



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Wes Shoemyer
18th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 434
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the
Week of December 28, 2009**

**Capitol Office
(573) 751-7852**

Preparing for the 2010 Session

JEFFERSON CITY – The Second Regular Session of the 95th Missouri General Assembly officially gets underway at noon on January 6, and it's going to be a very interesting year. Crafting a balanced state budget will be the biggest challenge during the session due to the continuing decline in state revenues. 2010 also is an election year, which has a tendency to change the dynamics of the legislature, although I hope the less partisan tone that has developed in the Senate over the past year will continue. A lot of lawmakers are facing term limits in 2010, and that too, will have an impact on the legislative process next year. Still, it is my hope that we will find ways to work together to make the 2010 session meaningful for the people of Missouri.

One of my legislative priorities for the New Year will be to expand the MO HealthNet Oversight Committee. I think it's important to make sure the committee includes a wide range of people who represent all walks of life from all parts of Missouri. I will introduce legislation again this year to expand the oversight committee by adding an optometrist, a nurse, a mental health professional, a licensed physical therapist and representatives from a not-for-profit health network serving rural Missouri. My bill also calls for the addition of a representative for long-term care facilities licensed in the state, someone in the durable medical equipment industry and from a Medicaid managed care organization, and a member from a rural health clinic and a federally qualified health clinic. My legislation also would require that two of the four physicians on the panel be from rural areas. We have fewer doctors in rural Missouri and patients often have to travel greater distances to receive care, so I just want to make sure the MO HealthNet Oversight Committee takes those issues into consideration when setting health care policies for our state.

For those who have not heard, a couple of weeks ago the State Tax Commission approved a plan to raise the taxable value on farmland that would take effect on January 1, 2011. In this current economic downturn and with input prices increasing significantly each year, this is a poor time to try to implement this proposal. Even though the State Tax Commission has passed this proposal, it must be disapproved by the legislature so that it will not take effect. Many legislators have come forward, as have I, stating their opposition to this proposal and are offering resolutions opposing this plan. I will either have my own resolution opposing this plan or will be a co-sponsor with my other Senate colleagues. We should be doing everything we can to help farmers stay in business and thrive since agriculture is Missouri's number one industry.

The State Tax Commission was created by the Missouri Constitution of 1945. The purpose of the commission is to maintain a property assessment system that is fair and uniform while promptly and efficiently responding to questions, complaints and needs of taxpayers and assessing officers.

I hope everyone had a safe and happy New Year celebration, and I look forward to another year of working for you in the Missouri Senate.

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, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.