

Week of November 29, 2010



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Getting Ready for the Legislative Session

In just a few short weeks, the Missouri General Assembly will convene for its 2011 legislative session in Jefferson City. For lawmakers, one of the most integral, yet seemingly simple parts of the legislative process is the prefiling of bills for consideration. Since it stands to reason that bills assigned a lower number have a higher likelihood of passing given our time constraints (session runs early January through mid-May every year), the process of prefiling bills becomes very important.

Each year, Missouri Senate rules allow prefiled bills (lawmakers can prefile bills beginning December 1) to be presented on the first day of session. It is customary that each member of the Senate, beginning with the most senior member, picks his or her top three priority bills, which are then each assigned a number once they go through the prefile process. Lawmakers may prefile bills continuing up to, but not including, the first day of session. Bills may also be introduced by any senator during the session, up to March 1.

This session, the first three pieces of legislation on which I will be focusing my attention are all education-based. One of the bills will require the State Board of Education to establish specific criteria for the admission or rejection of nonresident students who reside in an unaccredited school district that seek admission into an accredited district in the same or an adjacent county. This bill would require the board to have criteria established prior to the 2012-2013 school year. This is in response to the Missouri Supreme Court's decision in *Turner vs. Clayton School District* last summer, in which students residing in the St. Louis Public School District were previously enrolled as tuition students in the Clayton Schools prior to the St. Louis Public Schools losing its accreditation in 2007. The

families of the six students sought billing and payment by the respective schools for their students' tuition.

Another measure I am handling will modify the elementary and secondary education foundation formula and state aid for summer school. It plans to extend the state's phase-in of the foundation formula, modified in Senate Bill 287 back in 2005, through the 2013-2014 school year and eliminate summer school funding.

The third piece of legislation requires the Joint Committee on Education to oversee a task force on teacher compensation and effectiveness during the legislative interim between the First and Second Regular sessions of the 96th General Assembly. The task force will consist of 11 people, including two senators and two representatives that serve on the Joint Committee on Education. The charge of this task force is to consider options and make recommendations regarding educator compensation and effectiveness to the General Assembly by December 31, 2011.

It is an honor to serve as chair of the Missouri Senate Education Committee. I am confident these three proposed bills will start the dialogue to improve education in our state.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and answering any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senatorial District.

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