



BUDGET  
BREAKDOWN



IMPROVING  
HEALTHCARE



INCREASING MISSOURI  
EXPORTS

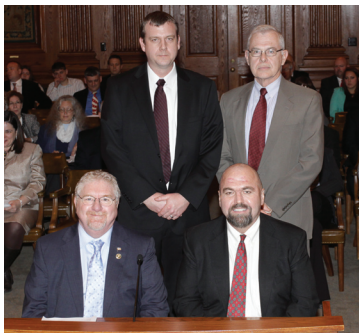
## SENATOR JAY WASSON

### 2013 Capitol Report

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

As another legislative year winds down, I'd like to take this opportunity to once again offer my sincerest gratitude to serve you in the Missouri Senate. It is an honor to represent the best region in the state, with some of the finest citizens in the world. In this annual newsletter, you'll find information on some of the major issues of the 2013 session and legislation I sponsored to better the lives of our fellow Missourians. If there is any way I can be of assistance to you, please contact me.

*Jay Wasson*



### Sen. Wasson's Committee Assignments

Financial and Governmental Organizations and Elections, Chairman;  
Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight; Jobs, Economic  
Development & Local Government; Small Business, Insurance & Industry;  
Transportation and Infrastructure

### HONORING OUR HEROES

I filed legislation this session to designate a bridge on U.S. Highway 65 in Greene County as the "Missouri Fallen Soldiers Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the great sacrifices our military members make to defend our country.

My measure was eventually included in House Bill 303, an omnibus transportation bill signed into law. We have a duty to remember the soldiers we've lost, who gave up their lives protecting our nation, our home. I was honored to carry this bill and see it become law.

We also approved legislation that allows for the creation of veterans' courts to handle cases involving substance abuse or mental illness of current or former military personnel. Also passed was a bill that allows funeral establishments and coroners that have the unclaimed remains of Armed Services members to release them to a veterans' organization for burial at a state or national veterans' cemetery.

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## Giving Home Buyers ALL the Facts

Recently, I was alerted to a problem in our district related to a subdivision in Rogersville. A number of citizens had purchased homes there, only to later learn the properties had substantial liens against them for Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) tax assessments from previous owners. The improvements are paid for by special tax assessments to property owners in the area of the project.

However, these improvements can sometimes take a while to complete, and in that time, residents may sell their homes. When the new owner then purchases the home, they may not be aware a NID tax assessment has been placed against the house or, in some instances, a lien has been filed against the property — these liens did not turn up on any title searches, so most homeowners didn't find out until after they bought the house.

**Senate Bill 248** requires the notice of neighborhood improvement districts to be filed with the recorder of deeds so these liens will turn up on title searches and consumers can know exactly what they're buying.



## Improving Healthcare Services For Missourians



The health and safety of my constituents is of the highest priority. I filed a number of measures this year aimed at improving medical services for Missourians, from increasing access to healthcare for rural citizens to ensuring the safety of our pharmaceutical drugs.

In the mid 2000s, the General Assembly began appropriating funds to allow the Board of Pharmacy to test drugs to ensure they have the proper strength and quality, largely to prevent incidents like the compounding pharmacy in Massachusetts that dispensed contaminated drugs, resulting in 44 deaths.

The problem is that no law was ever specifically passed granting the board the authority to test these drugs. **Senate Bill 306**, which I filed this session, gives the board the power to continue its drug-testing program.

**House Bill 315**, the House version of my legislation, **Senate Bill 147**, will allow elderly patients with prescription eyedrops to get refills before the prescriptions officially expire. This will let those elderly patients, who because of accidental spills might not have enough for the full 30 days, get a refill without having to go back to the doctor.

The bill also gives the Board of Healing Arts the authority to regulate athletic trainers in our state to ensure they meet current standards.

**Senate Bill 330** modifies the legal requirement that advanced nurse practitioners in collaborative practice arrangements with doctors work within a certain distance from the physician so that these nurses can provide care at rural health clinics. The bill only suspends the requirement for 28 days a year.

The legislation will also allow dental assistants to apply pit or fissure sealants and topical fluoride. This bill will give more rural Missourians access to healthcare they need.

## Second Injury Fund Fix

Fixing the Second Injury Fund (SIF) was one of the Legislature's top priorities. In recent years, the funding mechanism for the SIF has become unsustainable, mainly due to the 2008 recession. The SIF is funded through a surcharge on workers' compensation insurance premiums. When unemployment began to rise, workers' compensation premiums fell, bringing in less and less revenue for the fund. It is now nearly insolvent.

We passed **Senate Bill 1** this year to address the fund's shortfall. The measure establishes a funding mechanism that allows a supplemental surcharge to bolster the SIF in instances of a shortfall. The bill also removes permanent partial disabilities from the system, which will eliminate 70 percent of the claims.

