***This Week in the Missouri Senate* Script: Session Begins**

This week in the Missouri Senate, we review the opening days of the 2017 legislative session…

**Nat Snd 1 / Runs :01 / OC: (sfx out)**

*“(sfx)”*

The First Regular Session of the 99th General Assembly began at noon on Wednesday.

In regards to issues, Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard of Joplin says Right to Work remains a priority…

**Richard 1 / Runs :12 / OC: interest of employees.**

*“It gives businesses a chance not to be forced to have unions dictate to them negotiations on working conditions. We want good working conditions, but to be forced to join a union is not necessarily in the best interest of employees.”*

But Senate Minority Floor Leader Gina Walsh of Bellefontaine Neighbors calls the concept a bad idea…

**Walsh 2 / Runs :08 / OC: pay the fees.**

*“You should never get anything for free. I don’t think that the guy next to me should be able to come and join the club just because he wants to, and not pay the fees.”*

For Sen. Richard, this may be the year for some sort of education reform measure…

**Richard 3 / Runs :10 / OC: is just unacceptable.**

*“Again, I’m not sure what form it’ll take. But, failing school districts, with kids not getting an education, with kids going to universities and having to take remedial or reading is just unacceptable.”*

But, Sen. Walsh cautions any sort of “reform” package must be handled correctly…

**Walsh 4 / Runs :10 / OC: about any reform.**

*“And, I’m going to be very cautious about education reform, because — if you’ve been reading, and I’m sure you have — how well Riverview Gardens is doing, in just three years. I’m going to be cautious about any reform.”*

But, Sen. Richard says more ethics reform is probably not needed…

**Richard 5 / Runs :09 / OC: to change that.**

*“However, the Legislature is a microcosm of Missouri, and you got people who do the right thing, people who do the wrong thing — and, there’s no amount of legislation going to change that.”*

Senator Walsh adds the Legislature has to solve transportation funding…

**Walsh 6 / Runs :11 / OC: can be done.**

*“We need to sit down and just say to a group, or committee of our peers, and say, ‘Come up with two viable ways to fund this.’ And, I don’t even know if that can be done.”*

Senator Richard says his caucus maintains its majority…

**Richard 7 / Runs :11 / OC: this great state.**

*“We’ve been given a chance to govern, and we need to do it right. It’s my goal not to make any mistakes and to get Missouri in a better picture to live and work and be a part of this great state.”*

Senator Walsh says her side has added membership…

**Walsh 8 / Runs :09 / OC: have new members.**

*“We operated last year with a vacancy for part of the year, and we’re up to nine members. The dynamics of the [Missouri] Senate is going to change because you have new members.”*

There are also six new Missouri senators. They are 23rd District Sen. Bill Eigel of St. Charles, 21st District Sen. Denny Hoskins of Warrensburg, 4th District Sen. Jacob Hummel of St. Louis, 15th District Sen. Andrew Koenig of Manchester, 19th District Sen. Caleb Rowden of Columbia and 11th District Sen. John Rizzo of Independence.

And, remember, you can follow these and other issues facing the Missouri Senate by visiting our website: [senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov).

Reporting from the State Capitol, I’m Dean Morgan.