



State Senator Kurt U. Schaefer - District 19

**Weekly Capitol Review**

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## Legislative Highlights from the Missouri Senate – Week of March 23, 2009

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Dear friends:

We have now passed the halfway mark in the General Assembly, but we still have a long way to go before the session concludes on May 15. More than 500 bills have been introduced this session in the Senate, many having already received a hearing in their respective committees, debated in the Senate, and moved on to the House, which has introduced a great many of their own bills as well.

As we concentrate on completing our task in the legislature, the session often stretches into the early morning hours. Such was the case Wednesday, when the session finally ended around 2:30 Thursday morning as we worked on [Senate Bill 291](#), an omnibus education bill sponsored by Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields. The bill has several elements, such as allowing schools to offer and receive funding for virtual or Internet classes, and requiring all revenue collected from the repeal of casino loss limits be deposited into the Classroom Trust Fund and then passed on to our schools.

[Senate Bill 256](#), a piece of legislation I sponsored, has been passed by the Senate and now is in the House. The bill creates the *Political Subdivision Services Bidding Standards Act*, which deals with standardizing the bidding process for contractors, goods and services throughout the state's 114 counties. Passage in the House would place this bill on the governor's desk for his signature.

In other news, Missouri is the very first state to begin using funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, better known as the federal stimulus plan. To that end, we have created two separate funds by the passage of [Senate Bill 313](#) to assist us in tracking the stimulus funds to see where our money is being used. We must be careful implementing these funds, as some of the provisions of the plan call for starting programs that may no longer be funded after 2010. We want to assure Missourians that we will not rush into spending these

funds before considering the best way to benefit the state with your tax dollars.

Mid-Missouri is also slated to benefit directly on the federal level as well: [U.S. Senator Kit Bond has secured more than \\$21 million](#) to help fund critical transportation and environmental projects in mid-Missouri. Transportation funds not only improve Missouri's crumbling highway infrastructure, but will create jobs and promote economic growth, making a long-term investment in the future of our communities. Many of these funds will benefit the University of Missouri in Columbia for various technology research projects in agriculture, life sciences and biotechnology.

With a little over two months remaining in the session, we definitely have quite a few tasks ahead of us. We will forge ahead towards the finish line with measures to make Missouri a better place to live for all our citizens.

As always, should you have any concerns or questions about the Missouri legislature, feel free to contact my office. My staff and I are always ready to help find answers to your questions concerning Missouri.

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