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October 5, 2009

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The Stouffer Report: *Small Business, Not Big Government*

It is coming up at least once a week. It seems like everywhere I go lately, I run into someone wanting to do their part to spur the economy.

These are bright, hard working people that still believe in the American dream. They are not looking for a handout, they are looking for opportunity.

These folks are working in their garages on the next "big idea," small businesses with plans to grow their company or even manufacturers thinking about expanding on existing product lines. They talk about working day and night for what they have. They talk about their hope for future generations to have the same opportunities as we have had in the past.

Over a desk, conference table or bed of a pickup truck, these folks outline their ideas to me that were created through years of business experience, in a board room or even on a napkin.

However, following the excitement of sharing their big plans, in the next breath they say, "but with all the uncertainties out there, we are just going to wait."

There's a common thread in the reservations they mention, most of which are federal issues facing all Missourians including my constituents on the state level:

- "Cap-and-Trade" or "climate change" legislation is often the first concern discussed. This would establish a bureaucracy to oversee the sale and transaction of "credits" to reduce carbon emissions in this country. Many believe it will raise electric rates in coal states like Missouri by at least 50 percent. To many employers, this would mean an



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abrupt end to business.

- “Card check” legislation will make it easier for Detroit-style workplaces to come to Missouri through easier unionization of small businesses. This proposal removes secret ballot workplace elections and, if employers and employees cannot agree upon terms, a federal arbitrator does it for them. Their decision is final and binding. On the state level, folks are working to keep this from happening through an initiative petition.
- “Healthcare reform” is also named as a concern along with higher taxes. Most employers like the idea of changes to the healthcare system, but at what degree and what cost? And at what level can we can we sustain health care?

These proposals and many more leave businesses with uncertainties that keep them making the decisions that will move us forward as an economy.

At some point, we have forgotten it is small business, not government, that moves the economy out of the doldrums. In the past, we have been successful in moving government out of the way in times like these. I think it is time we all start moving back towards that goal before it is too late.

Meanwhile, we need to keep working in our garages, board rooms and meetings to do our part to move Missouri forward with the next “big idea.”

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

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov

