

STATE SENATOR

RON RICHARD

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DISTRICT 32 - 2016 SESSION REPORT





Dear Constituents,

It continues to be an honor serving the men, women and children who live in Missouri's 32nd Senatorial District.

The 2016 session proved to be very productive, and I am truly proud of the work we accomplished this past year.

Along with crafting a fiscally responsible budget for Fiscal Year 2017, we passed legislation that will strengthen Missourians' Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms, save our K-12 funding formula and reduce welfare spending in Missouri.

During the annual veto session, we successfully overrode the governor's vetoes of 13 bills that we felt were right for Missouri and its citizens.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my Senate office if you have any questions about these issues or your state government.

Sincerely,

Ron Richard
State Senator

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Preserving the Integrity of Our Elections Process

Without a doubt, one of the greatest successes of the 2016 session was passing voter ID legislation that will bring greater integrity and fairness to Missouri's public elections. House Bill 1631 requires voters to provide a valid photo ID at the polls, such as a non-expired Missouri driver's license or non-expired military license. If a voter does not have a valid ID, that person may still receive a regular ballot by signing a statement, under penalty of perjury, attesting to their identity. If no statement is signed, the voter can vote provisionally. As part of a compromise to ensure no eligible voter is disenfranchised, the state and all fee offices will be required to provide a free photo ID to any voter who does not possess one and any underlying documents necessary to obtain it. House Bill 1631 will help prevent in-person voter fraud by improving security at the polls, ensuring Missouri voices are heard and giving our citizens confidence in the elections process.

House Bill 1631 was one of the 13 measures we voted to override during this year's veto session. The measure will only go into effect if Missouri voters also approve House Joint Resolution 53, which will appear on the November ballot. If passed, the joint resolution would make Missouri the 17th state to require a photo ID to vote.

Reducing Welfare Spending Lawmakers were also successful in overriding the governor's veto of legislation that will reduce welfare spending, which currently consumes one-third of Missouri's budget. Senate Bill 608 allows Medicaid providers to charge a fee to MO HealthNet participants for missed appointments or for failing to cancel an appointment within 24 hours prior to the appointment. The fee must be paid before another appointment can be scheduled with that provider. The permissible fees are as follows: no charge for the first missed appointment in a three-year period, \$5 for the second, \$10 for the third and \$20 for the fourth and each subsequent missed appointment in a three-year period. Fees are waived in cases of inclement weather. The measure also creates an \$8 copay fee for the use of a hospital emergency department in a non-emergency situation.

A Bipartisan Plan to Save the Foundation Formula

In May, my colleagues and I voted to override the governor's veto of Senate Bill 586, a bipartisan measure that will help save the state's public education funding formula. Very simply, SB 586 reinstates the 5 percent cap on current operating expenses that was removed in 2009. The cap was removed based on projections of approximately \$75 million annually in new gaming revenue, but the extra money never materialized. Unfortunately, the formula continued to grow at such an accelerated rate that it became all but impossible to fully fund.

Senate Bill 586 will take fully funding the formula from an unrealistic goal to an attainable goal within the next few years, preserving the formula for the foreseeable future. Most importantly, it will give Missouri school districts the predictability they need to effectively plan their budgets and provide a quality education to our students. Senate Bill 586 took effect on July 1, 2016.

Task Force on Dyslexia

Another education-related measure from the 2016 session is Senate Bill 638, which creates the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia and requires Missouri schools, including charter schools, to conduct dyslexia screenings beginning in the 2018-19 school year. Additionally, practicing teacher assistance programs shall include two hours of in-service training regarding dyslexia and related disorders that is to be provided by each school district for all practicing teachers.

Senate Bill 638 was signed into law in June and took effect on Aug. 28.

Protecting the Innocent Further review of our state abortion laws was another priority issue of 2016. In response to the recent allegations against the Planned Parenthood organization, the Missouri Senate established the Interim Committee on the Sanctity of Life. The committee met several times throughout the interim to investigate Planned Parenthood's business model and methods by which they dispose of human remains from aborted fetuses and whether any state dollars had been directly used in such activity.

The committee announced the initial results of its investigation in July. The findings concluded that Planned Parenthood's record on the sale of human fetal tissue is full of alarming gaps; Planned Parenthood appears to be out of compliance with state law regarding its disposal of fetal remains; and internal documents show shocking indifference to women's health and possible medical malpractice. These findings absolutely warrant revisiting our state laws on abortion and abortion providers.

Missourians have also made it clear they do not want any more of their taxpayer dollars to go to organizations that provide abortions. By defunding Planned Parenthood, the only abortion provider in the state, we ensured this will no longer happen. That being said, women in Missouri will still have access to high-quality, affordable — in some cases, free — health care at one of the federally qualified health centers, rural health care clinics or county health departments located in Missouri.

Strengthening the Second Amendment

State lawmakers also passed legislation expanding gun rights in Missouri. Through Senate Bill 656, we aimed to ensure that Missouri's law-abiding citizens have the legal right to protect themselves and their families.

