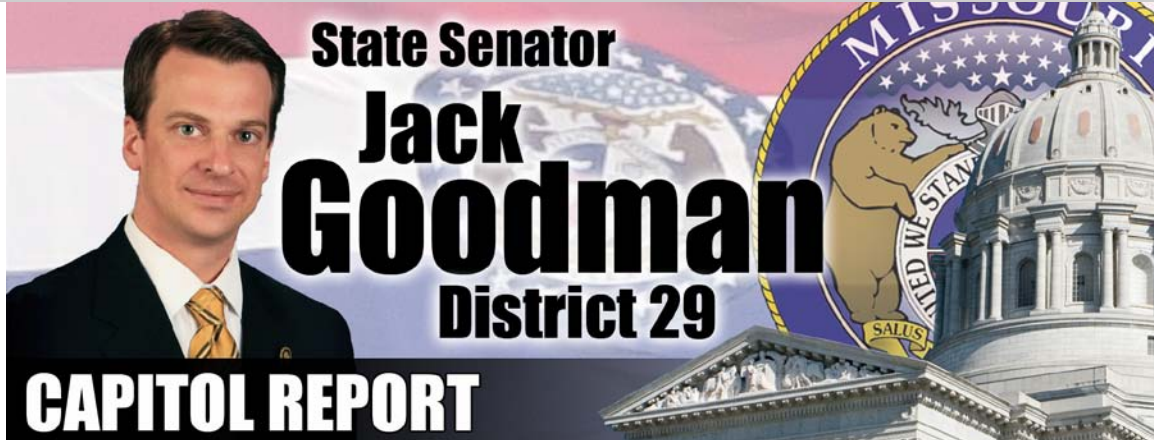


Week of January 18, 2010



Senator Jack Goodman – Serving Barry, Lawrence, McDonald, Ozark, Stone and Taney Counties

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## [Meeting Our Challenges](#)

The 2010 legislative session is now underway and it promises to be a year filled with challenges. The budget obstacles that await us are obvious, but we will also need to anticipate problems that will arise as a result of federal legislation, tighten ethical requirements in the Legislature and pursue a strategy of long-term planning for Missouri's future.

Budget challenges are inevitable this year as our state works to overcome decreased revenues caused by a national economic downturn. While Missouri is in a better position than many other states, we will have some difficult — and unavoidable — decisions to make this year. Right now we are facing a general revenue shortfall of almost \$800 million below what was predicted for fiscal year 2010. The governor has made more than \$600 million in budget cuts, but it looks as though we may be in store for more cuts in the coming weeks. Like many of my Senate colleagues, I promise I will stand firm against any proposal to raise job-killing taxes on hard-working Missouri families to compensate for less-than-projected state revenues.

We must also anticipate the consequences federal legislation will have on our state budget, if passed. In particular, I am speaking of the health care takeover currently awaiting finalization in the U.S. Congress. While the final form of the legislation and its final passage are uncertain, what we already know should be enough to make every Missourian very concerned. The federal bill in its current form is a budget-busting monster that includes mandates on the state to spend at least another \$450 million on expanded government programs.

This year, I filed [SJR 34](#), which would allow the people of Missouri to vote on a state constitutional amendment empowering the Governor, the General Assembly or the people, through initiative petition, to compel the Attorney General to challenge overreaching federal legislation that violates the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S.

Constitution. There must be a mechanism to protect the people when government exceeds its legitimate powers.

I also co-sponsored [SJR 25](#), a proposed amendment to the Missouri Constitution that would prohibit the implementation in Missouri of intrusive personal mandates contained in an overreaching federal health care bill.

Another big issue this year will be ethics reform in our state. Some unsavory actions on the part of elected officials in the past year have further eroded public trust in their public servants. To help rebuild that trust, several bills have already been filed proposing to strengthen the ethical standards in the Legislature.

Finally, we must face all of these challenges in the midst of the term limits that will affect 10 senators this year and 10 more in two years. We must focus on long-term solutions beyond the tenure of our own service. Doing so will require lawmakers to take a forward-thinking approach to public service. If we are serious about making Missouri a leader in education, business and health care, we must look beyond the present to five, 10 and 20 years down the road, working to ensure that our successors step into leadership with Missouri in a position of strength.

I will discuss specific legislation, including the bills I am sponsoring this session, in future Capitol Reports. I know we face an uphill climb, but I am confident we can come together and work diligently to strengthen our state and further improve the quality of life for Missourians in 2010.

As always, I welcome your ideas, questions and concerns about Missouri government. You may contact me at the State Capitol as follows: (573) 751-2234, [jack.goodman@senate.mo.gov](mailto:jack.goodman@senate.mo.gov) or by writing to Senator Jack Goodman, Missouri State Capitol, Room 331-A, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

#### Contact Information

**Capitol Office**  
State Capitol Building  
Room 331-A  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**Website:**  
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/goodman>

**Phone Number:**  
573.751.2234 (Capitol)  
417.466.3731 (District)

**Fax:**  
573.526.9808