



Frank Barnitz

State Senator — District 16



Column For Week of: January 5, 2009

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The Legislative Session Begins

On January 7, the 2009 legislative session began. This marks the first day of the 95th General Assembly, and the start of my fourth full session as your state senator (I served a partial session after a special election in 2005). Opening day of a new General Assembly is marked by quite a bit of pomp and circumstance as friends, family, and interested members of the public join us to see the new class be sworn-in to office.

The opening day ceremony on January 7th was much like many in the recent past. Both houses of the General Assembly convened in their respective chambers at noon. The Senate is called to order by the Lieutenant Governor. Newly elected senators are then sworn in. Leadership, including the Senate President Pro-Tem and the floor leaders from the majority and minority parties, are named and take an oath of office administered by the President of the Senate.

While the requirement that many state officials take an oath is mentioned in the state's constitution several times, the oath taken by members of the Legislature is one of the few oaths that is actually laid out in the constitution. The constitution specifically states that members of both the House and Senate must take this oath or else they will not be able to take office. The oath is:

I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the state of Missouri, and faithfully perform the duties of my office, and that I will not knowingly receive, directly or indirectly, any money or other valuable thing for the performance or nonperformance of any act or duty pertaining to my office, other than the compensation allowed by law.

On January 12th, another swearing-in will take place—our new governor, Jay Nixon will officially take office. I am proud to serve as a member of the Inaugural Committee,

and I hope that interested citizens from the 16th District are able to attend this event, which is open to the public.

I would also like to congratulate the many citizens throughout Missouri who had their voices heard by the Department of Conservation. When the department proposed changes to the structure and pricing of hunting, fishing, and trapping permits in our state, many constituents contacted my office with concerns and issues about these changes. These same citizens decided to provide public input during the department's comment period. On December 19th, the Missouri Conservation Commission decided to sideline or modify several of the original recommendations because of the comments that they received from the public. The proposals to increase the resident landowner acreage requirement for no-cost deer and turkey permits from five to 80 acres and eliminate lessee privileges will not take effect. The Commission also decided against proposed resident permit price increases. The recommendation to establish a new senior "forever" permit was also stopped, meaning people more than 65 years old will continue to be able to hunt small game and fish for free, without a permit. For more information on permit restructuring and rules, visit <http://www.mdc.mo.gov>.

I am looking forward to this legislative session and the good work we can do for Missouri. Please feel free to come visit my Capitol office this year — we are always glad to see guests from the district.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to call me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2108. You can also write to at the address listed below.

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