

For Immediate Release
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SHARING A VIEW OF THE STATE

Issues and Comments – 33rd Senatorial District

Senator

Chuck Purgason

"Be thankful we're not getting all of the government we're paying for."

- Will Rogers

This week Governor Jay Nixon delivered the annual State of the State address to a joint session of the General Assembly.

In the midst of 9.6% unemployment and sagging state revenues, there was no mention of the current state of the state. There was no serious conversation of the challenges we face in crafting the next state budget. There was no serious discussion of his priorities in his budget. No mention of serious tax reform, economic incentive reform, or health care reform. The Governor did not mention or take a stand on the health care proposals in Congress.

This was a "safe" speech. It did not address anything controversial, nor did Governor Nixon back any significant issue. He gave his office and the General Assembly all of the elbow room necessary to do anything and claim a victory - after all it is an election year.

Governor Nixon did state that:

We must keep the jobs we have and create thousands more. We must build a granite foundation for Missouri's future growth. And we must balance the budget without raising taxes.

This simple statement is a great place to start and deserves bipartisan cooperation to move Missouri forward in the coming year and decade. His economic proposals deserve our attention, we must build a budget that lives within our means without raising taxes, and we must position Missouri by simplifying our regulatory environment.

The State of the State address did open the door for Governor, the House, and the Senate to work together this session.

In contrast to Governor Nixon's silence on the health care proposals in Washington, D.C., the Missouri House passed a concurrent resolution this week by a vote of 111 to 46 that sends a message to our congressional delegation, Speaker Pelosi, and the President opposing these measures on the grounds that they are too expensive, too big, too corrupt, and hand out too many special deals. I expect the Senate to do the same. The cost to the state of Missouri is enormous and will do nothing bend the cost curve making health insurance more affordable.

According to a Rasmussen Reports poll released recently, 55% of the American people oppose these proposals and only 40% support the federal healthcare takeover and mandate being thrust upon us by President Obama, Senator Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi. Other polls in Missouri suggest opposition among Missourians is closer to 60 - 65%.

These proposals contain provisions that obligate the states to substantially increase the amount of money that each state will be required to pay for Medicaid with the exception of special backroom deals like Senator Nelson's Cornhusker Kickback for Nebraska that exempts Nebraska from this provision shifting their costs on the rest of the states.

The Missouri Department of Social Services estimates that the total cost to Missouri could range from \$2.18 billion to \$2.45 billion. This is on top of the \$100 million plus per year in new funding for natural caseload growth. Our budget, along with Missouri taxpayers, cannot bear this new shift of costs without increasing taxes or cutting expenditures on education or other vital state services.

The weeks ahead will pose many challenges for lawmakers. Short-term fiscal policies will fail to promote long-term growth. I will pursue policies that will allow people keep more of their own money, allow them to make decisions for themselves and their families, and give individuals more liberty in their consumption, savings, and debt retirement.

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions, and concerns. I can be reached in Jefferson City at (573)751-1882, you can e-mail me at chuck.purgason@senate.mo.gov or you can write to me by regular mail at 201 WEST CAPITOL AVENUE, ROOM 420, JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101.

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