

# 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 Process Continues Throughout the Summer

Even though the legislative session ends in May, my work as your state senator continues throughout the year. Typically, summers are busy with bill signings, making presentations to civic and business groups, researching legislation, and, most importantly, meeting with constituents to discuss matters that are important to you.

During this year's session, the General Assembly passed 162 bills and two joint resolutions — both proposed constitutional amendments that must be approved by voters to become law — out of more than 1,800 bills and joint resolutions that were introduced. When the session ended, all of those bills were passed to the governor, who has until July 14 to sign them or use his veto power. A two-thirds majority in both chambers is required to override a veto. Any bill that the governor does not sign will automatically become law. Most of the passed bills become law on Aug. 28 unless they contain an emergency clause, which means they become effective upon the governor's signature or at a specified date.

The number of bills that advanced this year is typical, and I think it's important to remember not to judge the success of any legislative year with the quantity of bills passed. Also keep in mind that the content of many bills makes it into other bills. I think it's also important to note that lawmakers each year are equally responsible for blocking bad legislation, as was the case this time with the energy bill that would have required consumers to pay for the construction of a new nuclear plant ([SB 228](#) & [HB 554](#)). While the proposed legislation did renew the discussion of nuclear energy and the need for alternative forms of energy in our state, the proposal was too detrimental and did not provide enough consumer protections. I strongly debated against this bill as I couldn't support it because of the devastating financial impact it would have had across southeast Missouri on our residential consumers, our agricultural base, and to one of our area's largest employers.

And as is the case during any legislative season, there are also those bills that seem promising, but due to time constraints and/or a lack of consensus do not succeed. That happened with legislation I advanced in the Senate ([HB 46](#)) that would have strengthened the informed consent requirements for women and teens seeking an abortion. After much work throughout the session to reach a reasonable solution to this complex and controversial issue, however, both sides could not reach

consensus on the bill before time ran out to pass this important piece of legislation. I plan to write more about what happened with this bill in the near future.

Several of my own proposals were successful this year, including my measure to modify the school funding formula to ensure money from the repeal of loss limits on casinos is spent in the classroom for early childhood services, teacher salaries and transportation. This will mean tens of millions of dollars more for education and add an average of \$120 per pupil for each school district. I plan to highlight other measures of mine that made it into legislation in future columns.

I have to say that I felt some of the biggest missed opportunities of the session included passing the Senate's innovative health care program that would have expanded insurance coverage to 35,000 low-income, working Missourians and eventually up to around 200,000, a bill requiring insurance companies to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism, and my own proposal — the Missouri Promise program to expand the A+ scholarship fund to more high school graduates. I will work to advance the bill again next year to ensure Missouri families can realize their dreams of a higher education.

As the summer progresses, I look forward to continuing my work as your state senator. 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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