

Week of March 9, 2009



Senator David Pearce – Serving Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties

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Make Your Voice Heard: Complete a Legislative Survey

Without a doubt, the most important aspect of my job as a lawmaker is to represent my constituents. I do this by working to solve the problems they face and addressing the issues that are important to them. If lawmakers did not have the support of the people who elected us, we wouldn't have the opportunity to serve in the Capitol in the first place, so it is crucial we never forget who makes it possible for us to be here as we create and refine Missouri's laws.

In my ongoing effort to be made aware of what matters most to the residents of the 31st State Senate District, I compiled a survey that asks your opinion on some of the key issues the Legislature may tackle this year. You will find this survey on my Senate website at www.senate.mo.gov/PearceSurvey, where you may complete and submit it online. You may also complete and return the paper version that is available as an insert in your local newspaper.

One of the issues I am curious to hear your opinion on is the state budget. There has been a lot of talk about budget shortfalls, and it appears that this year—until June 30—we will have a shortfall of \$240 million. Next year we will be facing a shortfall of more than \$400 million, if revenues continue to decline. A controversial option is to raise taxes, and I would like to know your thoughts on the issue.

I'm also looking forward to seeing what you think about Missouri's voting process and if you would like any changes to be made. Legislation concerning two aspects of the voting system is working its way through the General Assembly. The first part deals with

photo ID and if it should be required in order to cast a ballot, and the second concerns early voting. Right now Missouri is in the minority of states that do not allow citizens to vote in advance. The debate seems to center around added convenience for voters versus the extra cost the state would be required to spend to make early voting a possibility.

A question regarding the state's No-Call List is also included in the survey. Currently the list does not include cell phone numbers. Because people are increasingly using their cell phones as their primary phone, I am sponsoring a bill ([Senate Bill 43](#)) that would allow Missourians to add their cell phone numbers to the list if they wish. The bill would also ban certain automated calls to those who sign up for the No-Call List. Your answers will help me gauge support for SB 43.

The Legislature is currently considering a bill that would provide for the studying of a universal health care system in Missouri, in which everyone would be covered by health insurance. Although this bill would only begin the preliminary legwork for implementing universal health care in Missouri, I am interested to know your thoughts on the topic.

Other issues highlighted in the survey include biodiesel-blended fuel; alternative energy and whether utilities should be allowed to increase rates and charge customers for the costs of building new power plants; adding a tax to cell phone services to pay for 911 coverage; education spending; and primary seat belt use, which allows police officers to stop and ticket drivers solely for not wearing their seatbelts.

As you can see, we are covering some big issues this year at the Capitol. I encourage all residents of the 31st District to take the time to fill out a survey to ensure that your opinions are heard and that your views are properly represented in the Missouri Senate.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. Because we are here to serve you, we look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

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