



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of September 14, 2009**

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Veto Session – Part 2

JEFFERSON CITY – This week Missouri lawmakers returned to the state Capitol for the annual Veto Session as required by the Missouri Constitution. As I mentioned in a previous column, we did not expect to see any serious attempts to override any of Governor Nixon's vetoes and that's just what happened. The governor was forced to veto several bills because state revenues continue to fall below projections made earlier this year when the legislature was crafting the budget. I think most of my colleagues understand we can't spend money we don't have, and although they may object to some of the specific items vetoed by the governor, we realize he had no choice but to make those responsible decisions.

Since there were no plans to override any of the governor's vetoes, we made the most of our time in Jefferson City by scheduling a number of committee hearings to take advantage of the fact that we all had to be in town. I serve on the Joint Committee on Legislative Research, which met Wednesday for its quarterly business meeting.

I also was just named to the Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight, which oversees transportation policy in our state. This committee also reviews citizen complaints related to transportation issues, it investigates complaints from current and former employees of the transportation department, and it monitors spending by the transportation department.

The other committee I serve on that met this week is the new Healthy Missourians 2020 Committee, one of three special committees established by the President Pro Tem to guide state policy for the next decade. The Healthy Missourians 2020 Committee will be responsible for developing a long-term strategy to provide health insurance coverage for Missourians who currently lack coverage or cannot afford it.

We have a lot of work to do; Missouri ranks 38th in the nation in terms of the health status of its citizens. We must develop a long-term plan for controlling the rising cost of health care while making sure the more than 700,000 Missourians who are uninsured have access to affordable health care coverage.

I had the pleasure of introducing a group of students from the Pike-Lincoln Technical Center and their director Krista Flowers to my colleagues in the Senate during the Veto Session. These building trades' students got a first-hand look at work now in progress to replace the roof of the 90-year old Capitol.

If you have any questions or comments about this or any other issue, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.