

CAPITOL REPORT

SENATOR
**ERIC
SCHMITT**

INSIDE:

**AUTISM
INSURANCE
REFORM**

**PROTECTING OUR
LOCAL SCHOOLS**

**RIGHT-SIZING
STATE
GOVERNMENT**

AUTISM INSURANCE REFORM

This year, Sen. Schmitt again fought for autism insurance reform. One in 91 children born today will be diagnosed with autism spectrum conditions, autism is the only one specifically excluded from insurance coverage. However, that is about to change. Sen. Schmitt will lead the way to get legislation passed in 2010.



After his speech before the passage of autism insurance reform, Sen. Schmitt embraces his son Stephen, a 6-year-old diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

A LONG ROAD TO PASSAGE

In 2009, the Senate passed similar legislation, but when time for action came, Sen. Schmitt helped organize rallies across Missouri, driving the measure — effectively paving the way for its passage. Senator Schmitt's dream of so many families just a few years ago, became a reality.

ABA THERAPY: A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

The required insurance coverage will include a physician or psychiatrist's referral of ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) therapy—up to \$40,000 per year for those 18 years of age and younger. A cost-of-living adjustment has been included to adjust the cap for therapy services in coming years. Actuarial studies estimate that the cost of offering this life-changing therapy is a less than one percent increase in premiums. Hard-working families across our state pay for insurance their entire lives and when their child is diagnosed with autism, coverage should be there when they need it most.

PROVIDING HOPE TO FAMILIES

Autism insurance reform will allow children on the autism spectrum to receive the support and opportunity for thousands of Missouri families and generations to come. For more information, contact the Missouri Department of Insurance at their hotline or visit www.insurance.mo.gov/consumer/autismFAQ.

FIGHTING FOR OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS

Senator Schmitt comes from a family of educators and his wife, Jaime, taught in a local school district. Making sure students get a world-class education is one of his top priorities.



This year, there was an effort to balance our budget on the backs of “hold harmless” school districts, several of which are located in the 15th District like Kirkwood, Parkway, and Lindbergh. Senator Schmitt led the fight to remove a harmful provision to make sure local school districts get their fair share of funding and are not treated inequitably.

MAKING

A CALL FOR FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Senator Schmitt took the lead this year in calling for Washington, D.C. to stop deficit spending. Senate Concurrent Resolution 36 urges Congress to pass a balanced budget amendment so that, just like Missouri, Congress would not be able to spend more than we take in. The national debt now totals more than \$13 trillion and is rising each day. This means we are paying more than \$120 million a day in interest alone. Whenever we issue a birth certificate, we are essentially handing that child a federal credit card tab of \$44,000. This harsh and disturbing reality must change, and will only change with fundamental reform, like a constitutional requirement for the federal government to balance its budget.

gnosed with autism. Out of the top 10 neurobiological age. Senator Schmitt's leadership and dedication helped

ran out before the House of Representatives could take drawing thousands and building grassroots support for the Schmitt's hard work and passion paid off. House Bill 1311, a with an overwhelming bipartisan vote in 2010.

This bill will provide real hope and opportunity to these children and families. ABA therapy is often the difference between a child being invited to a birthday party, a dad being able to take his son to a baseball game, a mom being able to take her daughter to a movie, or a family being able to go to a restaurant without having to leave before the meal is over.

spectrum to reach their full potential and provide real hope generations of Missouri's children. For more information, call the toll-free number 1-800-726-7390 or visit their website at



