

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

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



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Veto Session Fast Approaching

Lawmakers Have the Chance to Undo Actions Taken by the Governor

In the coming weeks, we in the Missouri State Senate will have an opportunity that should not be taken for granted. On September 16, I will return to Jefferson City for the annual Veto Session. This will be an opportunity for legislators to determine if any of the bills that were vetoed by the governor should have another chance. This session the governor vetoed 12 Senate bills and 11 House bills. There were also 11 budget bills that received line-item vetoes this year. A Governor's veto can only be overturned if two-thirds of members in both the Senate and House vote to overturn it, which is no easy task. The discussion of these vetoed bills and the final vote on them will be our main focus during that important week.

Among the vetoed bills is [House Bill 373](#), which I handled in the Senate. The measure would have created the General Educational Development (GED) Revolving Fund, which would have consisted of money that would come from a small fee on taking a GED test. The fee would have simply paid the costs involved with administering the test. The GED program is a great service. There are thousands of Missourians who take it every year to better their education, with many moving on to get a college degree. As you know, I am a big proponent of education in our state and I wanted to do more to help those who advance their education. I am hopeful that my colleagues in both the Senate and House will understand the reasoning behind this bill and overturn the governor's veto on this piece of legislation.

Another bill that was vetoed by the governor was [Senate Bill 153](#), which addressed aspects related to agriculture. The measure would have modified the definitions of "handler" and "end-user" to ensure the persons appointed to these positions on the Rice Advisory Council are actually employed in these capacities and are not representing rice producers, as was the intent of the original bill. This measure would have insured that we have a balanced representation of all groups on the council. However, the entire proposal was vetoed because of amendments to an unrelated part of the bill that would have provided changes to the Unfair Milk Sales Practices Act.

Other vetoes that I hope to address during this year's veto session include the proposal to classify sawmills and planing mills as agricultural property, which passed in [Senate Bill 235](#) and would have alleviated the current financial strain on the timber industry. Also, a measure which I proposed (passed in [House Bill 620](#)) that would have loosened the state's bingo laws and lowered taxes to benefit veterans and fraternal groups should be discussed.

One of the biggest disappointments was the governor's veto of [House Bill 544](#), which would have created a Missouri version of the Federal Stimulus Accountability and Oversight Panel. It is estimated that \$4.3 billion will be flowing to Missouri as part of the stimulus plan over a two-year period, and the Missouri Accountability Portal allows taxpayers to track all state dollars. The Legislature, through House Bill 544, intended to make the accountability portal permanent by state statute adding valuable transparency to our state government.

The Governor's veto messages on these bills and others can be viewed at <http://governor.mo.gov/actions/>. I am unsure what the outcome will be for these and other vetoed bills, but I am confident that my colleagues and I have the same goal in mind, and that is to do the best job we can to represent the citizens of Missouri.

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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