

Week of September 14, 2009



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## [Lawmakers Convene for Veto Session](#)

This week the Capitol was once again full of activity as lawmakers convened in Jefferson City for the Legislature's annual veto session on Sept. 16. A September veto session is required by the state constitution if the governor vetoes any bills passed during the year's legislative session.

With 12 Senate bills, 11 House bills and line items in most of the budget bills (line-item vetoes allow the governor to disapprove of a particular item in a budget bill without having to eliminate the entire bill) receiving a veto, lawmakers gathered to consider these measures. We ultimately determined that we would not attempt to overturn a veto, which falls in line with most veto sessions, as a veto is a very rare occurrence that hasn't taken place since 2003. That year, legislators voted to overturn three vetoes, allowing Missourians to carry concealed weapons, barring lawsuits against gun manufacturing companies and requiring a waiting period for certain medical procedures. This year was unique, however, with the most vetoes since 1961.

A simply majority of both chambers was required to initially pass these bills. As you can probably imagine, a two-thirds majority, which is required to override a veto in both the Senate and House, is much more difficult to attain. However, if an issue rises to the level where most lawmakers feel strongly enough to counter a veto, it is certainly not impossible. Many times this occurs when a controversial social issue receives a veto. This year, it is fair to say that the most divisive vetoes were the line-item cuts in the various budget bills.

Lower-than-anticipated state revenues led the governor to veto \$105 million in

spending in the fiscal year 2010 budget, which took effect July 1 of this year. The governor also restricted an additional \$325 million in spending until revenue improves. Unfortunately, several valuable state programs, services and tools were affected by these decisions, but in a tough budget year, difficult choices need to be made.

My biggest disappointment this year was the veto of [House Bill 620](#). This measure would have given not-for-profit entities greater flexibility with the funds they generate from bingo games, allowing more money to be available for use in local community projects. I am currently working on developing a similar bill for next year that will have the support of other lawmakers and the governor. I have talked with the governor's staff to see what we can do to change the bill to make sure he will sign it next year if it crosses his desk again, and I will continue to work cooperatively with his office until we figure out a solution.

To see a complete list of bills vetoed by the governor, please visit the Missouri Senate's website ([www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov)), click on "Session Information" on the left side of the page, and then select the link titled "Governor's Action on Truly Agreed Bills."

Also, I recently discussed the veto session in a podcast, which is available for download on my new multimedia page at [www.senate.mo.gov/Audio/Pearce/Multimedia-2009.html](http://www.senate.mo.gov/Audio/Pearce/Multimedia-2009.html). I will periodically update this page with new podcasts and audio and video segments, so please check back often.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. 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.

*Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31<sup>st</sup> State Senatorial District.*

#### Contact Information

**Capitol Office**  
State Capitol Building  
Room 419  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**Website:**  
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/pearce>

**Phone Number:**  
866.277.0882 (toll-free)  
573.751.2272

**Fax:**  
573.526.7381