



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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Taking a Stand Against Excessive Government Spending

A group of Missourians congregated on the steps of the Capitol this week to protest the excessive and reckless spending of the federal government. With April 15th being Tax Day and April 13th being Tax Freedom Day—the day that Americans are symbolically liberated from forking over their earnings to the government for the year—I can hardly think of a more appropriate week for concerned citizens in Missouri and across the country to hold “tea party” protests as a nod to the colonists who tossed tea into the Boston Harbor more than 200 years ago.

I realize that those of us who believe in limited government are out of style in both political parties. Alas, we live in the midst of times when the majority believes in a growing and activist role for government. Time will prove the folly of this excessive confidence in government.

Coincidentally, this is the week that the Missouri Senate passed its version of the 2010 fiscal year state budget, which allocates taxpayer dollars to various programs, services and departments. Although by Washington’s standards, Missouri’s budget is small—\$23 billion for the entire state compared with the latest federal budget of more than \$3.5 trillion (including a gaping deficit of \$1.8 trillion for 2009 alone)—I was dismayed to see that our budget proposes to take funds from the ill-advised federal bailout package to supplement the state’s operating expenses. This plan could easily come back to haunt us down the road when this stream of money dries up.

Essentially we are building our budget on a foundation of sand by using a temporary supply of money from Washington for ongoing projects. To name only a few examples, it

includes bailout money for ongoing programs such as Amtrak (\$9 million) and the Missouri Film Commission (\$37,050). It also funds part of our court system (circuit courts, \$4.2 million; Supreme Court, \$626,000) in the same way. The danger is that once the bailout money goes away, we'll be left with expenses that stick around. This is a fiscally irresponsible plan that I cannot support, so I voted 'no' on many of the 13 budget bills that were brought to the Senate floor.

Americans instinctively know that government spending is out of control. The best example of this is the so-called "stimulus package." This plan represents the absolute worst Washington has to offer. While it comes as no surprise that the federal government regularly squanders tax dollars, the stimulus takes this one step further by essentially using a credit card to pay for the excesses of Congress and the President. Now we must borrow from our children and grandchildren's future to fund pet social spending projects that will not bring about the revival of our economy. Case in point, General Motors is headed for bankruptcy in spite of the bailout.

As I've mentioned before, in response to the federal government's actions, I filed a resolution in the Missouri Senate that asks Congress to stop wasting taxpayer money on bailout bills. If passed, [Senate Concurrent Resolution 18](#) would make it clear to the federal government that Missouri does not approve of the so-called federal stimulus act, nor does it approve of any bailouts down the road.

It is imperative that all of us stand up to the excesses coming out of Capitol Hill. I only hope we can reverse course and return to an era of fiscal responsibility—both in Missouri and in our nation's capital—before we dig too deep of a hole.

If you have any comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.

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