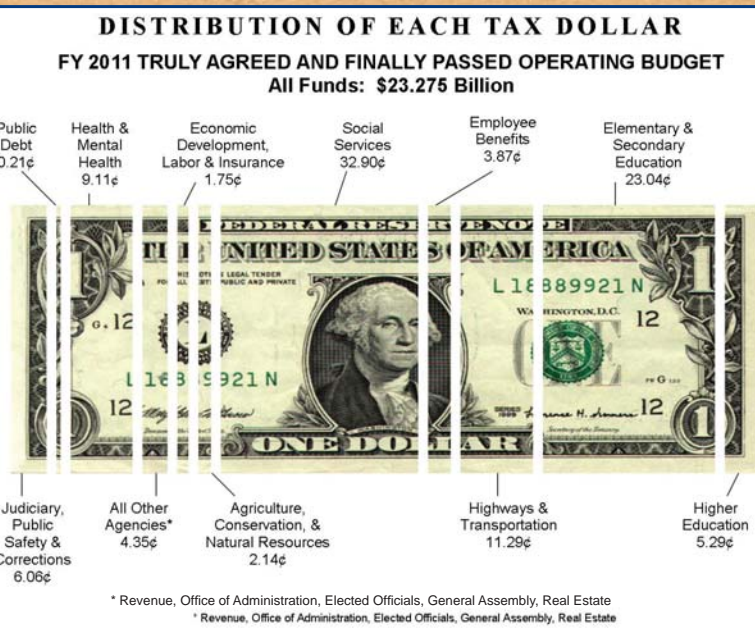
RIGHT-SIZING STATE GOVERNMENT

This year, the Senate began efforts to consolidate state agencies and reduce the size and scope of state government. We opened the process up to the public and received thousands of suggestions. It is important that legislators think outside the box and consider every possible way to right-size our government. Some successful legislation to achieve this effort included:

- SB 842, which modifies provisions relating to public assistance programs administered by the state for a cost-savings of more than \$24 million.
- HB 1868, which merges the State Water Patrol into the Missouri State Highway Patrol for a cost savings up to \$1 million.
- HB 1965, which eliminates printing of state manuals (Blue Books) and State Statute books for a cost-savings of \$1.7 million dollars in printing and postage.
- HB 1, which modifies the retirement system for new state employees, potentially saving the state \$660 million in the first 10 years alone.

Senator Schmitt encourages you to submit your ideas by visiting www.senate.mo.gov and clicking on the Rebooting Government logo.

EVERY DOLLAR COUNT



CRAFTING A BALANCED BUDGET

This year, one of the greatest challenges for the Legislature was crafting a balanced budget in one of the most difficult fiscal years in Missouri's history. The governor delivered his budget recommendations in January, but as the year progressed, revenue collections were much lower than expected.

Tough decisions were made. The Legislature reduced spending by \$500 million to balance the state's budget.

Senator Schmitt and his colleagues in the Senate and House also refused to raise job-killing taxes on hard-working Missourians. Instead, they worked to create a budget that keeps Missouri living within its means.



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Senator Schmitt with his wife, Jaime, and children, Stephen, Sophia, and the newest addition, Olivia, who was born in August.

Senator Schmitt's Legislative Successes



Saving Taxpayer Dollars

Senate Bill 842, sponsored by Sen. Schmitt, works to save more than \$24 million, making public programs more efficient while directing those precious dollars to those who need it most. This change is critical in these difficult budget times and will lengthen the time Medicaid (MO HealthNet) has to recoup taxpayer dollars paid for services that are actually covered by an individual's private health insurance, saving taxpayers millions each year.



An Elected Assessor

Senator Schmitt commended local voters for approving a County Charter Amendment to replace the current appointed county assessor position with an independent, elected assessor accountable to taxpayers and not politicians. Senator Schmitt brought the idea to the forefront with a similar legislative measure that was passed in 2009.



Protecting Taxpayers

Senator Schmitt sponsored Senate Bill 851, which requires additional notice to the public before local governments can vote on tax increases, eminent domain, or certain districts and projects receiving public funding. The new law requires at least four days notice, rather than the previous 24-hour notice.



Fighting for Parents as Teachers

Budget constraints put the entire Parents as Teachers program in jeopardy this year. As a member of the local Parents as Teachers board, Sen. Schmitt was a lead advocate for the program. His efforts resulted in \$16 million of funding for the program, as well as legislation that supports the program's future viability.



Transparency in Property Tax Assessment

Senator Schmitt successfully amended legislation this year to include a provision making it easier for local taxpayers to find information online about their reassessment and comparable properties.



Protecting Homeowners

House Bill 2058, handled in the Senate by Sen. Schmitt, makes important reforms to laws in our state involving residential liens that will ensure subcontractors are paid at closing, banks continue to lend in the residential market, home construction is not unnecessarily stymied, and homeowners no longer have to fear being saddled and sued for hidden liens after they close on their most valuable asset — their home.