Unfortunately, the surcharge rate for employers will increase. I'm not happy about this increase, and neither were many of my colleagues. However, the cost of doing nothing would be far higher than this solution. And, the backlogged claims against the SIF should be completely paid out by 2020, at which point rates will return to normal.





# Budget Breakdown

## Fiscal Year 2014 Operating Budget Distribution of Each Tax Dollar



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

This year's budget for Fiscal Year 2014 totaled around \$25 billion, a slight increase from the year before. We actually have more funds than we appropriated, as revenue collections are higher than we predicted, a sign our economy is beginning to bounce back from the last few years. Funding for the K-12 education foundation formula was increased by around \$60 million, and higher education also received a boost of about \$34 million.

In addition, the budget includes \$10 million to the University of Missouri to create a Springfield clinic campus with Mercy Hospital and CoxHealth. The program should enroll around 30 physicians every year, who will hopefully stay in our area when finished. The final budget also includes \$1.3 million to establish an occupational therapy program at Missouri State University.

I was also happy to see a \$600,000 increase in funding for the Rural Crimes Unit. As the price of beef has risen, so too has the number of cattle thefts. The extra funding is a good first step in combating a trend that is hurting an important area of our economy.

Other noteworthy items in the budget include \$73.2 million for Missouri's seven veterans' homes, an additional \$1 million in general revenue funding for the state's five Regional Autism Projects, and a \$1 million increase to the A+ Schools Program.

## Helping Our Fellow Missourians

Missouri's benevolent tax credit programs support charities and non-profit organizations like food pantries and pregnancy resource centers. Unfortunately, a number of the tax credits for these programs were set to expire this year. To address the issue, we approved Senate Bill 20, which was combined with legislation I sponsored to extend or renew our state's benevolent tax credits, including the Residential Dwelling Accessibility Tax Credit, the Pregnancy Resource Center Tax Credit and the Food Pantry Tax Credit, among others. I was grateful to see it pass.

## PROTECTING MISSOURI'S EMERGENCY RESPONDERS



Every day, there are countless vehicular accidents on our roadways. Within minutes, emergency workers, including first responders, firefighters, police officers and paramedics, are at the scene to treat the injured and provide assistance in any way they can. They represent one of our best impulses — to help our fellow citizens when disaster strikes.

Unfortunately, this is not without its dangers for the emergency personnel. There have been multiple incidents of emergency responders struck by passing traffic as they work an accident. Some have even lost their lives.

This year I filed **Senate Bill 282**, which would go far in protecting our emergency workers. The legislation increases the penalties for moving violations and traffic offenses that occur within an active emergency zone.

People need to know how important it is to look out for our emergency workers. This bill creates a safety zone around the scene of accidents to discourage imprudent driving. I was happy to see the governor sign this important bill into law.



*Shown above, Sen. Wasson receives a 2013 legislative award for his work benefitting emergency medical service personnel.*

## State Senator Jay Wasson

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## Fighting Fraud in the Initiative Petition Process

As chairman of the Financial and Governmental Organizations and Elections Committee, I've heard numerous reports of abuse within the initiative petition process, from falsifying signatures to misleading citizens on what exactly they're signing.

House Bill 117, which I carried in the Senate, adds more transparency to the initiative petition process so the public knows exactly who's sponsoring the petition and what exactly they're endorsing. It also clarifies the Secretary of State's role in the process.

The initiative petition process is an important tool for citizens to exercise their democratic rights. Allowing fraud and abuse in the system undermines not only the process, but the efforts of those involved citizens who wish to implement real change in their state. It is critical we continue to maintain the sanctity of this vital right.

## Gubernatorial Appointments

Some of the citizens from the 20th District appointed to state boards this year include Chuck Wooten (shown right) Missouri Veterans Commission; Michael Jinks, Missouri Propane



Gas Commission; Dr. Brian Vesely, Missouri Board of Examiners for Hearing Instrument Specialists; and Melinda Nicholson, Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board.

## Increasing Missouri Exports Worldwide

This year, I joined the governor, fellow lawmakers and Missouri business leaders on a week-long trade trip to Taiwan and

South Korea. It was an incredible opportunity, not only for those of us on the trip, but for the state at large. Missouri is part of a global economy.

Numerous companies throughout the state regularly

ship products across the world, especially Asia, where the demand for agricultural goods has exploded in recent years.

Shipping more goods out of Missouri will bring more jobs to our state. We have to foster these business partnerships and expand our presence in foreign markets.

Our trip was successful on many levels. The mission resulted in agreements to sell a total of \$1.9 billion in Missouri goods to Korea and Taiwan over the next four years. This is a huge step in growing our exports to these countries, which will benefit businesses across the state.

I was honored to be a part of this trip. I'm amazed at how connected our world has become, that corn grown here in Missouri somehow finds its way to a dinner table in South Korea. It was eye-opening and reaffirmed how important it is that we continue to foster these trade partnerships.

