



State Senator

**Robin Wright-Jones**

District 5



**Column For Week of: February 23, 2009**

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## **First Bill Passed as Senator Advances Prospect of Another Crossing Over the Mighty Mississippi**

### *Tapped For Two Strategic Planning Committees*

This week, the full [Senate](#) gave its final stamp of approval to several bills, including one of mine, representing my first (but hardly my last) piece of legislation to earn passage in the Senate as a newly-minted member of that body.

[Senate Bill 179](#) authorizes Governor Nixon to transfer a plot of land now being used by the Department of Corrections to the Missouri Highways and Transportation

Commission. This land conveyance is a

crucial element in paving the way for

[the new Mississippi River Bridge project](#) in St. Louis. At just about this

time last year, Illinois and Missouri

officials reached an agreement to build

a new four-lane bridge a mile north of

the Martin Luther King Bridge, with

design accommodations for a

companion bridge to be built sometime later. The project includes building a partial

interchange with existing I-70 near Cass Avenue on the Missouri side, and improvements

at the I-55/64/70 Tri-Level Interchange on the Illinois side. (Picture below is a rendering

of the bridge; St. Louis is to the right.)



Before work can begin, the necessary land must be obtained, including the ground covered by my legislation. This “first bill” of mine now moves to the House of Representatives for similar consideration. Bills earning passage in both chambers move to the governor’s desk for signing into law. I am hopeful and optimistic that Senate Bill

179 will earn Mr. Nixon's signature.

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While much of lawmaking can be viewed as day-to-day tactical work, the Senate has assembled three special panels designed to look into the future and develop strategic initiatives for improving the lives of Missourians. I am pleased to be a member of the [Missouri Senate Job Creation 2020 Committee](#). The other two "2020" panels include the [Missouri Senate Healthy Missourians 2020 Committee](#) and the [Missouri Senate Educated Citizenry 2020 Committee](#). These committees will begin meeting as early as next week and will convene through December 31, 2010. The 2020 panels are made further unique by the fact that their entire memberships consist of senators in their first term.

Job creation and health care accessibility figure large in today's economic conditions and I'm eager to help move Missouri to the forefront on both issues.

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The Missouri Senate will reconvene at 4 p.m. Monday, March 2, 2009. 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 [my office](#) at (573) 751-2606.

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



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