



State Senator

Rita Heard Days

District 14



Column For Week of: January 19, 2009

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## Senate Committees Named and Assigned

In the Missouri Senate this week, Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields (R-St. Joseph) named and assigned the 18 Senate committees that will review legislation for the 2009 session. He also appointed senators to serve as chairmen and chairwomen of the committees.

Sen. Shields also appointed Senate Minority Floor Leader Victor Callahan (D-Independence) to a chairman position on the newly created Senate Progress and Development Committee. Chair positions are typically reserved for members of the majority party. For the first time in recent history, a committee chair position is now held by a member of the minority party.

The Senate committees and their respective chairmen and chairwomen are (in alphabetical order):

- Administration: Sen. Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph
- Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources: Sen. Dan Clemens, R-Marshfield
- Appropriations: Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin
- Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy and the Environment: Sen. Brad Lager, R-Maryville

- Education: Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter
- Financial and Governmental Organizations and Elections: Sen. Delbert Scott, R-Lowry City
- General Laws: Sen. Jack Goodman, R-Mt. Vernon
- Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight: Sen. Chuck Purgason, R-Caulfield
- Gubernatorial Appointments: Sen. Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph
- Health, Mental Health, Seniors and Families: Sen. Norma Champion, R-Springfield
- Jobs, Economic Development and Local Government: Sen. John Griesheimer, R-Washington
- Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence: Sen. Matt Bartle, R-Lee's Summit
- Progress and Development: Sen. Victor Callahan, D-Independence
- Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions and Ethics: Sen. Kevin Engler, R-Farmington
- Small Business, Insurance and Industry: Sen. Scott T. Rupp, R-Wentzville
- Transportation: Sen. Bill Stouffer, R-Napton
- Veterans' Affairs, Pensions and Urban Affairs: Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau
- Ways and Means: Sen. Carl Vogel, R-Jefferson City

I was assigned four committees: Education; Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight; Small Business, Insurance and Industry; and Transportation.

The Education Committee examines all legislation relating to education, including public schools, libraries, and programs and institutions relating to higher learning.

The Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight Committee considers all bills, except for regular budget bills, that require new appropriations or expenditures of appropriated funds in excess of \$100,000.

The Small Business, Insurance and Industry Committee considers all legislation relating to the ownership and operation of small businesses, urban renewal and housing,

and forms of insurance — including identity, accident, and life insurance.

And the Transportation Committee considers measures relating to our state's roads, highways, bridges, airports and aviation, railroads, port authorities, and other means of transportation — including matters involving motor vehicles and drivers' licenses.

Senate committees are responsible for holding public hearings and refining legislation before it heads to the Senate floor for consideration by the full body. I look forward to serving on each one of these committees and working with my colleagues to pass legislation beneficial to the citizens of our state.

Senate seminars designed to inform senators about some of the key issues we will be facing this session continued this week. On Tuesday, my colleagues and I attended two seminars—the first covering transportation infrastructure and development in Missouri, and the second focusing on agriculture, Missouri's primary industry.

Lawmakers also attended seminars on Wednesday, with presentations on education and economic development. The education seminar covered early childhood and elementary and secondary education. They discussed the newly established “Schools First Elementary and Secondary Education Improvement Fund,” which was part of a ballot initiative passed by voters in November 2008, as well as urban schools. During the economic development seminar, lawmakers discussed how Missouri can compete with other states.

The Senate seminars wrapped up on Thursday, with discussion on higher education and a focus on what measures other states have taken to strengthen their coordinating boards.

It was also announced that the governor will speak before the Legislature in a joint-session next Tuesday, January 27, during the “State of the State” address. The governor is expected to outline his plan for the state budget.

The Missouri Senate stood adjourned on Monday, January 19, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Last week I told you about the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration held in the Capitol Rotunda. The theme of this year's event, hosted by the Missouri Legislative Black Caucus, was “Uniting Communities — Past, Present and Future.”

The Missouri Senate will reconvene at 4 p.m. Monday, January 26. 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) 751-4106.

*Senator Rita Heard Days represents a portion of  
St. Louis County in the Missouri Senate.*



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