



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of December 21, 2009**

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# New Year Resolutions

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JEFFERSON CITY – I hope everyone had a safe and happy Christmas and got to spend some time sharing the holiday with family and friends. I'd like to be able to take a short break to catch my breath from all of the excitement of the past few days, but the next couple of weeks will be busy as we prepare for the 2010 legislative session. Most of us have a pretty good idea of how the session will unfold, since everything is tied to our difficult budget situation. State revenues continue to be weak, and the governor already has cut millions of dollars from the budget as revenue collections failed to meet earlier projections.

An economist working for the Missouri Senate recently told us that state unemployment is expected to top 10% next year, the number of bankruptcies is expected to double in 2010, and sales tax collections will remain flat. Obviously, we're not out of the woods yet, although there has been some positive news about the national economy. Most experts seem to agree that the worst of the recession is over, though they warn the recovery will be slow. One of our tasks in Jefferson City next year will be trying to find ways to stimulate our economy and provide incentives to create good-paying jobs.

The other major task will be trying to preserve state programs and services that are important to the quality of life of Missourians while crafting a balanced budget, as required by our state constitution. This process actually got underway when the Senate Appropriations Committee began holding public hearings on the 2011 budget earlier this month, and we won't vote on the final budget bills until May. I will keep you posted as the budget process moves along, and will fight tooth and nail to ensure the interests of the people of northeast Missouri are considered as the budget takes shape.

In the meantime, I will be doing everything I can to advance several legislative priorities of the 18<sup>th</sup> Senate District. One of the bills I filed for the 2010 session comes down to a matter of fairness. Senate Bill 666 (again, I have nothing to do with bill numbering) requires all offices occupied by elected officials in the state capitol building to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities by December 31, 2015. We can't really be a government "of the people, by the people" if some of the people can't get in to see their representatives.

Senate Bill 667 creates the Missouri Seed Availability and Competition Act. Farmers who want to retain patented seed from a current harvest for planting the following season would have to register with the Department of Agriculture and pay a fee of \$7 per bushel of saved seed. The fees would then be deposited into the Genetically Engineered Seed Fund and distributed to the patent holder and the Department of Agriculture, with any unused funds going to the University of Missouri for agricultural research and development.

Senate Bill 709 creates the Board of Auto Body Repair and sets out the requirements for membership on the board. This board licenses auto body repair facilities, excluding those that specialize in certain services, and licenses physical damage appraisers. This legislation would provide some protection and some peace of mind to consumers when they take their vehicles into the shop for repairs.

These are just a few of the issues I'll be promoting during the 2010 session. If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issues give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at [wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.

Happy New Year!