



12<sup>th</sup> District  
State Senator

# Brad Lager

## 2010 Legislative Report

Dear Friends,

From tough budget decisions during the regular legislative session to a special legislative session that increased government spending, the 2010 legislative year has been eventful. While more than 1,800 bills and resolutions were introduced, only 108 made their way to the governor's desk, and rest assured, those bills that did get passed were carefully scrutinized to make sure that they are in the best interest of Missouri's taxpayers.

This session primarily focused on crafting the state's operating budget. In a year of declining revenues, protecting educational funding and streamlining government operations were our top priorities. While these issues took up the majority of the debate this year, there were a few other beneficial pieces of legislation that passed. For example, I sponsored and the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 928, which overturned a Missouri Supreme Court decision that would have resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in tax increases on Missouri businesses and their consumers. I also assisted in passing House Bill 1516 and House Bill 1965, which established additional financial accountability measures and repealed hundreds of pages of expired statutes. Although it was killed by out-of-touch politicians, I also sponsored legislation to limit government spending and make it tougher for elected officials to increase their salaries.

Our nation is in the midst of some very challenging times and our state is no different. Families across Missouri have been forced to make many difficult decisions in order to prioritize their spending at home. These changes represent a permanent shift in the way we live our day-to-day lives and it is time for government to change as well. Missouri's taxpayers deserve a government that lives within its financial means, is efficient and responsible with the resources that are provided by the taxpayers and remains committed to its most fundamental priorities.

I am honored to represent the 12<sup>th</sup> District in the Missouri Senate, and I look forward to continuing to advance the priorities of the constituents I serve. Please feel free to contact my office at any time at 573-751-1415 or sign up for my weekly newsletter at [www.senate.mo.gov/lager](http://www.senate.mo.gov/lager), because together we can make Missouri an even better place to work, live and raise a family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brad Lager'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## Timely Tax Refunds: HB 1408

I believe that tax dollars belong to the taxpayer, not the government. Therefore, when a taxpayer is owed money by the state, the state should process the return in a timely manner. This is why I supported the passage of House Bill 1408, which mandates that all tax refunds are processed and sent to the taxpayer within 90 days of April 15. In addition, the state must pay interest to the taxpayer if the refund is not delivered by the statutory deadline.

## Advocating for Our Schools

I believe that funding education should be our state government's number one priority. While other states are taking millions of dollars out of the classroom, I have fought hard to protect Missouri's schools from budget reductions, while giving our local school boards the tools they need to manage these tough times. Even though our state has experienced a double-digit drop in revenues, the Legislature has appropriated the same level of funding for fiscal year 2011 as schools received in FY 2010.

To assist schools during these tough economic times, the General Assembly passed House Bill 1543. This legislation relieved local schools of a number of unnecessary and unproductive state mandates so that local school boards can shift precious resources away from state mandates and into programs they believe are doing the best job of educating Missouri's children.

As a strong supporter of Career Ladder and Parents As Teachers, I was disappointed in the massive funding reductions made to these valuable programs. Although I disagreed with some of the changes made this year, I will continue fighting to increase funding for programs that benefit Missouri's school children and their teachers.

## Streamlining State Government

During the 2010 session, there was much discussion about how Missouri's state government can be more efficient and effective. Put simply, "How can we streamline government?"

From the creation of a special interim committee to suggestions and recommendations from Missouri's taxpayers, there has been a lot of discussion about how to streamline government in order to increase savings, reduce costs and improve services. These ideas ranged from consolidating departments, to eliminating programs, to completely overhauling programs so that they are more effective. Among the changes adopted this year were consolidations of state law enforcement responsibilities, the elimination of unnecessary statutes, as well as the adoption of a Medicaid Cost Containment Program.

While the Legislature sent a handful of reforms to the governor to consolidate and eliminate programs, there are still many changes that will need to be made in order for our state government to live within its means. I look forward to continuing the work of streamlining government and fighting for Missouri's taxpayers.

## Visitors from Northwest Missouri to the State Capitol in 2010



*Senator Lager visited with Maryville 4<sup>th</sup> graders during session to explain the functions of government.*



*Senator Lager presented a resolution to students from Union Star for their participation in the STAR Project.*



*Students from Chillicothe visited with Sen. Lager to discuss issues affecting Northwest Missouri schools.*



*Senator Lager took Andrew County YMCA Youth in Government students on a tour through the Capitol.*

# Missouri's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget

In a year with substantial revenue shortfalls and many difficult decisions, there was no doubt that crafting the fiscal year 2011 budget would be the toughest challenge facing the General Assembly this year. In the end, the final budget for FY 2011 was \$23.3 billion and included \$5.3 billion for funding schools throughout the state.

