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Sen. Gary Nodler Resigns from Appropriations Chair *Senator Makes Choice Between Candidacy and Chairmanship*

JEFFERSON CITY — Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, today announced he will resign his position as Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee effective Monday, November 30. Nodler has served on the committee for all seven of his years as a state senator, and chaired the committee for the past two sessions. Nodler said his decision earlier this summer to seek a Congressional seat led to his decision to resign. Senator Nodler looks forward to the opportunity to be more actively involved in a broader range of legislative issues outside of the budget process during his final session.

“As a candidate for Congress, it would not be possible to give sufficient attention to both the time demands of a campaign and the time demands of being chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee,” he said. “I also have a deep appreciation for the long-standing and strong tradition of the Senate Appropriations Committee being the most bipartisan committee in the Legislature. Republicans and Democrats work together and that carries through to floor unity to keep our budget recommendations intact throughout the process. Protecting the tradition of bipartisanship is vital to the success of the budget process. As a candidate, it would be difficult to maintain that tradition while I am involved in a partisan primary.”

Nodler also said he is stepping aside to ensure that there can not even be the appearance of political ambition in any way influencing the actions of the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

“We play by the rules in the Missouri Senate and the members of the Appropriations Committee are determined to avoid any appearance of conflicts of interest,” Nodler said. “I decided to become a candidate after the last legislative session ended, and I am leaving the committee before the work for the next session begins so there can not be even the appearance of political considerations compromising the integrity of our budget process.”

The committee’s recent significant successes include creating accountability measures to accept, track and spend federal stabilization and stimulus dollars in Senate Bill 313 that was authored by Nodler and signed by the governor. Missouri is the only state in the Midwest to have its AAA Bond rating renewed by Standard & Poor’s, Moody’s and Fitch Ratings; and despite facing revenue shortfalls, the state is in a better financial standing than most states across the nation.

“We have kept our national bond rating when others have not been able to. No I.O.U.’s have been issued by the state of Missouri, like other states,” Nodler said. “K-12 education funding has increased and higher education funding has been preserved. By making difficult decisions, Missouri can meet the state’s obligations without a tax increase.”

Nodler commented that it was an honor to be trusted with the important task of leading and shaping the state’s more than \$23 billion dollar budget.

“I am grateful for the confidence of both Senate Leaders Mike Gibbons and Charlie Shields who named me as their appropriations chairman,” Nodler said. “I also have great appreciation and respect for my colleagues on the committee; we have worked to build the best bipartisan environment that I believe the committee has ever had. I would also like to commend the professional staff. Their hard work and dedication, along with that of the committee members, has allowed us to succeed in passing budgets that protect taxpayers while facing very difficult challenges.”

The committee's public hearings on the budget begin December 7, 2009.

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