

Senator Scott T. Rupp
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MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

**Proposed Legislation Provides Oversight of
“Race To the Top” Education Funding**

JEFFERSON CITY – Senator Scott T. Rupp will file legislation that will ensure that any “Race To The Top” education funding coincides with Missouri’s vision for education reform.

The “Race to the Top” Fund is a federal grant program from the U.S. Department of Education that is set to distribute nearly \$4 billion to the nation’s schools. Missouri stands to receive \$150 million to \$250 million in education funding, if its application is approved. Sen. Rupp was disappointed with the final application submitted by Governor Nixon because several of the education reforms that he has helped work towards were either left out or watered down in the final application. Now Sen. Rupp wants to ensure that any funds awarded to Missouri are utilized to meet the goals of the Missouri Legislature and continue to protect local control of education.

“I don’t believe this application is satisfactory, and I would have said so if we were given the chance to review it before it was sent to the federal government,” said Sen. Rupp. “However, my new legislation makes sure that this Legislature will meet the goals that Missourians want for their schools. If our state’s desire to reform education doesn’t sync with what the federal government has in mind, then we won’t accept the funding.”

Senator Rupp believes that “Race To The Top” could get the ball rolling on long sought after education reforms like charter school expansion and the removal of tenure, merit and differential pay proposals. “By expanding charter schools and utilizing privately run schools, we can give students in failing districts an option to get a high quality education. We have failed generations of students by failing to change the status quo,” said Sen. Rupp.

Included in the proposed legislation will be language that establishes a special fund in the budget that holds any grant dollars the state is awarded. DESE would have to provide the details of the grant, the reforms it would enact, and the consequences of enacting the terms of the grant. “With the creation of this holding fund, we make sure that Missouri is not bound to strings that are not in line with our vision of education reform. We will maintain the long term interest and our ability to control the education policy at the local level,” said Sen. Rupp.

The proposed legislation is similar to how the state has handled federal stimulus funds, and Sen. Rupp cites the example of the rejection of approximately \$40 million in unemployment insurance funding. “We did not agree with the permanent changes we were expected to make to our unemployment insurance fund, so we refused the money,” said Sen. Rupp.

The U.S. Department of Education is currently reviewing Missouri’s application. Senator Rupp’s proposed legislation is set to be introduced on the Senate floor next week.

“We are the Show-Me State, so you’ll have to show us the reforms we want and the details of the program before we take any funds,” said Sen. Rupp.

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