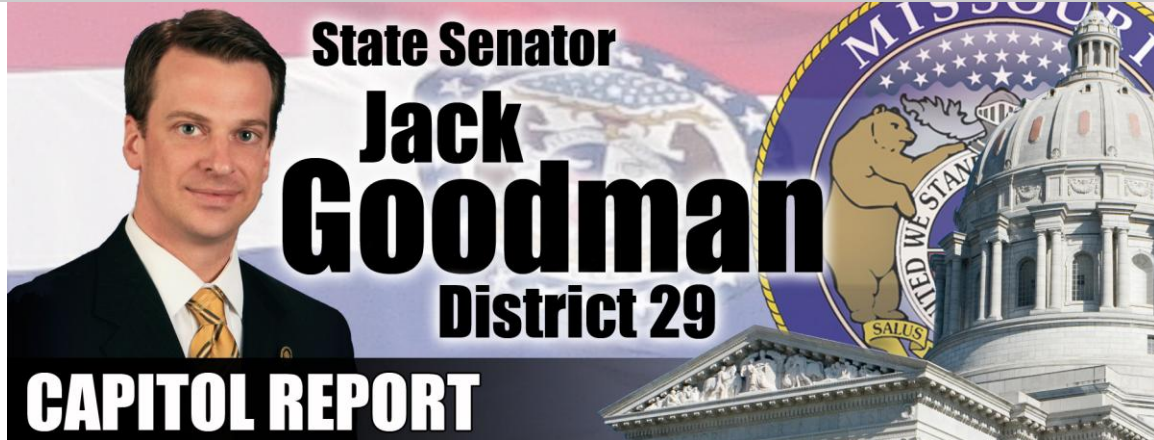


Week of January 25, 2010



CAPITOL REPORT

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

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[Standing Up for Taxpayers' Rights](#)

A debate is gearing up in the Legislature over taxpayers' rights. I have to say: It is about time. Illegal drug use among welfare recipients has been an issue that has received some attention in recent years, but I believe this is the year decisive action will be taken on the issue.

This year, I sponsored [SB 615](#), a bill to allow drug testing of recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) if there is reasonable suspicion that a person is using drugs. If an individual does test positive for drugs, he or she would be ineligible for benefits under the program for one year. The person would also be referred to a substance abuse treatment program. Other members of the household would still continue to receive benefits through a third-party payee. Thus, innocent family members would not be penalized, but drug users would not be able to get their hands on the money.

Of course we want to curb illegal drug use in our state, but this bill is about much more than that. Taxpayers have a reasonable expectation that their hard-earned dollars are not going to support illegal behavior—including drug habits. Right now many of us feel as though the federal government is hijacking our tax dollars to recklessly spend them on bank bailouts, special interest projects and job creation bills that do not actually create sustainable jobs. Here in Missouri, we must take the steps we can to protect taxpayers' rights. I believe one guarantee we can—and should—make to Missourians is that their money will not subsidize drug use by those on government programs.

Simple drug tests are required of applicants for many jobs across the state. Certainly the least we can do is require those who are receiving government assistance be held accountable just as they would if receiving a paycheck for employment. Drug testing would also separate the people who are abusing the system from those who really need help getting back on their feet.

Senate Bill 615 was heard this week in the Senate Health, Mental Health, Seniors and Families Committee. It must be voted out of committee to be debated on the Senate floor. I'll keep you updated on the status of my bill and other similar legislation in the weeks to come.

On another note, a bill I sponsored would strengthen regulations for sexually oriented businesses in Missouri. It was passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee this week. This issue is another priority of mine and I hope 2010 is the year that we are able to get legislation through the General Assembly cracking down on the harmful operation of smut shops across the state.

Senate Bill 617 would prohibit the establishment of a sexually oriented business within 1,000 feet of a pre-existing school, house of worship, state-licensed day care, public library, public park, residence, or other sexually oriented business. The bill would also regulate what can take place inside such establishments. Sexually oriented businesses would also be required to close their doors between midnight and 6 a.m., and the use, sale and consumption of alcohol on the premises would be prohibited.

The increasing prevalence of these smut shops in our beautiful state makes it increasingly difficult, as parents, to protect our children from the harmful effects they can have on our communities. They are also a magnet, drawing sexual predators into our communities.

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 or by writing to Senator Jack Goodman, Missouri State Capitol, Room 331-A, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

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