



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 May 11, 2009

A Challenging Session Concludes

By the time you read this, the final gavel will have fallen, and the first regular session of the 95th General Assembly will have come to a close. This last week has been a challenging one as we struggled to negotiate legislation to address some of the most pressing issues facing our state: healthcare reform and economic development. In the final hours of the session, I am pleased to say we were able to come together in compromise and pass the legislation that will help Missourians have access to get back to work, but I am disappointed that the House blocked our efforts to tackle the issue of healthcare in our state.

One of our highest priorities this session was to help Missourians struggling in this tough economy. We passed [House Bill 191](#), a bill that expands the Quality Jobs Act, a program that works to keep and recruit better paying jobs with benefits in our state. The Senate also included important tax credit reforms in the legislation to make sure the programs designed to attract and help businesses in our state are doing just that. While this bill was one of our biggest challenges this year, the end result is a balanced piece of legislation that will support job growth in Missouri while protecting the interests of taxpayers in our state.

Despite late nights and the efforts of many of my colleagues to pass Senate Bill 306 (healthcare), an amicable agreement could not be reached. It is unfortunate that the House chose to deny 35,000 individuals healthcare because of their own disagreements, and I am hopeful that we will be able to implement a similar program to help these uninsured low income families next session.

Other legislative successes this session include:

- Education improvements through [Senate Bill 191](#). This bill includes a legislative fix to make sure gaming money from Proposition A goes to classrooms, a measure to expand virtual school classes, and a provision to create performance standards for Missouri teachers.
- A \$23.1 billion budget that was passed balanced and on time. The spending plan protects Missouri taxpayers by making sure our use of state dollars is sustainable in the future. We fully funded the public school funding formula and increased higher education funding— **all without a tax increase**.
- A comprehensive bill to address veterans issues ([House Bill 427](#)). The legislation creates a special license plate for individuals who were awarded an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (a measure I advanced); and clarifies the rules for in-state tuition for military dependents, making sure students can continue to qualify for in-state tuition, even if their parent(s) move(s) from Missouri.
- Establishing the Line of Duty Compensation Act in [House Bill 580](#). The program would allow the family of a law enforcement officer, emergency medical technician, air ambulance pilot, air ambulance registered professional nurse, or firefighter who was killed in the line of duty to receive additional state compensation benefits.
- Protecting Missourian's privacy by sending a strong message against the federal government's 2005 Real ID Act, which instituted stricter policies for driver's licenses. The legislation we passed makes sure your personal information is secure and not easily accessible in digital form.

Bills passed by the Senate and House now await the governor's signature to become law.

Bills without an emergency clause are set to go into effect on August 28th.

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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