

State Senator Yvonne S. Wilson - District 9

2010 Legislative Report



Friends,

It has been my honor to serve you in the Missouri Senate for the past six years. As a Kansas City native, I am committed to helping shape a positive culture for the city and its residents. I have dedicated my life's work to public service, spending the first 35 years of my career with the Kansas City School District as a teacher, consultant and principal, and retiring as Director of Elementary Education in 1985.

In the Missouri Senate, where I represent the interests of approximately 163,000 Jackson County citizens, I currently serve as Secretary of the Senate Minority Caucus. I am privileged to serve on a number of important Senate committees, including Appropriations; Education; Health and Mental Health; and Seniors and Families. It is in these committees where policies are developed that directly impact the lives of Kansas Citizens, particularly the African-American community.



I believe the most pressing issue facing our great city is poverty, which points to the challenges of homelessness, affordable and accessible health care, and sufficient early childhood education programs that effectively prepare children for success in high school, college and life. Fragmented efforts are underway to address each of these issues, but little will be achieved on this unless we all work together.

Over the years I have had many role models who were older than me. I have learned that one is never too old to observe admirable characteristics in younger people. With that in mind, the person I intend to emulate the rest of my life is our First Lady, who possesses the charm, intellect, empathy, style and grace that I believe every woman should embrace.

Thank you.

Changing Times:

- Until the 1970s, approved roles for women were wife and mother, teacher or nurse.
- Today, no occupation is off-limits to women, from doctor to lawyer to CEO to — perhaps — President of the United States.



Advice to Young Women:

- Never be afraid to ask questions of people.
- Never take no for an answer or let someone tell you that you cannot do something you desire to do.
- Learn how to express yourself with confidence.
- Become involved in your community, at your school and in local political races.
- Find someone you admire and study their work habits, their philosophy of life, how they overcame challenges and what inspires them.
- Stay in school and graduate.
- Run for office and become the next generation of women leaders for our community and the world.



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Foreclosure Avoidance Counseling

In the Kansas City, Missouri area, HUD-approved housing counseling agencies are available to provide you with the information and assistance you need to avoid foreclosure. As part of the president's comprehensive Homeowner Affordability and Stability Plan (HASP), you may be eligible for a special Making Home Affordable loan refinancing or modification, to reduce your monthly payments and help you keep your home.

If you need help understanding the Making Home Affordable programs, you can use counseling agencies in the 9th Senatorial District that will provide you with free foreclosure prevention services. If you are eligible for the

loan modification or refinancing program, the counselor will work with you to compile an intake package for your mortgage loan lender and/or service provider.

Foreclosure prevention counseling services are provided free of charge by nonprofit housing counseling agencies working in partnership with the federal government. These agencies are funded, in part, by HUD and NeighborWorks America. There is no need to pay a private company for these services.

If you are in danger of losing your home to foreclosure, call one of the counseling agencies right now and seek the immediate help that you need.

Senator Wilson's Gubernatorial Appointments for 2010



Senator Wilson nominated Alvin Brooks to serve on the Kansas City Board of Police Commissioners.



Gwendolyn Richards (left) was tapped to serve on the Alzheimer's State Plan Task Force.



Senator Wilson nominated Donna Bushur (left) to the Child Abuse and Neglect Review Board.

The Right to Vote

One of the most critical ways we can influence governmental decision-making is through voting. Voting is our formal expression of preference for a candidate for office or for a proposed resolution of an issue. Voting generally takes place in the context of a large-scale national or regional election; however, local and small-scale community elections can be just as critical to individual participation in government.

In the United States, the 13th, 14th, 15th and 19th Amendments were important to the civil rights movement and the right to vote. The 13th Amendment ended slavery in the United States, while the 14th Amendment allowed blacks to have the same rights as whites. The 15th Amendment allowed black citizens to vote, while the 19th Amendment extended the right to vote to women.

Womens' suffrage in the United States was achieved gradually, at state and local levels, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, culminating in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which



provided: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Today in the United States, the fight continues as all mentally competent adults have the right to vote with only one exception: convicted criminal offenders. In 46 states and the District of Columbia, criminal disenfranchisement laws deny the right to vote to all convicted adults in prison. Thirty-two states also disenfranchise felons on parole, and 29 disenfranchise those on probation. And, due to their individual laws, in 14 states even ex-offenders who have fully served their sentences remain barred for life from voting.

We still have a long way to go to ensure the constitutional right of every American. This further enforces the importance of casting your vote and making your voice heard.

Make sure you exercise your right to vote in EVERY election. Every vote counts every time.

Serving Kansas City and Missouri: Committee Assignments

Elected to the Missouri Senate in November 2004, after serving five years in the Missouri House of Representatives, I hold a leadership position as Minority Caucus Secretary and represent a portion of Jackson County in the Missouri Senate. Below are accomplishments of the number of important committees on which I serve.