Among other provisions, Senate Bill 656 allows an alternate method of certification with regard to training requirements for concealed carry applicants, expands the state's "Castle Doctrine" and provides that individuals not engaged in unlawful activity may use deadly force to protect themselves in public areas as well as on private property. Current law requires you to run from an approaching attacker and not defend yourself. The measure also allows Missouri residents who meet the requirements for a concealed carry permit to receive a lifetime concealed carry permit by paying a \$500 fee.

Since both the House and Senate approved the legislation by veto-proof margins during the final week of session, we were easily able to override the governor's veto in September.

Tort Reform Addressing Missouri's unfair and outdated civil judicial system was another goal for the 2016 session. I am pleased to say we passed two common-sense tort reform bills that would have gone a long way toward improving the Show-Me State's legal climate and economy.

Senate Bill 591 sought to align Missouri's outdated standard for expert witness testimony with the Daubert Standard, allowing judges to act as gatekeepers so that only those individuals who are truly expert witnesses may provide expert witness testimony. A second reform bill, Senate Bill 847, aimed to modify provisions relating to the collateral source rule and establish that the appropriate recovery for medical expenses is the actual cost or amount paid, rather than the value of the medical care rendered.

Unfortunately, the governor vetoed both of these important reform measures. Although the Senate voted to override the governor's veto of SB 847, no motion was made in the House; Senate Bill 591 was not brought up for an override attempt.



2016 Veto Session Recap

The annual veto session began at noon on Wednesday, Sept. 14, and concluded just 10 hours later. In total, members of the General Assembly voted to override 13 of the governor's vetoes. In addition to the bills already mentioned, successful overrides from the 2016 veto session include the following measures.

SENATE BILL 641 exempts federal agriculture disaster payments from state income tax.

SENATE BILL 844 modifies provisions relating to livestock trespass liability.

SENATE BILL 994 modifies provisions relating to alcohol.

SENATE BILL 1025 exempts instructional classes from sales tax.

HOUSE BILL 1414 exempts data collected by state agencies under the federal Animal Disease Traceability Program from disclosure under Missouri's sunshine law.

HOUSE BILL 1432 requires a hearing to be held within 60 days if a state employee is placed on administrative leave.

HOUSE BILL 1713 requires the Department of Natural Resources to provide information regarding advanced technologies to upgrade existing lagoon-based wastewater systems to meet any new or existing discharge requirements.

HOUSE BILL 1763 changes the laws regarding workers' compensation large deductible policies issued by an insurer.

HOUSE BILL 1976 changes the laws regarding service contracts.

HOUSE BILL 2030 authorizes a tax deduction equal to 50 percent of the capital gain resulting from the sale of employer securities to a certain Missouri stock ownership plans.

Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Breakdown

In any given session, passing the state budget is the single greatest task we undertake, requiring months of hard work and focused discussion. Although we had until early May to pass the Fiscal Year 2017 spending plan, we once again completed it ahead of schedule.

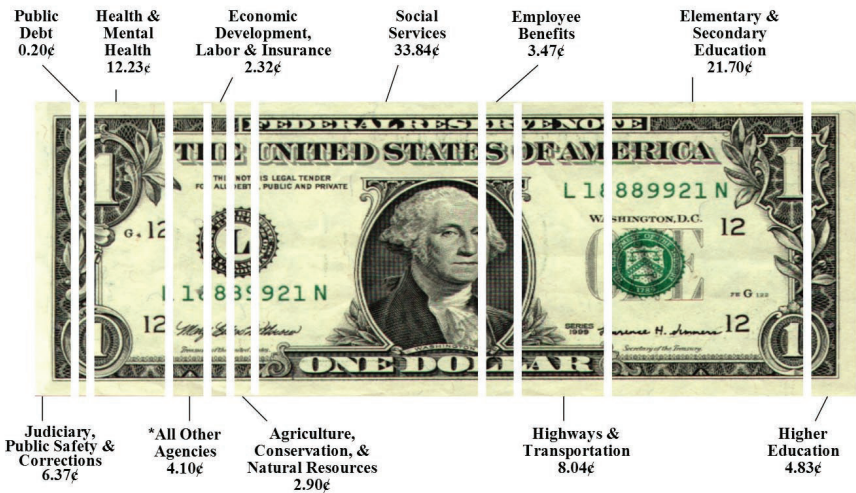
This year’s \$27.3 billion budget continues to reflect lawmakers’ commitment to funding our state’s vital services and programs, taking care of our most vulnerable citizens, eliminating bloated government spending and passing a fiscally responsible budget that Missouri taxpayers can actually afford. Of course, the fact that we were able to defund the state’s only abortion provider is one of the most notable aspects of this year’s budget. Fiscal Year 2017 runs from July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

Highlights from the FY 2017 \$27.3 billion budget:

- Record levels of funding for K-12 education, including an additional \$70.4 million;
- An increase of \$21.2 million for early childhood special education;
- A combined \$8.5 million in increases for the Access MO, Bright Flight and A+ scholarship programs;
- A 4 percent across-the-board increase in performance-based funding for higher education;
- \$1 million for the construction of airport hangers in Joplin; and
- A 2 percent pay increase for state employees.

DISTRIBUTION OF EACH TAX DOLLAR

FISCAL YEAR 2017 AFTER VETO OPERATING BUDGET
All Funds: \$27.258 Billion



*Revenue, Office of Administration, Elected Officials, General Assembly, and Real Estate