

*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*



*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

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**Chair of Stimulus Committee Says Taxpayer's Money is
Ripe for Abuse in Missouri**
Senator Scott T. Rupp Dismayed by Nixon's Veto of Funding Oversight Bill

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri taxpayers could be easy pickings for those who want to steal, defraud or abuse the federal stimulus dollars coming to our state, according to Sen. Scott T. Rupp, R-St. Charles, chairman of the Joint Interim Committee on Oversight of Federal Stimulus and Stabilization Funds.

This week, Gov. Jay Nixon vetoed [House Bill 544](#), which would have created a Missouri version of the Federal Stimulus Accountability and Oversight Panel. The language in the bill to create the state panel was taken from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 established by the federal government. Vice President Joe Biden is overseeing the federal panel's implementation.

According to Sen. Rupp, the federal government and the Obama administration have taken many steps in the area of fraud, waste and abuse of the taxpayers' money redistributed in their stimulus plan on the federal level.

"Who is watching for fraud, waste and abuse in Missouri now that Gov. Nixon has vetoed the Missouri oversight program that other states and the federal government have placed so much emphasis on?" Sen. Rupp said.

Governor Nixon's veto message on House Bill 544 reports the oversight provisions of the bill already exist in other bills signed into law, but according to Sen. Rupp, his research indicates otherwise. Senator Rupp says a separate Joint Committee on Oversight of Federal Stimulus and Stabilization Funds — established in his Senate Concurrent Resolution 27 — dealing with gathering information on available monies for competitive grants does not deal with any oversight issues and is completely separate from the oversight responsibilities that were included in House Bill 544.

"I worked with the State Auditor's office to make the oversight panel legislation stronger and to give more audit powers to the auditor's office to go after abuse allegations before they happen, and I am shocked that the Nixon administration vetoed such an important bill," Sen. Rupp said.

It is estimated that \$4.3 billion will be flowing to Missouri as part of the stimulus plan over a two-year period.

Another portion of the bill would have allowed Missouri citizens to know how much, if any, budget cuts are made by a sitting governor to departments and programs with just the click of a mouse. Lawmakers, in House Bill 191, were able to make the free, web-based Missouri Accountability Portal (mapyourtaxes.mo.gov) permanent in statute. But, through language in HB544, they had intended to also expand it to require the governor to submit a daily report documenting all amounts withheld from the state's operating budget for the current fiscal year.

"During an economic downturn, reporting information on tax dollars being withheld by the executive branch is as important as informing the public on tax dollars being spent," Sen. Rupp said.

House Bill 544 also included a minor provision that would have allowed Missouri lawmakers access to the dome of the State Capitol.

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