling our economy.” These corporate handouts have been given at the expense of the small businesses across America that are struggling to survive a challenging economy. Small businesses create over 80 percent of all jobs and are the backbone of our economy.

I truly believe the best thing government can do to support small businesses would be to get out of the way and allow them to succeed. Government regulation and increased bureaucracy do nothing more than hinder business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. I think excessive regulation drains a business owner’s time and energy and can be very detrimental to a small business’ bottom line, which limits growth and prevents them from creating new jobs or providing better pay/benefits to their current employees. During my time in the General Assembly, I have worked hard to reduce red tape, limit excessive bureaucracy and cut the job-killing taxes that have a stranglehold on our small businesses.

Within this year’s economic development legislation, we were successful in passing some common sense measures that will help Missouri’s small businesses. We were successful in repealing the Missouri Franchise Tax for nearly 12,000 small businesses across this state. We passed the “Big Government Get Off My Back Act,”

which prohibits our state government from increasing user fees for the next four years and protects employers with fewer than 25 employees from any new state agency regulation that adversely impacts their company. For aspiring entrepreneurs, we expanded the Missouri Linked Deposit Program to make it easier for local banks to issue low-interest loans to qualified small businesses.

Small businesses are the foundation of our local communities and the cornerstone of our country’s economy. I truly believe every small business owner should have the opportunity to succeed based on the free market and I will continue to fight to keep small businesses safe from big government intrusion.

*“Government does not create jobs, businesses do. The role of government is to foster an environment in which businesses of all sizes have the best possible chance to succeed.*

*We must ensure a level playing field so that everyone who wants to work and compete in our free enterprise system has an equal opportunity. I believe that small, family-owned businesses should receive the same advantages as the larger companies who have been receiving special treatment under the current system.”*

**— Senator Brad Lager**

## *Small Business: The Backbone of Missouri*

- **The United States Small Business Administration estimates that there are 450,000 active small businesses in Missouri.**
- **97 percent of Missouri businesses with employees qualify as a “small firm.”**
- **Over 200,000 Missourians are self-employed small business owners.**
- **There are an estimated 23 million businesses in the United States. In smaller towns, these businesses represent a major source of employment.**
- **In fact, small businesses — as defined by the Small Business Administration — represent 99.7 percent of all the employers in the country and employ half of all private sector employees.**
- **Over the last decade, small businesses have accounted for 60 to 80 percent of all new jobs created on an annual basis.**
- **Small businesses are rapidly making gains in the technology sector. 41 percent of high tech workers like engineers, scientists and computer programmers are employed by small businesses.**

# Fighting for Good Government

## *Senator Lager Fights Legislator Pay Raise*

For the first time during my tenure in the Missouri Senate, I won the fight to block the proposed pay raise for Missouri's state legislators.

Currently, salary increases for lawmakers are recommended by the Citizens Commission on Compensation for Elected Officials. Without a two-third's vote by the Legislature to reject a proposed increase, it automatically goes into effect. I have consistently offered resolutions that would call for a vote to prevent the commission's recommended increases from taking effect.

*"Everywhere you look across the state, Missourians are facing tough economic challenges. As so many of our neighbors struggle to make ends meet, it would be completely irresponsible for Missouri lawmakers to take a pay increase."*  
— Senator Brad Lager



## *Fighting for Tax Credit Accountability*

In recent years, Missouri's use of state tax credits has exploded. While these programs are credited with encouraging economic investment, they have grown to a level that substantially impacts state revenues. With hundreds of millions of dollars being authorized, it becomes very difficult to maintain budget certainty and guarantee that money is available for schools, highways and other essential functions of state government.

Like many government programs, the issuance of these subsidies began on a small scale with noble intentions. In the years since their inception, both the number of programs and their amounts have grown at alarming rates, thereby driving this year's total tax credit liability to over \$500 million. In addition to the exorbitant cost, I have been very concerned about the lack of legislative oversight over these costly programs.

During this past legislative session, I was successful in bringing common sense reforms to these out-of-control programs through the implementation of caps and sunset provisions. I believe that taxpayers' money should be spent in a way that benefits the taxpayers, not the deep-pocketed special interests who have the ability to influence the legislative process. Without responsible oversight, the astronomical size of these programs will do more harm than good for the health of Missouri's economy.

If our state government is going to continue to be in the business of providing economic subsidies, then it should be done in a transparent manner that maintains strict accountability to the taxpayers of this state.



*Senator Lager presides over the Missouri Senate.*

**To follow the Missouri Senate throughout the year, log on to [www.senate.mo.gov/Lager](http://www.senate.mo.gov/Lager)**

**More contact information is available on page 7 of this newsletter.**

# Building a Responsible Budget

In recent years, I have been very vocal about the rate of growth in state government spending. I have advocated for fiscal restraint in good times to help us better manage the challenging times.

