



Senator Jason Crowell – Serving Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry, and Scott Counties.

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The Fight to Reform the MDFB Continues

I have spent a great deal of time this session focused on getting Missouri's fiscal house in order. I have laid out several steps we MUST take in order to create a sound fiscal future for our state—rejecting the bailout mindset, ending unaccountable spending, paying off our state's debt now, and focusing on accountability and oversight. These policy reforms have met a great deal of resistance from both Republicans and Democrats in Jefferson City who do not want the sweetheart deals and backroom agreements to come to an end, but I want to let you know how you can support efforts to reform our state.

Since first elected to the Senate, I have worked hard to expose abuse, waste, and fraud. The first bill I passed in the Senate ended the “golden parachute” pension system used for years by legislators of both parties to significantly increase their retirement pensions. Earlier this year, I raised criticism of the Missouri Development Finance Board (MDFB) after it approved \$25 million in tax credits for parking lots at the Kansas City Chiefs' stadium and

a new indoor training camp in St. Joseph. Specifically, I called for the elimination of the Missouri Development Finance Board's power to bypass legislative accountability and oversight through the issuance of tax credits. Those calls have not only been ignored, the MDFB is arrogantly stepping up its reckless spending of your tax dollars.



On March 24th, the MDFB met once again to hear a proposal from another professional sports team; this time it is the St. Louis Cardinals. In 2002, the team came to the MDFB and received \$29.5 million in tax credits and \$12.3 million in transportation dollars to construct a new baseball stadium. In exchange for your money, the billionaire baseball team owners “committed” to put \$60 million towards a new Ballpark Village. This project was proposed without using any of your tax dollars. The stadium was built, but the promised village was never delivered.

During the March MDFB meeting, the Cardinals asked for **\$88.8 million** in state MODESA (Missouri Downtown Economic Stimulus Act) subsidies to build the Ballpark Village, which has been estimated to cost \$600 million by the time it is completed. I guess they figure that seven years is long enough for us to forget their broken promises. I am angered by the deceptive behavior of these developers, who obviously think that it is okay to make a promise, break that commitment and then turn around and be rewarded for it. It is even more

infuriating that the MDFB is actually going to give into the billionaire baseball team owners and hand over your money.

Why is it that a project promised without the use of taxpayer dollars in 2002, is now going to cost you at least \$88.8 million? With education, mental health, and state-sponsored healthcare scrambling to meet the constraints of a tight budget year, should we really be spending state dollars on the whims of billionaire baseball team owners?

Another concern raised by this project is whether it would even contribute to the economic development of the area. Tax dollars generated in the proposed village wouldn't necessarily be "new," but would instead come from consumers who currently spend their money elsewhere at hotels, shopping centers, and restaurants competing with the potential development. The project would disperse much of the already existent revenue to new vendors rather than draw in additional revenue. Remember the Dome and Convention Center promises?

This sort of tax dollar shell game is exactly the kind of practice I have been working to reform. Please join me in supporting a solid fiscal future for our state and ending unaccountable spending practices. Contact the Missouri Development Finance Board, and urge them to vote against the Cardinals' plan at the next board meeting on April 21st:

Mail:

Missouri Development Finance Board
Governor Office Building
200 Madison Street, Suite 1000
P.O. Box 567
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Phone: 573-751-8479

E-mail: mdfb@ded.mo.gov

We must make sure that state government acts responsibly with the best

interests of Missourians at heart. I hope you will join me in these efforts to fundamentally reform state spending practices by bringing meaningful accountability and oversight over the use of your hard-earned tax dollars.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions, and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>.

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