



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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A New Beginning

JEFFERSON CITY – The 2010 legislative session officially got underway this week with promises from both sides to work together in a bi-partisan manner for the people of Missouri. It's pretty typical for legislative leaders to hope for the best at the start of the session, and maybe this year the civil tone that marked the previous legislative session will carry over to this year. I certainly hope we can all work together to make life better for the people of Missouri, but there will certainly be challenges.

First of all, it's an election year, and you just never know how that will impact the session. In addition, term limits will force a large number of members out of office after this year. Ten members of the Missouri Senate and roughly one-third of the House will be forced to leave after this session due to term limits. Some members will work hard to try to secure their legacy in their final year, while others are already looking ahead to the next stage of their careers, so it promises to be an interesting year no matter what happens.

As I have mentioned before, the biggest challenge facing members of the General Assembly will be crafting a balanced state budget in the face of declining state revenues. This will be the second straight year that we will be working with less revenue than we had to work with the year before. Just like hard-working families across this state, Missouri lawmakers will have to tighten their belts while not selling our future short. We'll have a better idea of how best to proceed with the budget after Governor Nixon delivers his State of the State address later this month.

Despite the budget challenges we face, we must do everything in our power to protect education and to find ways to put Missourians back to work. About one out of every ten Missourian is struggling to find work in this tough economy, so it's important that we find

ways to stimulate job growth by providing incentives for companies to expand their existing workforce or to relocate to our state and create new jobs. We must also ensure an adequate education for our children because the best economic development tool is an educated workforce.

I look forward to working on behalf of the citizens of the 18th Senate District again this year and hope you will stop by to visit if you happen to be in the Capitol.

If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issues give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.