



Frank Barnitz

State Senator — District 16



Column For Week of: January 19, 2009

[Website](#) | [Email Me](#) | [Biography](#) | [Newsroom](#)

Work Continues at the Capitol

The change in leadership in the Legislature, as well as the executive branch, affects the way we go about our work in the Senate. This week, committee assignments were announced, which now gives us an opportunity to begin working directly with the legislation that could ultimately be signed into law. Committee meetings also mean that we will soon be discussing the state department director nominees the governor has chosen, including the nominee for the Director of Agriculture position, who is from in the 16th Senate District.

The legislative process is already underway. At this writing, there are 217 Senate bills that have already been introduced and first read on the floor, and the number changes every day as new legislation is introduced. The next step for any legislation is to be referred to a committee. During a committee hearing, bills are discussed and the public has the opportunity to testify on pending legislation. If the majority of the committee members approve the bill, it can go on and be debated on the floor.

I serve on several committees, including:

- The Appropriations Committee, which works to draft the state spending plan.
- The Agriculture, Food Production, and Outdoor Resources Committee, which discusses bills including those which affect farming, state parks, and natural resources.
- Education, which focuses on legislation that affects elementary, secondary, and higher education.
- Transportation, which deals with bills that affect Missouri's highways, trains, and other forms of public transportation.
- Ways and Means, which addresses legislation on bills concerning revenue and the public debt of the state, the assessment of property, and gaming.

I also had the opportunity to meet with several of the appointees for state department

directors this week. The nominees for the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Economic Development stopped by to introduce themselves and talk about the goals they have for the departments they have been selected to head.

I was also especially pleased to meet Dr. Jon Hagler, Gov. Nixon's nominee for Missouri Agriculture Department Director. Jon is a local from St. James, Missouri, and actually went to school at Northwood R-4 in Dent County. His experience includes serving as an agricultural adviser to the governor during his campaign and working on his local farm raising Missouri Fox Trotters. He is easy to communicate with and to talk to, and he told me about some of the new directions he would like to take with the department. I am excited to welcome him, and look forward to working with him.

In order for Jon or any of the appointees to officially take office, they must first appear before the Gubernatorial Appointments Committee. The appointees work with their state senator, who serves as a sponsor of the nominee in the confirmation process. The process begins in the Senate's appointments committee and concludes with a consenting vote by the full Senate. I look forward to serving as Jon's Senate sponsor, and I anticipate that his transition to director will be a smooth one.

Things are about to get much more hectic here at the Capitol as committee meetings begin, and we start to deal with more issues on the Senate floor. I am looking forward to our work, and will keep you posted on what is going on in the Legislature.

If you would like to start receiving my column regularly, please visit my website at www.senate.mo.gov/barnitz and click the "Sign Up to Receive My E-Newsletter" link located under Constituent Services, or select the "Subscribe" button below.

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 the address listed below.

Contact Information

Capitol Office
State Capitol Building
Room 427
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Website:
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/barnitz>

Phone Number:
573.751.2108
Fax:
573.526.0573

[Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)