

Week of September 28, 2009



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Serving Our Veterans

The brave men and women who fight for our freedom and protect us at home and abroad deserve our utmost respect and gratitude. We may never be able to fully repay their sacrifices, but after they have served our country, we can honor them by listening to their concerns and addressing the issues that affect them. As a lawmaker, I am fortunate enough to be in a position to help improve the quality of life for veterans who live in Missouri, and I consider that a great honor along with a great responsibility.

Recently, I was appointed by the Senate President Pro Tem to serve on the Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC). This year's passage of [House Bill 427](#) allowed for the addition of lawmakers to the Missouri Veterans Commission—two members from the Senate and two members from the House of Representatives, one each chosen by majority and minority leadership. The MVC is charged with managing the state's veterans homes and making them safe, comfortable living environments for Missouri veterans; providing timely and compassionate benefit services to veterans and dependents; and maintaining state veterans cemeteries, ensuring honorable resting places for deceased veterans.

In my new role as a member of the MVC, I recently met with MVC Executive Director Larry Kay at the Warrensburg Veterans Home to discuss issues affecting Missouri's veterans. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet with Larry and discuss some of the obstacles and opportunities facing our veterans, and I look forward to working with him and other leaders in the community during my tenure on the MVC so I can better understand our veterans concerns and the issues that affect them. I am excited about one of the MVC's current projects, in particular—listening posts.

To further assess the needs of Missouri's veterans, the Missouri Veterans Commission, along with AMVETS, the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of

Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans and Marine Parents is holding 21 listening posts across Missouri from Sept. 14 through Oct. 28. All those who served in the military, regardless of belonging to an organization, are invited to attend. In the 31st Senatorial District, a listening post was already held on Sept. 21 in Warrensburg and another one will be held in Nevada on Monday, Oct. 26. It will be hosted by AMVETS at the Missouri National Guard's Camp Clark in Comm. Bldg. 475. A "Meet & Greet" will take place from 6-6:30 p.m. and the listening post will run from 6:30-8 p.m. The Missouri Veterans Commission will take the comments generated at these listening posts very seriously, and many ideas may end up in legislative proposals presented to the Missouri Legislature next session.

We cannot truly comprehend the depth of sacrifice many of our veterans have made to protect our country. Now, it falls on us to ensure that we are meeting their needs and addressing the issues that are important to them. With these listening posts, the Missouri Veterans Commission is trying to determine how our state is best serving our veterans and the areas in which it could improve. I look forward to hearing the thoughts and opinions of veterans across the state and getting to work for these valiant and dedicated individuals.

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 31st State Senatorial District.

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