Senate Appropriations Committee

This committee is responsible for allocating some \$23 million in state revenues to various state departments, agencies and programs. Some 9th District appropriations include:

- Metropolitan Community Colleges.....\$33,093,398
- Foundation Formula (Kansas City area).....\$539,688,484
- Bruce Watkins Cultural Heritage Center.....\$100,000

Senate General Laws Committee



This committee considers bills that do not fall into a specific category, such as Senate Bill 579, which would have repealed the law currently prohibiting Kansas City police officers from participating in some political activities.

While I had to recuse myself from voting on the issue because of a conflict of interest, my belief is that this is a local issue to be decided by our local citizens and not legislators across the state.

Joint Committee on Corrections



This panel is composed of Senate and House members and has legislative oversight of corrections facilities and policies in Missouri. During annual facility reviews, I have visited Crossroads, Cameron and the Western Diagnostic Center corrections facilities.

Senate Health, Mental Health, Seniors and Families Committee

This committee considers all legislation dealing with health and mental health issues, as well as matters relating to seniors and families. For example, the committee this year heard testimony on Senate Bill 693, which I sponsored, that would have enacted the Foster Care and Adoptive Parents Recruitment and Retention Fund. In addition, I've again sponsored a bill to grant eligibility for food stamps for individuals satisfactorily completing a substance abuse treatment program. Missouri now prohibits food stamp benefits for felons involving possession or use of a controlled substance.

Senate Education Committee and the Joint Committee on Education

Both of these committees consider all legislation relating to elementary and secondary education in Missouri, as well as higher education.



One of our top legislative priorities is to provide an adequate and affordable education to our children as clearly spelled out in the Missouri Constitution. However, we are failing our duties in this respect. In fact, our public schools were forced to make drastic cuts and will not receive the increased funding called for under the 2005 funding formula. The Kansas City, Raytown, Hickman Mills and Center districts were forced to make drastic cuts to their budgets. There are many dedicated, hard-working teachers struggling to succeed against the odds, who truly care about children and who are trying to make a difference. But they cannot do it alone.

As lawmakers, we failed these teachers and our children this year. Nonetheless, the Senate Education Committee heard testimony on Senate Bill 614 – a bill I have sponsored for several years – which modifies the definition of “bullying” as used in school district anti-bullying policies to include cyberbullying and electronic communications. This bill passed under the omnibus education bill, House Bill 1543.

These are my biggest accomplishments from the Second Regular Session of the 95th General Assembly:

- House Bill 1543: This bill makes changes to laws relating to elementary and secondary education and includes my language to require schools to adopt policies to prevent cyberbullying (Senate Bill 614).
- House Bill 2297: This bill authorizes the establishment of the Kansas City Zoological District, which may be composed of the counties of Cass, Clay, Jackson and Platte. This is similar to legislation I sponsored in Senate Bill 1002.
- House Bill 2005: This funding bill for the Office of Administration, Missouri Department of Transportation and Department of Public Safety includes \$3 million for the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority. Unfortunately, this spending was vetoed by the governor.

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Your 2010 Community Directory

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On the web:
www.senate.mo.gov/Wilson
E-mail:
yvonne.wilson@senate.mo.gov
Staff:
Darsel Phauls
Ronald Finley

Emergencies: 911

FBI: 816-221-6100

Fire Department: 816-842-2121

Ambulance: 816-361-1111

Jackson County Sheriff:

816-524-4302

Highway Patrol (Local):

816-622-0800

Poison Control Center (MO):

800-366-8888

K.C. Power & Light:

816-471-5275

Non-Emergency Police Numbers

East Patrol: 816-235-5530

Central Patrol: 816-234-5510

Metro Patrol: 816-234-5520

South Patrol: 816-234-5550

Kansas City Hall:

816-513-3600

Kansas City Housing Authority:

816-777-2914

Kansas City Action Center:

311

Kansas City

Community Development:

816-513-3200

Kansas City Housing

Code Violations:

816-513-1500

Kansas City

Bulky Item Collection:

816-513-1313

City Union Mission (Homeless):

816-474-9380

Jackson County Executive

Michael D. Sanders:

816-881-3333

President Barack Obama

Vice-President Joe Biden

White House:

202-456-1414

United States Senators

Claire McCaskill:

816-421-1639

Christopher S. Bond:

816-471-7141

United States Congressman

Emanuel Cleaver:

816-842-4545

State Officials

Governor Jeremiah W.

“Jay” Nixon:

816-889-3186

Lt. Governor Peter Kinder:

573-751-4727

Secretary of State Robin

Carnahan: 573-751-4936

State Auditor Susan Montee:

573-751-4824

State Treasurer Clint Zweifel:

573-751-2411

Attorney General Chris Koster:

573-751-3321