



9th
District

State Senator Shalonn "Kiki" Curls NEWSLETTER

2013 End of Session Report

Dear 9th District Citizens:

The First Regular Session of the 97th General Assembly came to a close in mid-May. Although leaders of the Missouri House and Senate called the 2013 session a success, most observers argue the session was full of lost opportunities and misplaced priorities.

Missouri lawmakers had a unique opportunity to dramatically improve the state's economy while greatly expanding access to basic health care needs for hundreds of thousands of Missourians this year. Expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would have provided health care coverage to 300,000 Missourians who currently lack health insurance, while creating more than 20,000 jobs across our state. Unfortunately, those in the majority caucus could not come to a consensus and pass beneficial health care legislation for a significant portion of Missourians.

House and Senate members controlling the legislative agenda promised that jobs and economic development would top the list of priorities for the 2013 session, yet they failed to address the economic needs of Kansas City and St. Louis, the two largest economic engines of our state.

In addition, efforts to revise the school funding formula failed once again this year, with lawmakers opting instead to create an interim committee to study the issue over the summer. However, we did lift the two-year waiting period imposed on school districts after the loss of accreditation, so we can take immediate action to improve these districts and give our students every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Members of my political party in the Senate and House did manage to stop or weaken a number of bills that would have harmed public education and labor unions in the state. During the Legislature's annual veto session in mid-September, I stood firm to help sustain the governor's vetoes on two major bills considered during veto session, a dangerous tax cut bill that would have harmed education and other vital state services and a measure that would have weakened union workers' rights.

During the 2013 legislative session, I sponsored several bills designed to benefit all Missourians throughout the state. One particular piece of legislation would have ensured Missouri's mass transit workers' safety while they're on the job. I was disappointed when the governor vetoed this important measure. I will once again file and push this legislation, as well as others, forward in 2014.

My office will use this time between legislative sessions back home in Kansas City to meet with citizens throughout the district, attend events in the area, draft bills for 2014, and examine how to best serve the residents of the 9th District.

Shalonn "Kiki" Curls

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Missouri's Spending Plan for Fiscal Year 2014

Missouri senators completed work on the approximate \$25 billion FY 2014 budget one day before the constitutional deadline to pass our state's spending plan, approving the 13 House budget bills for the fiscal year that began July 1. I served on a conference committee made up of Senate and House members and many hours were spent during the final weeks of session trying to reconcile differences between the budgets approved by the two chambers.

The state spending plan for the next fiscal year includes a \$66 million increase in funding for K-12 education and increased funding for higher education by \$25 million. The budget also includes \$76 million for Missouri's seven veterans' homes, which is an increase of \$2.2 million compared to the previous year.

Also included in our state's operating budget for Fiscal Year 2014 was the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (\$250,000), located in the heart of our great city. In addition, \$225,000 found in House Bill 12 goes to fund two program models for the Greater Kansas City Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) that create sustainable communities and help families achieve economic stability.

Operating Budget for 9th Senate District and Surrounding KC Area

- **\$525.6 million – Foundation Formula**
- **\$31.7 million – Metropolitan Community Colleges**
- **\$6.3 million – State Schools for the Severely Handicapped**
- **\$3 million – Jackson County Sports Authority (Arrowhead & Kauffman)**
- **\$2.5 million – Division of Youth Services Facilities**
- **\$2.5 million – Juvenile Court Personnel Reimbursement – Jackson County**
- **\$2.5 million – Kansas City Community Release Center**
- **\$2 million – Bartle Hall Convention Center**
- **\$700K – Disparity Study**
- **\$250K – Negro Leagues Museum**
- **\$225K – Greater Kansas City LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation)**
- **\$200K – WWI Memorial**
- **\$178K – Kansas City Re-entry Program**
- **\$100K – Kansas City Tutoring Program**

Health Care Insurance Bill Sponsored by Sen. Curls Enacted Into Law

A measure I sponsored this session that contains several important health care provisions was signed by the governor in July and most provisions found within the legislation immediately became law. Senate Bill 262 prohibits larger deductibles, copayments or coinsurance amounts for services using telemedicine compared to the same health care service provided through face-to-face diagnosis, consultation or treatment. Telemedicine uses modern-day information technology to provide certain health care services to various citizens, especially those who are not able to easily leave their homes or do not have readily available access to medical facilities.



My legislation is a great way for Missourians to gain access to health care across our state. It significantly saves citizens money and time by reducing the need for travel from rural areas of Missouri and saving taxpayer dollars by having to pay for medical travels, such as instances when citizens who are on Medicare are transported from nursing homes to medical treatment centers. This is incredibly important as we look for ways to provide improved access to health care around the state in rural and urban communities. The telemedicine portion of the bill will take effect Jan. 1, 2014.

Another portion of the bill addresses the licensure of health insurance navigators. The provision allows licensed health insurance navigators to provide fair and impartial information and services in connection with eligibility, enrollment and program specifications of any health benefit exchange operating in Missouri. The bill also gives these navigators the authority to facilitate the selection of a qualified health plan and initiate the enrollment process, as well as provide referrals to any applicable office or agency for enrollees regarding questions or concerns pertaining to their health plan or coverage.