Although we were able to craft a balanced budget this year, I remain concerned about the use of short-term solutions to address long-term problems. This year's budget uses nearly \$800 million in federal stabilization money to plug holes from revenue shortfalls. We will not be able to count on these funds forever, so the difficult decisions needed to responsibly balance our ongoing budget obligations with expected revenue have not been solved; they have simply been postponed.

I will continue to advocate for the implementation of common sense policies that establish fiscal restraint and an equitable tax code. Missouri needs leaders who will ensure that the taxpayers' dollars are spent in the most efficient way possible. Government must always be accountable to its citizens, and I believe our state is stronger when Missourians keep as much of their hard-earned money as possible. Our government must be a good steward of taxpayer money.

## 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



# Securing Our Energy Future

## *Energy Conservation and Efficiency*

The 2009 legislative session included extensive discussion about how to balance future energy demands, rising costs and the environmental impacts of energy generation. Although there is no silver bullet that will fully address these complex challenges, we must keep working to head off this potential crisis. There is little doubt that without an increase in energy production we will not be able to meet the energy demands of the future. However, it takes time to design, develop and build new energy production facilities. As a result, we must be smarter, more efficient and more effective in how we utilize the energy we currently generate.

In response to this challenge, I sponsored and passed Senate Bill 376. This legislation encourages cooperation among utility companies and their customers in order to promote better energy efficiency in Missouri. By encouraging consumers and their utility companies to partner together to develop programs and strategies, we can optimize energy use. The adoption of energy efficient practices can occur rapidly and will immediately result in cost savings for consumers as they reduce energy consumption throughout Missouri.

I believe this is a reasonable and responsible approach to becoming more efficient in our energy consumption. This legislation has received broad-based support from consumer groups, energy companies, industrial energy users, economic development groups and environmentalist organizations. By working together, we have begun to address the difficult task of ensuring we have the future energy resources to power Missouri homes and businesses.



***Senator Lager meets with members of United Electric Cooperative during Great Northwest Days at the Capitol.***

## *Promoting Renewable Energy*

While energy costs have continued to increase in recent years, consumers have become increasingly committed to energy conservation and the promotion of renewable energy technologies. It has become imperative that every level of government work towards establishing secure energy production that takes advantage of our domestic resources while promoting conservation, renewable and alternative sources.

Among these proposals was a provision to offer low interest loans through the linked deposit loan program for eligible alternative energy operations, which produce and sell fuel or power from alternative energy sources, such as solar, hydroelectric, wind and qualified biomass.

The Legislature also approved the adoption of an income tax deduction for the cost of a home energy audit conducted by a certified energy auditor as well as the cost of implementing the recommendations of the audit.

Finally, legislation was passed that requires representatives throughout state government to meet multiple times throughout the year to discuss ways to secure federal grants which would be used to fund the production of renewable fuels, increase the energy efficiency of products, buildings and vehicles, and increase research and development for the manufacturing of renewable energy technologies.

***(Photo provided by M.C. Derr of the Atchison County Mail.)***

# Here to Help You

*As your state senator, I believe the cornerstone of good government is open communication. I encourage you to contact my office at any time to voice concerns and offer your thoughts about what is occurring in state government.*

*Please know that my office stands ready and willing to assist you with any future problems or concerns. If you would like to be kept up to date as events unfold at our State Capitol, please contact me at [brad.lager@senate.mo.gov](mailto:brad.lager@senate.mo.gov) and we will add you to our e-mail distribution list.*



Rich Germinder gathered experience over years of working in both state and federal government. He primarily handles legislative duties for the Senator.

He also spends much of his time working with local officials and community leaders to obtain grants, advance local priorities and develop relationships with government departments.



Katie Reichard developed an extensive background in constituent services during her time working in law firms over the past few years. She works daily to answer constituent concerns and solve problems that arise when citizens deal with state government agencies. She also handles scheduling duties for the office and manages requests for resolutions and Capitol tours.

## Important Phone Numbers:

**Social Services**  
**573-751-3870**

**MoDOT**  
**888-275-6636**

**Veterans**  
**573-751-3779**

**Health and Senior  
Services**  
**573-751-6400**

## Contact Senator Lager:

**Capitol Office:**  
**State Capitol, Room 429**  
**Jefferson City, MO 65101**

**Capitol Phone: (573) 751-1415**

**Capitol Fax: (573) 751-8342**

**E-mail: [brad.lager@senate.mo.gov](mailto:brad.lager@senate.mo.gov)**

**Online: [www.senate.mo.gov/lager](http://www.senate.mo.gov/lager)**



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2009 Legislative Report

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## Friends and Visitors



*Livingston County FFA students visited with Sen. Lager during the 2009 Farm Bureau Youth Leadership Day.*



*The 2009 Great Northwest Days brought county officials from throughout the 12th Senate District to Jefferson City.*



*Student government leaders from Northwest Missouri State University spend time in Jefferson City with Sen. Lager.*



*Dr. Neil Nuttall of Trenton was nominated to the Workforce Investment Board, one of several appointments sponsored by Sen. Lager.*