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News

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Blocking Tax Increases on Missouri Farmers *Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Missouri has a strong history of agriculture, tracing back to 1725 when some of the first farms in the state were established. Agriculture is the state's number one industry and Missouri ranks second in the country for number of farms. Just like any industry in this



economy, however, farmers are facing tough times as an unstable market puts their livelihoods in jeopardy. Despite this situation, the State Tax Commission voted in December to actually raise taxes on the most productive farms in Missouri by approving new

“productive values” for agricultural land. On the first day of the 2010 legislative session, I filed [Senate Concurrent Resolution 32](#) to prevent the Missouri State Tax Commission from taking this unfair action.

Missouri farmland is divided into eight groups based on land quality; the best quality is grade 1 with the worst being grade 8. The Commission's decision would increase

farmland grades 1 through 4 by almost 29 percent or an average of about 90 cents per acre. A property that produces the most dependable crop yields would see their valuation raise from \$985 per acre to \$1,270 an acre. Both the Director for Missouri's Department of Agriculture and the Missouri Farm Bureau disagree with the Tax Commission's decision, warning that a tax increase could be extremely damaging to Missouri's farmers as they work in this struggling economy.

We need to be finding ways to lower taxes for our farmers, not force them to shoulder a higher tax burden. If our family farms see increases in their expenses, it will only contribute to an already wounded economy in our state. Prices for farm commodities have fluctuated greatly recently with costs for things like fertilizer, seed corn and fuel skyrocketing. The General Assembly can block the Tax Commission's decision, but we need to act quickly. The Legislature must pass SCR 32 within 60 days to block this tax increase from going into effect.



Farmers are the backbone of Missouri's economy, and it is the state's job to provide every avenue possible for farmers to succeed, not to create roadblocks. The General Assembly should not stand by as farmers are expected to bear more costs.

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This past Monday, January 18th was also Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. This is a day set aside for reflection on the life of this influential figure in our nation's history as well as the ideals he stood for. It is a day for us to commemorate the legacy of Dr. King and serves as a reminder of how he was a model of courage, truth,

justice, compassion, humility, and service. During the nearly four decades since Dr. King's death, our country has made great strides towards equality for all. His work continues to inspire many to fight for human rights and the end of all prejudices.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions, and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, email me at:

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