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August 13, 2009

“Caring for Missourians” Update

Southeast Missouri State University and I have had an honest disagreement concerning their responsibility to Missouri taxpayers regarding *Caring for Missourians*. I believe it is important that Southeast demonstrate accountability by ensuring that only Missourians will benefit from your tax dollars spent on this program. Southeast disagrees. I ask you to decide.

For Fiscal Year 2010, the General Assembly appropriated \$40 million in one-time federal bailout funds to Missouri universities. In an effort to address Missouri’s need for more health care professionals, Governor Nixon and the university presidents decided this money would be best spent

to fund the *Caring for Missourians* initiative. For their part in this program, Southeast Missouri has decided spend their allotted \$1.172 million to update laboratories and hire two new staff members – a move they report will create 16 new slots for health care students.

You Decide!

Make Your Voice Heard!

All three letters between Southeast Missouri State University and myself can be found below for your review.

Your opinion is important to me so I ask that you read all three letters and then weigh in on the issue.

Southeast Missouri State contact information is:

Southeast Missouri State University Board of Regents
One University Plaza
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
Telephone: 573-651-2222
Email: regents@semo.edu

Donald "Brad" Bedell
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Reginald D. Dickson
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Board of Regents

James P. Limbaugh
Member
Board of Regents

Doyle Privett
Member
Board of Regents

Daren Todd
Member
Board of Regents

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>.



MISSOURI SENATE

JASON G. CROWELL
27TH District

June 10, 2009

President Ken Dobbins
Southeast Missouri State University
One University Plaza
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Dear President Dobbins:

Recently, Governor Nixon has been promoting the "Caring for Missourians" initiative that he asked the General Assembly to approve this past session. The program diverts \$40 million over 26 higher education institutions to address the ever thinning health-care professional shortage throughout the state, but places no specific requirement to Universities that the funds be used for "Caring for Missourians". It is the sole discretion of our Universities and Colleges on how to use these one-time funds.

Funding for "Caring for Missourians" has been appropriated through Fiscal Year 2010 Federal one-time stabilization funds. Southeast Missouri residents will benefit by Southeast Missouri State University receiving \$1,166,806, Three Rivers Community College receiving \$363,924, and Mineral Area Community College receiving \$338,100. Governor Nixon hopes of the additional money to eventually train and graduate more than 900 additional Missouri students in the field of health-care over the next five years; a very worthy priority.

It is no secret that our state is in dire need of more health professionals. According to the Nixon Administration, Missouri hospitals are facing a shortage of more than 7% for Registered Nurses, 6% shortage of pharmacists, 8% for both physical and occupational therapists, and a 7% shortage of medical laboratory technicians. The "Caring for Missourians" program stands to not only train and educate medical professionals to meet the drastically high demand for health-care; it also stands to bolster our struggling economy.

The logistics of the initiative will be to hold each individual college or university responsible for spending the increased appropriation on developing a specific plan to maximize the benefit of those funds for expanding healthcare training programs. Several institutions have already suggested that they will implement the money by using various methods such as increasing the total number of students entering specific healthcare programs, boosting online enrollment, offering accelerated undergraduate classes, and expanding graduate degree programs. Others have announced they will go with more of a capital improvement approach to addressing the healthcare worker deficiency by renovating classroom buildings, providing additional laboratory space, and upgrading to more cutting-edge clinical facilities and equipment. Either way, our Missouri economy should be stimulated with the creation of new faculty and staff positions at the higher education institutions, as well as fulfilling the high-paying, high demand jobs in a variety of health care fields.

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