

# State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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## Legislative Work Moves into High Gear

Senate committees were named and assigned in recent days and now the legislative process shifts into full swing as these committees begin meeting and considering the merits of proposed bills that could ultimately become state law. State department director nominees will also receive confirmation hearings soon and step into their respective roles as heads of our state governmental agencies.

I am very pleased to again be selected to serve as chairman of the Education Committee. As many of you know, education is a top priority of mine — and the Senate's — and an area in which I spend a good deal of my time. Given the current economic climate, crucial decisions regarding our state's educational programs and institutions will need to be made and the committee will be working very closely with — and seeking input from — our state's educators to make those critical decisions.

For the fifth year, I will again serve on the Appropriations Committee and my third year as vice-chair. The committee has already begun the important task of reviewing our state budget. Thankfully, our projected deficits aren't as high as first predicted, but still they are a major consideration that will require us to examine programs and services in order to balance spending and revenues.

In addition to these responsibilities, I will also serve once more on the Agriculture, Food Protection and Outdoor Resources Committee, which has undergone a slight name change to better reflect Missouri's agricultural industry. Agriculture, food production and Missouri's natural resources have an enormous impact on our state's economy and are very important to me and to the communities of southeast Missouri.

My fourth committee assignment includes another term on the Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, a seven-member committee that considers bills and matters relating to the judicial department of the state, including the courts, civil procedure and criminal laws. The committee also considers the constitutionality of all bills referred to it by the Senate and also considers bills and matters relating to the probation and

parole of persons sentenced under the criminal laws of the state.

At this writing, 236 Senate bills have been filed and that number will continue to grow until the March 1 bill filing deadline. Once bills are introduced and read a second time before the legislative body, they are referred to the appropriate committees. Then public hearings are set for testimony on any proposed legislation. Then, if a majority of the committee approves a bill, it moves to the Senate floor for debate.

As the weeks progress here in Jefferson City, I look forward to keeping you posted on the bills discussed and the debate that follows as the legislative process continues.

As always, if you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at 1-877-291-5584.

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