



When the Second Regular Session of the 97th General Assembly, which began in January, came to a close on May 16, 2014, I can honestly say I was both elated, and disappointed. I was elated to pass two major pieces of legislation; block yet another attempt to disenfranchise citizens through a voter ID bill; and secure nearly \$1 million in the budget for math and science tutoring for our children. In addition, I was pleased my bill to raise the minimum wage to \$10 an hour passed out of committee. Most beneficially, through the packed-room hearing on the minimum wage bill, we were able to shed greater public light and further the fight for hard-working Missourians.

I was disappointed, however, that the Majority Caucus this session was so focused on gun rights, restricting abortion rights, cutting taxes for the rich, and right-wing ideological issues that the Senate failed to once again enact Medicaid expansion or pass any legitimate economic development measures, such as raising the minimum wage, which would have created the jobs desperately needed in our community and throughout the state.

Before the legislative session began, I prefiled the bills listed below. I advertised those proposals in local newspapers, so that my constituents could see my agenda for the session. That way, at the end of the session, I could relay to you my efforts to have those bills enacted into law.

Senate Bill 531 — This bill would have raised minimum wage in Missouri to \$10 per hour. Amazingly, and despite the majority's staunch opposition, we were able to get this bill passed out of committee and placed on the Senate calendar. The committee hearing on the bill turned into a mini rally on the rights of hard-working Missourians to earn a living wage. Citizens packed the huge Senate committee room. We heard expert and moving testimony about how raising the minimum wage would benefit our economy and make a major difference in the lives of so many.

Senate Bill 532 — I am proud and very pleased to say that we succeeded in passing SB 532, which will enable relative caregivers to be able to consent to medical treatment and education matters for a child whose parents have all but abandoned them. With so many extended family caregivers in our community, this bill will enable them to avoid the lengthy court process to become a full legal guardian.

Senate Bill 731 — This is another bill I am so proud to say we passed. The act changes the nuisance law to give community organizations a major legal tool to fight blighted and abandoned properties that are an eyesore, spur crime, and ruin property values. I look forward to this legislation being used in our community to combat the problem of run down properties owned by people who do not live in the community.

Senate Bill 616 — Although SB 616, which I titled the “Every Child Can Learn Act,” did not pass out of committee, I am pleased to report some of its major components were placed as amendments on Senate Bill 493, which was the huge school transfer bill. The top priority of the Senate this session. SB 493 incorporates two provisions from my SB 616: one ending the practice of social promotions, which I have long championed, and another to accredit individual schools.

Senate Bill 555 — I was pleased that SB 555, which would have banned legislators and their staff from receiving free sports and entertainment tickets from lobbyists, actually made it out of committee and was debated on the floor of the Senate. The culture of the lobbyist influence is so strong, however, that, unfortunately, I think it will take several legislative efforts to make significant changes in the campaign ethics reform law.

Senate Bill 565 — This bill, which would have required the reporting of stolen firearms, became one of the most controversial subjects of this legislative session, after I attached it as an amendment to Senate Bill 613, the major gun bill backed by conservatives. It became a national story, with me taking to the Senate floor in high heels for a five-hour filibuster before the powerful gun rights advocates intervened to bully the majority party to strip my amendment requiring stolen firearms be reported in 72 hours.

Finally, I want to thank the many constituents, organizations and others who communicated their concerns, ideas, positions and thoughts with my office during the legislative session. I particularly want to thank the many of you who journeyed to Jefferson City to personally express and advocate your feelings and beliefs. Your presence in the Capitol is effective. It truly makes a difference. Seeing and feeling first hand your spirit of determination to make our community better inspires me to remain ever true and committed to my pledge to be “The Voice of the Voiceless.”

Thank you.

*For more information on Sen. Nasheed, visit her Missouri Senate website at [www.senate.mo.gov/nasheed](http://www.senate.mo.gov/nasheed) or email her at [Jamilah.Nasheed@senate.mo.gov](mailto:Jamilah.Nasheed@senate.mo.gov).*

