

Week of March 16, 2009



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

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## Reaching the Half-Way Point

This week the General Assembly stands adjourned for its annual mid-session recess, which means the 2009 legislative session is already half-over. We have made swift progress on several important pieces of legislation that we marked as our top priorities before the session even started, but we still have a lot of work to do when we return to Jefferson City next week.

Perhaps the biggest bill on our plate after the recess is [Senate Bill 45](#), the Senate's major economic development measure—which I am sponsoring. The importance of passing this piece of legislation cannot be overstated, as many Missouri families continue to struggle in this weakened economy. While the government cannot legislate its way completely out of the problem, we can help provide a favorable environment for private businesses to thrive. Senate Bill 45 puts in place responsible tax incentives for Missouri businesses that create jobs and spur economic growth.

Unlike Washington, D.C., we want to take our time to pass this bill the right way. Not only will it help us boost our economy in the short-term, but it will help lay the foundation for a solid economic policy down the road. The federal economic stimulus package that Congress passed was hundreds of pages and it is likely that most lawmakers didn't even get a chance to read the whole thing because it was rushed through so fast. We will not make that same mistake here in Missouri.

Another bill of mine, SB 44, received final approval from the Senate and is now in the House for similar consideration. Creating legislation that keeps Missouri families safe is one of our most important tasks in the General Assembly. [Senate Bill 44](#) creates new

regulations for private jails—which are facilities not maintained by the state, city or county—and brings their safety standards up to speed with public facilities. Private jails should have to abide by common sense regulations, such as immediately reporting when a prisoner has escaped.

Last week, the Senate passed [House Bill 14](#), a supplemental spending bill for fiscal year 2009. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I have spent a good portion of my time this session discussing the state budget, both for this year and next. When formulating the budget, we work with the most current numbers possible in order to determine accurate estimates for expenditures and revenues. But many times, just like in a household budget, there are unforeseen circumstances. It is impossible to account for these budget ebbs and flows, so the Legislature typically passes a supplemental budget bill each year that addresses budget issues that were not passed or were not funded at an adequate level. Several important programs that citizens in Missouri depend on will be able to continue thanks to House Bill 14. The bill is now in the House for final approval.

I will continue to keep you updated on the progress of the legislation that is important to you as it works its way through the General Assembly. We have approximately eight weeks left in the legislative session, giving us a lot of work to do in a relatively short amount of time. I look forward to a very productive second half that will see the passage of meaningful legislation that will provide good jobs, great schools and the best future for our families.

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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