



State Senator

**Jamilah
Nasheed**

5th District

End of Session Report

JEFFERSON CITY – Senator Jamilah Nasheed closed out the final week of the First Regular Session of 97th Missouri General Assembly impressively.

On the day that Malcolm X was first given recognition in the Missouri Capitol, Sen. Nasheed passed the first major education reform bill to pass the General Assembly in almost a decade. Senate Bill 125 established in statute the “St. Louis Plan,” a plan jointly agreed to by the teachers’ union and the school board administration, which establishes a more streamlined process for dismissing ineffective teachers.

Senator Nasheed’s education bill traveled from the Senate with overwhelming support. However, the bill was steeped in controversy when it arrived in the House, where it failed twice and was resurrected only after amendments were removed. School Superintendent Dr. Kelvin Adams, who asked Sen. Nasheed to sponsor the bill, called to thank her for the landmark achievement, as the legislation provides him a vital tool for transforming the school district.

No sooner than Sen. Nasheed had passed SB 125, she made a bold stand on the Senate floor that turned the tide in the movement to expand Medicaid by standing firm for the establishment of a Joint Committee on Medicaid Transformation. With the clock ticking to the end of the session, it had become an accepted fact that the majority-controlled Senate would not take any action this session on Medicaid expansion.

However, during the debate on a bill dealing with health care, Sen. Nasheed deftly offered an amendment to the bill that would have fully enacted the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act, which would ensure health care coverage for the more than 260,000 Missourians currently without health care insurance. Despite intense pressure from all sides to withdraw the motion, Sen. Nasheed refused, virtually bringing Senate proceedings to a halt.

“This is not the time to back down or give in,” Sen. Nasheed said, remaining unyielding to the pressure to withdraw her motion. The majority leadership then, somewhat frantically, sought a compromise in order to keep bills moving as the clock ticked down in the final

days of the session. An across-the-aisle colleague then offered an amendment to the bill, establishing the joint committee, and Sen. Nasheed expressed her appreciation for the amendment and the majority party for not allowing this legislative session to end without the discussion of Medicaid expansion moving forward.

The Joint Committee on Medicaid Transformation provides the vehicle for Missouri to craft Medicaid expansion legislation unique to Missouri, as other states, such as Arkansas, have done, and Sen. Nasheed is committed to seeing Medicaid expansion become a reality in this state.

In the final week, Sen. Nasheed also passed legislation to enact a re-entry program for persons coming out of prison, and secured for the program \$750,000 in funding. In addition, she was instrumental in securing \$700,000 in funding for a disparity study, which will substantially open up economic opportunities for minority and women business owners across the state. She also managed to secure \$300,000 in funding for a math and science tutoring program she created through legislation.

The final week capped off a freshman year in which Sen. Nasheed stood strong and eloquently in opposition to a slew of majority-sponsored bills designed to limit the rights of workers, undermine unions, and impose regressive sales taxes on ordinary citizens for the benefit of corporate interests, with Sen. Nasheed at one point conducting a four-hour filibuster on the floor.

When the majority presented legislation to prevent mortgage foreclosure mediation laws, such as that enacted by St. Louis County to assist homeowners facing foreclosure, Sen. Nasheed offered an amendment to not exempt the banks that received federal funds under the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). “How is it that we can give billions of taxpayer dollars to the banks to help them out, and not be willing to help out the homeowners on whose mortgages the banks are foreclosing?” Sen. Nasheed inquired of her Senate colleagues while vigorously debating the legislation on the floor.

As a freshman senator, Sen. Nasheed displayed uncommon political savvy in getting majority leadership to not bring to the floor for a vote legislation that would have enacted a photo identification requirement for voters – which has been a staple piece of legislation for the majority during the past few years. She also obtained from the majority leadership a commitment to not bring forth legislation that would have denied public assistance to persons not having a GED, and which would have denied public assistance to those in need as well.

“Although I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish this legislative session, I see so much more that needs to be done,” Sen. Nasheed said in assessing her first year in the Senate. “We still have not done enough to create jobs or spur greater economic development in the city,” she continued. “And with crime being so prevalent, we have spent way too much time this session talking about gun rights instead of crime prevention rights.”

When asked about her controversial style, Sen. Nasheed responded simply: “You can’t make an omelet without breaking some eggs.”

For more information on Sen. Nasheed, visit the Missouri Senate website or email Sen. Nasheed at Jamilah.Nasheed@senate.mo.gov

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