



Frank Barnitz

State Senator — District 16



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A Busy Week Back at the Capitol

This week, I joined my Senate colleagues in Jefferson City for the annual veto session. A September veto session is required by the state constitution if the governor vetoes any bills passed during the year's legislative session.

The actual veto session was fairly uneventful, but the week kept me very busy as I attended several committee meetings and met with constituents at the Capitol. Since legislators will not formally be returning to Jefferson City until the 2010 legislative session begins in January, many groups and committees took this opportunity to meet and discuss important issues.

I arrived in Jefferson City on Monday after attending the Show-Me Power Electric Co-op Annual Legislation Appreciation Fish Fry in Lebanon. The coop serves nine Rural Electric Cooperatives, which provide energy to communities throughout the 16th District.

On Tuesday, I started the day by attending a recognition ceremony for the Department of Public Safety employee of the month, Tara Ayars. I was able to present Tara with a Senate resolution and thank her personally for her hard work at the St. James Veterans Home. I was recently appointed to the Missouri Veterans Commission as one of four legislative members, so I am especially appreciative of her dedication in helping the retired military members in the area. Also on Tuesday, I attended three committee meetings:

- The Joint Committee on Capital Improvements and Leases Oversight is a committee made up of House and Senate members (five from each body). Our work includes monitoring state-funded capital improvement projects and identifying new projects and repairs that might be needed. This is a tight budget year and early numbers are showing that the coming year is going to be just as difficult, so our work on capital improvements needs to remain fiscally responsible, and we have to continue to be aware of these budgetary issues facing our state.
- The Senate has three new "2020 committees" this year, which were created to address Missouri's long-term plan on a variety of issues. The Healthy

Missourians 2020 Committee met for the first time this week to plan our work over the coming session. Our goal is to address healthcare issues on the state level, and to come up with a strategic plan to address the problems we continue to face in delivering affordable healthcare to working Missourians.

- The Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission makes recommendations to the governor and General Assembly for legislative action that will increase support for the military in Missouri and improve the lives of military families in Missouri. The 10-member panel contains experts in economic development, the military, the environment, and local government, as well as four members of the Legislature (two from each body). I enjoy working to better the lives of the military men and women in our state.

Wednesday was the day of the actual veto session, and as I said before, little took place. A total of 23 bills (12 Senate and 11 House) received the governor's veto. In addition, 11 House budget bills also contained line-item vetoes. A two-thirds majority vote from both chambers is required to override a veto, while initial passage of any bill requires a simple majority. A vote to overturn a veto is a rare occurrence and hasn't taken place since 2003. No vetoes were overturned by the General Assembly.

I have recently begun serving on the Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan (MCHCP) Board of Trustees. A meeting of the board was held on Thursday. The MCHCP serves as a large group purchaser of medical, dental, and vision insurance for public entities as well as providing an employee assistance program for wellness and disease management. Members of the board work to provide quality health benefit programs by establishing participation requirements, developing rules and regulations, and being responsible for the financial viability of the MCHCP.

With this busy week over, I am looking forward to returning to the district. Please feel free to let me know about events going on in the district or contact my office to let me know about the legislative issues that are important to you.

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.

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