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## The Stouffer Report: *The General Assembly Reaches the Session's Halfway Point*

So far, we have had a busy and full first half to the Second Regular Session of the 95<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. And, the really hard work is yet to come.

One of my priorities, I am proud to say, is one the first measures to make it through both the Missouri Senate and the Missouri House. [Senate Concurrent Resolution 35](#) tells the [Missouri State Tax Commission](#) thanks, but no thanks, on a proposal to raise land valuations for most property owners. The panel made the decision back in December and the Legislature only had two months to do something about it. Now, these tax increases will not happen. This is good because a recession is no time to make folks pay more for something they own.

Lawmakers in Missouri are continuing to remind Congress about the appropriate scope of federal government through proposals like [Senate Concurrent Resolution 46](#). This urges Congress not to pass "cap and trade" legislation. As I have written about here before, "cap and trade" would be detrimental to rural Missouri. It would penalize coal-burning states, including Missouri, and cause electric and natural gas bills to skyrocket to unprecedented levels. If the federal government is so concerned with finding new energy sources, then punishing how our state produces its much-needed energy is not the way to move forward.

I am also sponsoring a piece of legislation I believe makes sense. [Senate Bill 607](#) would require drug

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-  Visit the Capitol
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testing for work-eligible Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) applicants and recipients, based upon reasonable suspicion. This is simply a way of reducing fraud and making things fair for everyone. Most employers do some sort of drug testing, either for hiring purposes or for those already employed by the company. If we make this a requirement for folks who work, why not do the same for those needing state-funded assistance? The bill has been debated a couple of times this session and will hopefully get more floor time.



All in all, this has been a good session. In the second half, we will devote most of our time to the budget. As you have probably heard, the revenue picture is bad and getting worse for Missouri. However, it is not nearly as bad as it is in other states.

This year's revenue shortfalls give lawmakers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to trim back big government to honor taxpayers and to reduce wasteful spending. In future weeks, I will be asking for your input as we seek ways to "reboot" state government. It will take significant changes to balance the budget.

As always, I welcome your feedback regarding state government issues including, but not limited to, pending legislation, the state's budget or any other concerns or issues you may have. The more I hear from you, the better I am able to do my job as your representative in the Missouri Senate.

*Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.*

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).

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