2016 Legislative Session Preview

Intro: Lawmakers return to the State Capitol on January 6th for the start of the second regular session of the 98th General Assembly. Jonathan Lorenz sits down with leaders from both sides of the aisle to gather their opinions on the upcoming legislative session.

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Locator: Missouri Senate

 Jefferson City

((NATS))

 Lawmakers from across the state return to Jefferson City on January sixth for the start of the two thousand sixteen legislative session.

 Two thousand sixteen signals the start of a new era in the Missouri Senate as Senator Ron Richard begins his first full session as President Pro Tem and Senator Mike Kehoe starts his first full session in the Majority Floor Leader’s office.

 Super: Sen. Ron Richard

 (R) Joplin

 *“My job is to get them in a position, democrats and republicans, to make a fair and open presentation of what they think how the state wants to go on issues.”*

 The two thousand fifteen legislative session ended with contention because of a legislative procedure used to force a vote on the right to work issue.

 Despite the possibility of hard feelings still lingering among lawmakers, the Missouri Senate’s top democrat claims it is a situation he and the Senate’s new leadership team will work through.

 Super: Sen. Joseph Keaveny

 (D) St. Louis

 *“Some of my members are still stinging from the way it proceeded last year so we’ve got to work our way through that and the majority leader, the president pro tem and myself, it is incumbent on us to improve the environment from that.”*

 One issue already grabbing the attention of lawmakers is transportation funding.

((NATS))

 The state of Missouri has the seventh largest road system in the country, but ranks forty-seventh in the nation when it comes to state funding for roads and bridges.

 Last session lawmakers looked at the possibility of raising the state’s gas tax but the effort didn’t make it to a vote before the Missouri Senate.

 *“We talked about it last year probably this year, I don’t know if there is an appetite on either side of the building for a tax increase, maybe there is.*

*The Speaker and I will be conferring on that shortly.”*

 *“I think we need to raise a tax, we need to raise revenue, be it a gas tax, which I would prefer.”*

 Lawmakers gavel in… at noon on January sixth for the start of the second regular session of the ninety-eighth General Assembly… reporting from the State Capitol, I’m Jonathan Lorenz.