



Senator Kevin Engler

Capitol Report

Majority Floor Leader

3rd District

*Senator Kevin Engler proudly represents the people of
Carter, Iron, Reynolds, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve,
Washington counties and part of Jefferson County*

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Week of January 26, 2009

Fiscal Responsibility: Our Main Focus

A lot of things happened in the Capitol this week; the biggest of which was the Governor's State of the State address. The governor emphasized the good work from the Sheltered Workshops and the fact that he doesn't want to raise taxes during a time of a recession, both of which I think are very appropriate and I applaud him. My concerns are with his budget proposals. It is the governor's job to offer us a balanced budget, but that's hardly what the governor is proposing. Needless to say, it was a good speech if you are bad at math.

Although Governor Nixon is cutting \$250 million, his budget proposes spending \$1.1 billion more than the state will bring in. Anyone who can do elementary math knows this doesn't add up. In closer examination the governor is depending upon approximately \$1 billion from the federal bailout, which may or may not come and may or may not have strings attached; and he wants us to balance the budget with it. He gives the legislators the task of making the tough choices and cuts...and this is not the way it is supposed to be. We will deal with the problem and will probably prepare two budgets..... one based on receiving federal bailout money and one where we don't receive any.

Another important point to make on the federal bailout is that the money would be one time funding and the governor's proposals included programs that will require continuous funding. It's almost like taking a sub-prime mortgage out and letting the government make our first few payments knowing that we can't make the payments after that and we will lose the house.

Another issue is the Department of Mental Health was asked to show possible budget cuts and how it would affect their operations. One of the cuts they showed was shutting down MSOTC (Missouri Sexual Offender Treatment Center) in Farmington. This was a real threat, but I think with Rep. Steve Tilley's and my opposition and the fact that as Attorney General, Mr. Nixon was one of the initiators of MSOTC, we have stopped this proposal. We will continue to monitor the budget closely, but I think we have fended this off.

The Missouri Citizens' Commission on Compensation for Elected Officials, which is charged with studying elected officials' salaries, makes a recommendation every two years about raises for elected officials. Given the current economic climate I don't think it would be prudent for any elected official to consider taking a pay increase, so we have voted to turn these down.

We have had lots of visitors from the district and I know many more will be traveling to Jefferson City. Let us know you are coming and stop by the office.

If you are planning a trip to Jefferson City in the near future, do not hesitate to contact my office. You may reach me at 573-751-3455, send your e-mails to kevin.engler@senate.mo.gov or write to me at the Missouri Senate, State Capitol, Room 331, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

If you know anyone who would like to receive these updates electronically, please [send me](#) an email.

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