



State Senator

Robin Wright-Jones

District 5



Column For Week of: January 5, 2009

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# Missouri Senate Convenes for 2009 Legislative Session

*First Regular Session of the 95<sup>th</sup> Missouri General  
Assembly Began Jan. 7*

Missouri lawmakers gathered this week at the state Capitol to begin the 2009 legislative session. Senators convened in the Senate chamber at noon on Wednesday, January 7, to kick off the year by welcoming six new members, along with the 11 senators re-elected to serve a second term.

[Listen to the Senate Minute's report on the opening day of session.](#)

Six new senators were sworn in during the opening ceremony. [Sen. Jane Cunningham](#) (R-Chesterfield), replaces Sen. John Loudon in the 7<sup>th</sup> District; [Sen. Jim Lembke](#) (R-St. Louis), replaces Sen. Harry Kennedy in the 1<sup>st</sup> District; [Sen. David Pearce](#) (R-Warrensburg), replaces Attorney General-elect Chris Koster in the 31<sup>st</sup> District; [Sen. Kurt Schaefer](#) (R-Columbia), replaces Sen. Chuck Graham in the 19<sup>th</sup> District; [Sen. Eric Schmitt](#) (R-Glendale), replaces former Senate President Pro Tem Michael Gibbons in the 15<sup>th</sup> District; and [Sen. Robin Wright-Jones](#) (D-St. Louis), replaces former Senate Minority Floor Leader Maida Coleman in the 5<sup>th</sup> District. In addition, all 11 senators re-elected in November 2008 for a second term took the oath of office.

Introductory remarks by newly confirmed Senate President Pro Tem Charles W. Shields (R-St. Joseph)—who was unanimously elected to his new

post—set forth several priorities for lawmakers, including elevating Missouri’s place in the nation in the areas of job creation, health care coverage and education. He challenged senators to work together with members of the House and the new governor to achieve a common vision for the state.

[Listen to audio or watch video clips of Sen. Shields’ opening address.](#)

Work has already begun on the legislative agenda as senators continue to add to the more than 160 measures already filed. Several additional bills were also introduced on the floor on Thursday. Before specific bills can progress any further in the legislative process, they must first be referred to committees, a task that will happen in the coming weeks. Individual committees will then meet, discuss legislation, and hear public testimony before deciding whether to return the legislation to the full Senate.

The [Joint Interim Committee on Voice Communications Regulations](#) met on Tuesday to discuss industry proposals and hear public testimony. The committee has been studying the need, if any, to make changes to the inter-carrier compensation system where voice communications providers exchange traffic on other providers’ networks. It also has been investigating whether market-based pricing exists in the voice telecommunications industry. The committee will submit its final report to the General Assembly, along with any recommendations for legislative action, next week.

This column is written on a weekly basis. To follow these and other issues facing the Missouri Senate, visit [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov). Visitors can track legislation as it passes through the General Assembly, learn more about their Senate district, or listen to streaming audio of legislative debate as it happens. The Missouri Senate will reconvene at 10:30 a.m., Monday, Jan. 12. The First Regular Session of the 95<sup>th</sup> Missouri General Assembly will run through Friday, May 15, 2009.

If you have comments or questions about this week’s column or any other matter involving state government, please feel free to contact Sen. Wright-Jones’ office at (573) 751-2606.

*Senator Robin Wright-Jones represents a portion of  
St. Louis City in the Missouri Senate.*



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