In order to balance this year's budget, state lawmakers identified nearly \$500 million in spending reductions. These reductions included cutting the operating budgets of elected officials, reducing reimbursement rates to many providers, and renegotiating Medicaid contracts and operating reductions in every department within Missouri state government.



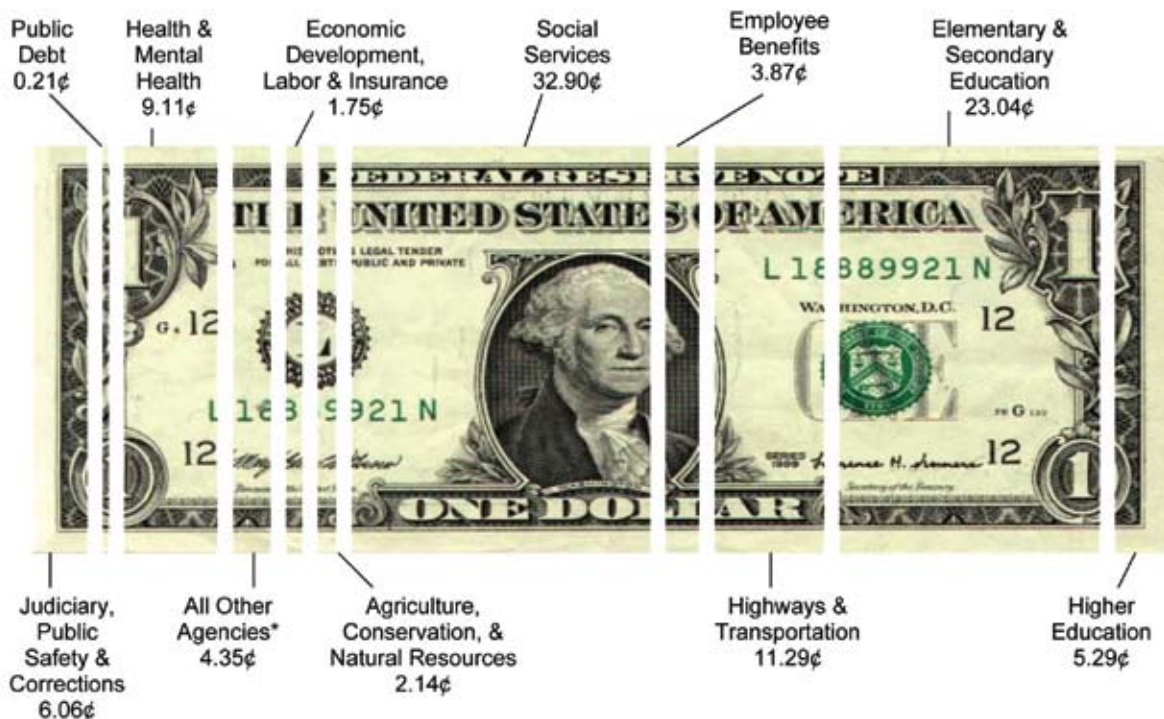
While a half billion dollars is a staggering amount, the real challenge comes next year when the shortfall will be approximately twice that amount, nearly one billion dollars. At that point, we will be forced to go well beyond minor reorganizations of departments and nibbling around the edges of governmental bureaucracy. To reduce state spending by the levels necessary, we will need to fundamentally reshape our state government, thereby delivering a smaller and more efficient structure that is focused on meeting the fundamental needs of our citizens.

With responsible fiscal policy and a more efficient state government, our state will be in the best position possible to experience strong, long-lasting economic growth so that Missouri's citizens will have the opportunity to enjoy financial health and prosperity.

*"The state must continue to evaluate programs and take actions that are in the best interest of the taxpayers.  
The goal should be to do things better and more efficiently than ever before."  
— Senator Brad Lager*

## DISTRIBUTION OF EACH TAX DOLLAR

**FY 2011 AFTER VETO OPERATING BUDGET**  
**All Funds: \$23.275 Billion**



\* Revenue, Office of Administration, Elected Officials, General Assembly, Real Estate



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## *Visitors to the Capitol from the 12<sup>th</sup> District*



*Senator Lager talks with the Cameron delegation at the 2010 Great Northwest Day.*



*Students from King City visited with Sen. Lager in the Senate Chamber.*



*Senator Lager meets with Grundy County Farm Bureau Youth Leaders at the Capitol.*



*Senator Lager visits with the Brookfield delegation at the 2010 Great Northwest Day.*