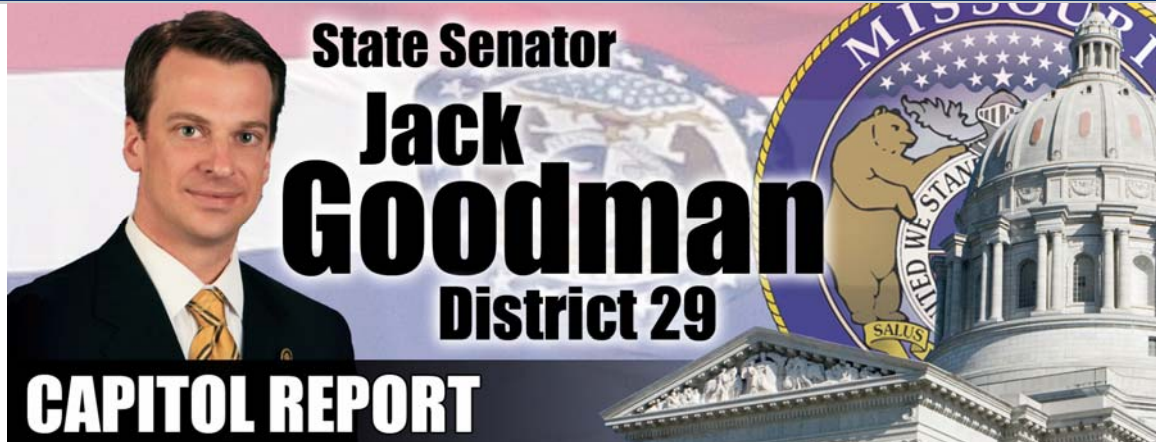


February 12, 2009



Senator Jack Goodman – Serving Barry, Lawrence, McDonald, Ozark, Stone and Taney Counties

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Getting to Work for Missouri

Three of the measures I am sponsoring this session received a passing vote this week from their committees, and will likely soon be taken up for discussion by the full Senate. In my [Senate Bill 156](#), I address an important issue that is causing problems in our district. The Senate Committee on General Laws, which I chair, passed the bill this week. I have heard from constituents and many others across the nation who have filed complaints with the Attorney General's office about Missouri travel clubs. Travel clubs collect yearly dues and usually an up-front enrollment fee from members in return for discount vacation packages and other travel deals on lodging, airfare and entertainment.

With our beautiful lakes, rolling landscapes and entertainment venues, the 29th district is one of Missouri's most desirable tourist destinations. Unfortunately, places that are popular for vacations often see their fair share of schemes designed to take advantage of visitors. While most companies in our area who sell travel club memberships are honest and upstanding, a very small minority have been giving the entire industry in Missouri a bad name and discouraging potential travelers from across the country from coming to Missouri on vacation. Senate Bill 156 closes the legal loophole that was allowing these few companies to fleece its customers and should restore the reputation and integrity of the industry, thereby restoring consumer confidence in southwest Missouri as a tourist destination.

Senate Bill 156 protects consumers by giving them the right to cancel a membership contract with a travel club for three days after purchase, even if the customer has used benefits of value during that three-day period.

This week, the Senate Judiciary Committee, on which I serve as vice-chair, also passed my [Senate Bill 223](#), which regulates sexually oriented businesses. I commend

my colleagues for taking this step to help clean up our communities and restrict the operation of these magnets for sexual predators. In recent years, smut shops have been popping up along the highways in the 29th district and across Missouri. This legislation helps combat the detrimental effects of these establishments by restricting their operation. Certainly it is appropriate to take measures to regulate these businesses to the fullest extent permitted by Constitutional law.

Today, I offered and passed an amendment to [SB 1](#), sponsored by Senator Delbert Scott. Senator Scott's bill tightens regulations on the pre-need funeral industry in response to the failure of a large company that left many customers without coverage for the funerals they had purchased in advance. An existing provision of our MO HealthNet (formerly known as "Medicaid") law allows low-income Missourians to purchase pre-need funeral coverage and exempt that policy from their asset calculation for purposes of MO HealthNet. I feel it is unfair to force low-income Missourians to bind themselves to the risk of a pre-need funeral contract in order to responsibly provide for their funeral expenses in advance. I offered an amendment allowing such persons to create a simple irrevocable trust to cover their funeral expenses, up to \$10,000, and exclude the asset from their eligibility calculations. This ensures that the money will be used for funeral expenses, but does not force Missourians to be bound to a particular provider or incur the risks and fees of various plans. I believe we should encourage low-income Missourians who want to be responsible and pro-actively save for this inevitable expense.

I am continuing my work on the Senate Select Committee dealing with any federal funds our state may receive from the federal "stimulus" package. While I do not support the federal legislation that is pending, I will work in your state Senate to evaluate opportunities to bring your federal tax dollars back to Missouri in the most responsible manner.

Yesterday, the Senate began debate of [Senate Bill 37](#), which I filed to provide needed flexibility to Missouri's Public Defender System. A pending U.S. Supreme Court case poses the real threat that if, we do not provide much-needed resources, the state may be forced to release many defendants who are not receiving speedy trials, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution. Certainly, returning criminals to our neighborhoods is not in the best interests of crime victims and law-abiding Missourians. I look forward to resuming this debate in the near future.

As the legislative session progresses, I am confident we will continue to work together and come up with creative, effective solutions for the issues that matter most to Missouri families.

As always, I welcome your ideas, questions and concerns about Missouri government. You may contact me at the Capitol as follows: (573) 751-2234, jack.goodman@senate.mo.gov or by writing to Senator Jack Goodman, Missouri State Capitol, Room 331-A, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

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Contact Information

Capitol Office
State Capitol Building
Room 331-A
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Website:
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/goodman>

Phone Number:
573.751.2234 (Capitol)
417.466.3731 (District)

Fax:
573.526.9808