



MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

Delbert Scott
28th Senate District

Capitol Building, Room 416
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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Contact: Debbie Poire
(573) 751-8793

Several 2009 Legislative Goals Attained

Economic Development and Education Measures Delivered to the Governor

My colleagues and I in the General Assembly finished our 2009 legislative session by sending the governor more than 160 pieces of legislation, with 48 of those measures as Senate bills. Since the conclusion of this year's session, lawmakers such as myself have returned to their legislative districts for the interim (the time between legislative sessions) to continue their work for their constituents and prepare for the next year at the State Capitol.

Economic Development

One of this session's most important economic development measures successfully passed both chambers in the final days of session. My colleagues and I spent long hours discussing a jobs bill designed to boost Missouri's economy while instituting tax credit reform. [House Bill 191](#) contains several provisions that will help create jobs and spur economic growth, while at the same time, implement tax credit changes in our state. House Bill 191 includes an increase in the annual cap for the [Missouri Quality Jobs Program](#) from \$60 to \$80 million, an increase in the annual cap for the [Business Use Incentives for Large-Scale Development](#) (BUILD) Tax Credit, and an increase in the [New Markets Tax Credit Program](#) from \$15 million to \$25 million.

Tax credit reform was also a large component of House Bill 191. The measure contains a provision that limits the amount of tax credits the Missouri Development Finance Board can issue in a calendar year without outside approval. The legislation also caps [historic preservation tax credits](#) at \$140 million, though smaller projects (such as those receiving less than \$275,000 in tax credits) are not included in the cap amount. Finally, House Bill 191 will require tax recipients to report any jobs created as a result of the use of these tax credits. This tax credit information must be made available to the public on the [Missouri Department of Economic](#)

[Development's website](http://www.ded.mo.gov) (www.ded.mo.gov) and through the [Missouri Accountability Portal](#). House Bill 191 was passed with an emergency clause, meaning the bill takes effect immediately upon receiving the governor's signature.

Education

Helping Missouri students receive a quality education is always a top priority each legislative session. A wide-ranging education bill passed this session that will institute some major reforms for schools across our state. [Senate Bill 291](#) started out as a single provision allowing school districts to offer virtual courses and receive state funding. With more than 30 provisions added to that particular piece of legislation, Missouri will remain a leader in education reform.

The comprehensive measure includes a provision that fixes an error in Proposition A passed last year that repealed the casino loss limits, providing extra revenue to public schools in our state. The fix ensures that the money voters intended for Missouri schools is properly distributed.

Senate Bill 291 also creates the Missouri Senior Cadets Program, which will provide opportunities for 12th graders in public schools to mentor kindergarten through eighth grade students; establishes the School Flex Program to allow eligible students to pursue a timely graduation from high school; and creates the Persistence to Graduation Fund which provides a way for school districts to apply for grants to implement drop-out prevention strategies.

Another big change Senate Bill 291 will require is teaching standards for public schools, as well as allowing school boards to establish a four-day school week instead of a five-day school week by a majority vote of board members. With the governor's signature, most provisions in Senate Bill 291 will become law on Aug. 28.

Next week, I'll highlight other measures that have been delivered to the governor to become law, including a comprehensive crime bill, legislation ensuring consumer safeguards regarding preneed funeral contracts, and how the Legislature addressed the mortgage crisis in our state. If you have any questions about other issues regarding your state government, please feel free to contact me at (573) 751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.

