



The Stouffer Report: Creating the Right Atmosphere for Bringing Jobs to Missouri

Quite possibly the most important thing the Legislature can do this year is work to improve our economic situation. Part of this work is coming through the state budget and another part could be done by a couple of different jobs bills we are debating.

I appreciate the efforts of my colleagues on the state level that have the vision to realize we can not spend our way to prosperity. We must do all we can to ensure businesses are able to add jobs and work to improve take-home pay.

The Senate has spent a lot of time debating two different economic development bills this session. [House Bill 191](#) came to us in early February. [Senate Bill 45](#) is our own version of a jobs bill. Both of these bills have some good things in them, especially in relation to the [Quality Jobs Act](#). However, there is resistance to expanding certain tax credits. I agree we need to cap tax credits. We cannot keep handing out taxpayer money without legislative scrutiny and without limits. The concept behind tax credits is great: reward those who take the time to improve our state by giving them a break on their taxes. But this, like anything else, can be abused and overused.

The beginnings of the concerns over tax credits

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started last year. Many lawmakers began asking why there are so many of these, why they seem to have no cap and how much longer we can keep paying for them. This has turned into some of my colleagues wanting to undo the work of the Quality Jobs Act, and other programs, by stopping all tax credits until there has been a thorough investigation into their effectiveness. I agree with studying the programs and seeing which ones work and which do not, but I also think there is no reason to just kill them altogether.

At the same time, we have an obligation to get as many people back to work as possible, and we can do this without raising taxes or handing out money under the guise of a bailout. Government does not create jobs; government creates the environment for jobs to be created. This is done by eliminating the roadblocks of high taxes and too much regulation. We have seen this work in the past. This country came out of a long and deep-running recession in the early 1980s after tax rates were lowered and many of the long-standing regulations were done away with.

While the governor and House leadership have been hopeful to see a jobs bill make it through quickly, folks also have to remember the Senate is a more deliberative body than the Missouri House. It is our role to make sure what we pass is the correct route for the state to take. Believe me, a lot of us in the Senate wish everybody was working and this economy was as robust as possible. But passing a bill for the sake of passing a bill will not drop the unemployment rate and put folks back to work. It is our duty and obligation in the Senate to do what is best for the taxpayers of our great state.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

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