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MISSOURI SENATE
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Capitol Report — April 3, 2009

There is a bill working its way through the legislature that will make a number of necessary changes to education funding in Missouri. [Senate Bill 291](#) started out as a piece of legislation that would allow public school districts to add virtual courses. Since its introduction, several amendments have been added and it has become a comprehensive education bill.

If this measure passes, one of the most significant changes would be in the way that revenue generated by the removal of casino loss limits is distributed to Missouri school districts. Based on the voter-approved Proposition “A” that passed last fall, money collected from the repeal of the loss limits was placed in the foundation formula and would, in fact, deprive 115 “hold harmless” school districts from receiving any additional funds. I represent two of these districts, [St. Charles](#) and [Orchard Farm](#).

With these new changes, money would instead be deposited into the Classroom Trust Fund and distributed to school districts based on an equitable per-pupil basis. Considering what has happened in the past, there is a certain degree of skepticism associated with this issue. Whereas most people believed that the additional revenue generated by the repeal of the loss limits would be added to the pre-existing education funding, it was only used as a replacement in a kind of “shell game.”

This bill seeks to ensure that money placed in this Trust Fund will constitute new and additional funding for elementary and secondary education. It shall not be used to replace existing money provided for elementary and secondary education as was proposed to the Legislature. Under the current funding formula, a portion of the education budget is removed and given over to general revenue. The money collected from the repeal of the casino loss limits is then used to fill the hole. With this bill, we will put an end to the “shell game” and guarantee that any money collected as a result of Proposition “A” will be used in the way that the voters intended — as new and additional funding for education for the benefit of all students in public education

Yesterday (4/2), this bill received final passage in the Senate and now moves on to the House of Representatives for their consideration.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on this or any other issues of concern to you. I appreciate and welcome your comments.

Committees:

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