

STATE SENATOR GARY ROMINE



DISTRICT 3 - 2016 CAPITOL REPORT



Bringing Health Care to Every Corner of the State

In 2013, I chaired the Interim Committee on Medicaid Transformation and Reform, which was tasked with examining MO HealthNet and finding innovative solutions to a host of complex issues affecting the state Medicaid program. Expanding telehealth, or telemedicine, services in Missouri was one of the recommended reforms to come out of that committee.



Signed into law as part of Senate Bill 579, my telehealth legislation (Senate Bill 621) will allow doctors to practice remotely, via a computer or telephone connection. This will increase the availability of health care in every corner of the state, most especially in rural communities that do not often have easy access to specialists and the most advanced technologies.

In addition to expanding the number of providers and health care sites that are eligible to provide telehealth services, SB 621 also addresses the use of asynchronous store-and-forward technology in the practice of telehealth services for MO HealthNet and establishes a statewide home telemonitoring program for the MO HealthNet program. Home telemonitoring services are health care services that require scheduled remote monitoring of data related to a patient's health.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am pleased to say the 2016 legislative session was very productive, and we passed some great pieces of legislation that will help make the Show-Me State an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

While each session presents its own unique challenges, I am proud of how often our conversations resulted in real compromise and genuine progress. This year, Missouri lawmakers passed more than 100 measures that have since become law, as well as a fiscally responsible budget. We also voted to override the governor's vetoes of 13 bills.

In this annual newsletter, you'll find information on some of the General Assembly's major achievements, my legislative accomplishments for the year and the state operating budget for Fiscal Year 2017.

It continues to be an honor serving the constituents of Missouri's 3rd Senatorial District. As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns.

Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-4008, or visit my official Missouri Senate website: www.senate.mo.gov/romine.

Thank you and God bless.

Sincerely,

State Senator
District 3

JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

In May, I was honored to once again be named as chair of the Joint Committee on Education, which is comprised of 14 state senators and representatives. Among other duties, the committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the progress of education in the state's public schools, colleges and universities and making recommendations to the General Assembly for legislative action. As a state senator and former high school teacher, the intersection of education and government has always been one of my main focus areas, which is why I consider serving as chair of this hardworking committee such an honor and responsibility.

LAWMAKERS VOTE TO PROTECT MISSOURI'S ELECTIONS PROCESS

The long road to passing voter ID legislation in Missouri is just one example from this session of how we worked together as a legislative body to improve our state. Approved by the General Assembly in May, House Bill 1631 requires that all Missouri citizens wishing to vote must present a valid, non-expired form of government-issued ID at their polling location. It also requires the state and all fee offices to provide free photo IDs as well as any underlying documents necessary to obtain an ID.

As part of a compromise, HB 1631 permits any person who does not have a valid ID and who is otherwise qualified to vote to sign a statement, under penalty of perjury, attesting to their identity; the voter may then present an alternative ID (e.g., a student ID) and cast a regular ballot. Any person who does not want to sign the statement may cast a provisional ballot.

I believe HB 1631 is a common-sense solution that will strengthen the integrity of Missouri's public elections while ensuring no eligible voter is disenfranchised. The measure will only take effect if Missouri voters approve its companion constitutional amendment, House Joint Resolution 53, in November.

BUILDING A ROBUST CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION NETWORK IN MISSOURI

Senate Bill 620 was my first bill of the 2016 session to make it to the governor’s desk. This important piece of legislation will expand career and technical education (CTE) in Missouri by requiring the State Board of Education to establish minimum graduation requirements for a CTE certificate that a student can earn in addition to their high school diploma. Under SB 620, students entering high school in the 2017-2018 academic year and thereafter will be eligible for a CTE certificate.

The measure also changes the composition of the Career and Technical Education Advisory Council so that the commissioner of education, not the governor, appoints the council’s eleven members and expands the council to include two senators and two representatives.

As a graduate and former teacher of CTE, I have long understood its value. From better preparing our students for life after high school to ensuring we will always have a qualified labor force to fill in-demand jobs, a robust CTE network will benefit Missouri and its citizens in myriad ways for years to come.

Passing CTE legislation was an effort two years in the making. It has been my privilege to be a voice for the CTE community, and I sincerely look forward to seeing the real life positive impact SB 620 will have in the Show-Me State. Senate Bill 620 was signed into law in June.



Providing Our Mining Industry With Greater Certainty

As state senator of the largest mining district in Missouri, I understand the importance of crafting legislation that allows the industry to thrive while also protecting our citizens and providing a stable economic environment for our local communities.

This session, I sponsored Senate Bill 622, which seeks to standardize the property assessment process to help ensure our mining companies do not see huge increases in their property tax bills from year to year, unless they expand their operation. I filed SB 622 to prevent any more instances in which a property is assigned a commercial classification based on the possibility that it may someday be used for mining-related activities. Providing leaders of our mining industry with greater certainty on the property tax front will allow them to more confidently plan for the future, and it will help keep these well-paying jobs in our area for years to come.

The language of SB 622 can be found in House Bill 2381, which was approved by the governor in June.

THE RIGHT TO DEFEND AND PROTECT

Among the 13 veto overrides was Senate Bill 656: legislation that aims to strengthen the Second Amendment right of all law-abiding Missouri citizens to keep and bear arms. Thanks to SB 656, Missourians will have the legal right to use deadly force in public spaces to protect themselves and their families from physical threats. It also enacts what is known as “constitutional carry,” enabling Missouri citizens who are legally allowed to possess a firearm to carry a concealed firearm without first having to obtain a state permit.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 OPERATING BUDGET 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

State Senator Gary Romine

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A Big Thanks to My Legislative Staff



Pictured above (from left to right): Karen Jacquin, Administrative Assistant; Sen. Gary Romine; former intern Haley Tarvin, who came to us from Missouri State University and is majoring in political science and minoring in criminology, with an emphasis in pre-law; and Dan Hutton, Legislative Director.

WORKING FOR THE 3RD DISTRICT

As state senator for Missouri's 3rd Senatorial District, my foremost responsibility is to the men, women and children I represent. Since my first day in office, it has been my goal to serve my constituents to the best of my ability, to protect your interests and to craft legislation that will make our local communities cleaner, safer and stronger. Here are a few of the local issues we worked on this year:

- Adding two-way telecommunications devices, such as cell phones, to the list of items it is a crime to possess, deliver, deposit or conceal in a prison or jail;
- Fighting to make sure the 3rd District, which is home to more mines than any other district in Missouri, receives funds from the ASARCO settlement to use toward a number of worthy projects that will help mitigate environmental damage in Missouri's Lead Belt;
- Helping the Ste. Genevieve County Sheriff's Office to more easily enforce the county's local animal trespass law by requiring owners to immediately regain control of their pets and allowing the sheriff's office to enforce their ticketing policies if necessary; and
- Ensuring our public schools are not forced to go without, or go into bankruptcy, simply because the designated tax funds they count on to operate are tied up in litigation.