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that is morally wrong.*

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Senate Focuses on Learning from Challenges

New Senate Leader Challenges Lawmakers to Create Long-term Vision

JEFFERSON CITY – Naming three strategies of job creation, more health coverage, and education past high school as ways to make Missouri a better place to live, work, and raise a family, Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, today started the First Regular Session of the 95th General Assembly. After being unanimously elected and sworn into the post of Senate Leader he delivered the opening day address.

Shields acknowledged Missouri is facing difficult times, but challenged senators to see the opportunities difficult choices create.

"I believe our task at hand is to learn from our current challenges to create a plan to sustain economic prosperity and a high quality of life for Missourians for years to come," Shields said.

Shields laid out his vision, naming three strategies to create an even better Missouri for the people of the state. He outlined the importance on creating and attracting jobs to the state, as well as making sure more students have education experiences past high school.

"We must continue to develop the tools to help our existing businesses grow and to attract new businesses that will bring jobs to our citizens," he said. "If we are to succeed in creating a more educated workforce, we must make changes in our education system from birth to higher education."

He also said the Senate should continue its efforts to help more Missourians find and afford healthcare.

"Simply put, we must begin to make serious strides towards moving our state's 700,000 uninsured into coverage."

Shields ended by challenging senators to work together with the House and Gov.-elect Nixon to improve the lives of Missourians.

"You are the senior board of directors for our state who can move us from a short-sighted, reactionary organization to one with vision and purpose."

A total of 17 senators were sworn in during the opening ceremony, 11 were returning members as well as 6 new members. They were elected on November 5, 2008. The 2009 regular session will run through May 15. To track legislation visit www.senate.mo.gov.

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