



State Senator Scott T. Rupp ~ District 2

# The Rupp Report

*Serving Lincoln County & St. Charles County*

Column For the Week of: September 20, 2010

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## Supporting Fiscal Conservatism in Missouri

Ever since Congress passed and the president signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, the Missouri General Assembly has made great efforts to monitor how these stimulus dollars are spent in our state and prevent wasteful spending of these funds.

Early in the legislative session last year, my colleagues and I in the Senate and House passed **Senate Bill 313**, which created two separate funds with our state's treasury to receive and retain the funds provided under ARRA. That same year, the General Assembly recognized that our state needed to determine how best to utilize the funds for Missourians from ARRA. The **Senate Select Committee on Oversight of Federal Stimulus**, which I chaired, was created and charged with studying and analyzing strategies for securing the maximum amount of federal dollars for our state that was anticipated to come from the federal economic stimulus plan. Members submitted a report to the General Assembly, including recommendations on developing transparency and accountability standards for the use of ARRA funds.

With these recommendations in mind, the Legislature passed **House Bill 544** in 2009, which would have created the Joint Interim Committee on Recovery Accountability and Transparency to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse of these federal stimulus dollars. However, the governor vetoed this legislation. Even though a **similar committee** was created that same year, it did not contain the same charges to address proper examination and distribution of stimulus funds.

In the meantime, federal stimulus dollars in the form of **Community Services Block Grants** (CSBGs) were distributed for projects such as film festivals in our state. These grants provide funds at the local level to address or reduce conditions of poverty. Constituents have been calling and writing my office about this particular distribution of CSBGs. If we would have had a proper accountability and transparency committee in place to examine distribution of stimulus funds in these instances, perhaps we would have been able to address the situation before it resulted in numerous questions that are now popping up about this project.

This year, lawmakers continued their efforts to address the lack of oversight of these federal stimulus dollars by passing **House Bill 1965**, creating the Joint Subcommittee on Recovery Accountability and Transparency. This committee is responsible for coordinating and conducting oversight to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of federal stimulus funds. More specifically, the committee will review contracts, grant management, job creation, and state agency and departmental practices. Senate and House members are expected to be named to this committee in the near future. Committee members will have to submit a report to the General Assembly and the governor each year until the panel expires March 1, 2013.

With this new committee, lawmakers will now finally have the opportunity to properly ensure that your taxpayer dollars are spent in a fiscally responsible manner to better our state as a whole. If you have any questions regarding this matter or any other issues within state government, please visit my website at [www.senate.mo.gov/rupp](http://www.senate.mo.gov/rupp). You can also **e-mail me** or call my office toll-free at (866) 271-2844.

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