



State Senator

Robin Wright-Jones

District 5



Column For Week of: January 12, 2009

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Inauguration Marks Second Week of Legislative Session

Senators Attend Educational Seminars on Key Issues and Took Time to Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Capitol was bustling with activity this week as it hosted the inauguration of statewide officials. Senators convened in a joint session with the House of Representatives to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state and state treasurer, which was held on the steps of the Capitol at noon on Monday, January 12.

During festivities held Monday evening, senators had an opportunity to mingle with their colleagues, the public and other state officials. Lawmakers were introduced during the Grand March, which was held inside the Capitol prior to the Inaugural Ball.

Also this week, senators attended a series of seminars, organized by Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields (R-St. Joseph), and designed to educate lawmakers on the key issues the Legislature will be facing this year. Each seminar this week featured experts in the field who are on hand to present information and answer questions. The first seminar was held Tuesday, January 13, and focused on Missouri's current and future energy policy, paying particular attention to alternative and renewable energy efforts. Representatives from Missouri utility companies and energy producers attended the meeting.

Lawmakers also took part in two seminars on Wednesday, January 14, the first of which touched on how Missouri can remain viable in the life sciences industry. The second focused on health insurance affordability, and how the state can insure more individuals while keeping insurance costs low for Missourians. Five more seminars are scheduled for next week.

Also on Wednesday, the Missouri Senate honored the “Unsung Heroes” featured in the 2009 Missouri Senate calendar during a special presentation. Several of the heroes and their families attended, making the trip to Jefferson City from various parts of the state. The heroes were recognized on the Senate floor and presented with Senate resolutions by their respective senators.

This week, two standing Senate Committees were filled by Sen. Shields. Sitting on the [Senate Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions and Ethics Committee](#)—which considers any issues that may arise relating to the governing rules of the Senate—is Chairman Sen. Kevin Engler (R-Farmington), Vice-Chairman Sen. Gary Nodler (R-Joplin), Sen. Norma Champion (R-Springfield), Sen. Shields, Sen. Joan Bray (D-St. Louis) and Sen. Timothy Green (D-St. Louis).

Appointed to the [Senate Gubernatorial Appointments Committee](#)—which considers the nomination of constituents for appointment by the governor to state boards and commissions—is Chairman Sen. Shields, Vice-Chairman Sen. Engler, Sen. Champion, Sen. Dan Clemens (R-Marshfield), Sen. Jason Crowell (R-Cape Girardeau), Sen. Eric Schmitt (R-Glendale), Sen. Victor Callahan (D-Independence), Sen. Ryan McKenna (D-Crystal City) and Sen. Robin Wright-Jones (D-St. Louis).

Legislation continues to be introduced on the floor, and in the coming weeks will be assigned to the various Senate committees as their members are appointed.

The annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration was held in the Capitol Rotunda on Wednesday evening. Sen. Robin Wright-Jones was chairwoman of the event this year and also served as Mistress of Ceremonies. The theme of this year’s event, hosted by the Missouri Legislative Black Caucus, was “United Communities — Past, Present and Future.” The celebration included a host of performances and tributes to the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., including tributes from Governor Nixon, Secretary of State Robin Carnahan,

Attorney General Chris Koster, Treasurer Clint Zweifel, Missouri Supreme Court Judge William Ray Price, Jr., newly-appointed Director of Office of Administration Kelvin Simmons, and Speak of the House Ron Richards.

The Missouri Senate will reconvene at 4 p.m. Tuesday, January 20. No session will be held on Monday, January 19, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The First Regular Session of the 95th 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.

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