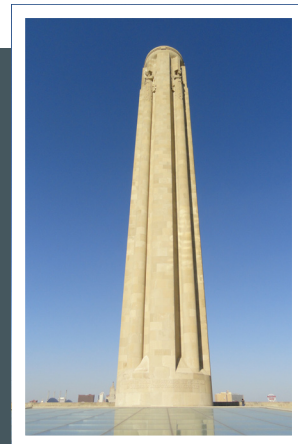
Additional provisions added to Senate Bill 262 during the legislative session:

- Allow health maintenance organizations to charge deductibles and coinsurance for basic health care services;
- Grant the offering of health benefit managed care plans from HMOs and other health carriers that require all health care services to be delivered by participating providers in the HMO's or health carrier's network;
- Outline the requirements for a health carrier to credential — assess and validate the qualifications of a practitioner to provide patient care services and act as a member of the health carrier's provider network — a health care practitioner; and
- Require an actuarial analysis of the cost impact to consumers, health insurers, and other private and public payers if a state mandate was enacted to provide health plan coverage for oral cancer drugs as well as the diagnosis and treatment of certain eating disorders.

Honoring History and Our World War I Heroes

Our city has the great privilege of hosting — one of many cultural offerings — a monument to the men and women who served our country and fought for our freedoms. The Fiscal Year 2014 operating budget contains \$200,000, which I requested as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to help fund the day-to-day operations of the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial in Kansas City. This museum was designated by Congress nearly a decade ago as our nation's official World War I Museum. Today, this museum operates as a non-profit organization that is dedicated to honoring those who served in the Great War.

In order to provide additional support for this historic landmark, I signed on to co-sponsor legislation this year that allows motor vehicle registration applicants to make a \$1 donation (\$10 donation for military license plates) to fund the National World War I Museum. The bill immediately became law when the governor signed the legislation in July.



Missouri's Missed Opportunity - Inaction on Medicaid Expansion

Despite a unified show of support for expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the majority party refused to consider the inclusion of nearly \$1 billion in federal funding to expand Medicaid in Missouri, opting instead for an interim committee to study Medicaid expansion and reform during the time between legislative sessions. Members of my political party sponsored legislation and offered amendments several times during the year to expand Medicaid in order to provide health care to hundreds of thousands of working poor in Missouri, but we were defeated each time. Numerous organizations, churches and social service groups advocated for Medicaid expansion, culminating in one of the largest rallies at the Capitol all year.

During debate on House Bill 11, which would have been the vehicle for Medicaid expansion, I shared my disappointment at this missed opportunity to help hundreds of thousands of working families in the state of Missouri that don't have health insurance. The expansion would have brought thousands of jobs to our state, as we spent countless hours on the floor discussing economic development and moving our state forward. I feel we have a moral and economic responsibility to the people of this state. When we have the ability to provide health care to thousands of people and create additional jobs, we should act on those opportunities in order to make life better for the people in Missouri.

However, those in the majority party refused to budge — arguing the federal government could not be trusted to pay its share of the cost of expansion. The federal government would pay 100 percent of the cost of expansion for the first three years and would never pay less than 90 percent of the cost after that timeframe. A University of Missouri study released earlier this year found expanding Medicaid would create 24,000 new jobs in the first year alone, producing enough new tax revenue for the state to cover its share of the cost of the expansion. Missouri now stands to lose billions of dollars in federal funding, and nearly 300,000 working Missourians will continue to go without needed health care services as a result of lawmakers' failure to expand Medicaid.

The consequences of inaction are already occurring in Missouri. Liberty Hospital, northeast of the Kansas City area, recently announced it was going to lay off 129 employees because the Legislature did not expand Medicaid under ACA.

Senators during the 2013 regular session set in place a plan to create a 10-member committee that will meet throughout the interim to discuss the issue of Medicaid transformation and reform. I remain hopeful my colleagues will give this important topic their undivided attention and do what's right for the people of this state.

Affordable Care Act and Open Enrollment Information

Open Enrollment for the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace began Oct. 1. Visit www.healthcare.org or call **1-800-318-2596** to learn more.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201
Toll-Free: 1-877-696-6775

Disparity Study Spearheaded by Sen. Curls Receives State Funding

Our state's spending plan passed this year includes \$700,000 for a disparity study that will ensure that minority- and women-owned businesses can compete fairly for state contracts. We want to make sure that minority- and women-owned businesses have a fair shot at securing state contracts for infrastructure projects, but we need new information before we can determine how to allocate those dollars. This new information will help us determine whether or not everyone is receiving equal access to state contracts.

A disparity study compares the actual number of minority- and women-owned businesses in the state against the actual number of minority- and women-owned businesses receiving state government contracts. A disparity exists when minority- and women-owned businesses are underutilized in the state contracting system. The last disparity study conducted in Missouri was commissioned in 1994 and completed in 1998.



Senator Curls and her colleague, Sen. Scott Sifton, discuss important legislation in the chamber of the Missouri Senate.



Senator Curls with the students from University Academy, a school located in the 9th District that participated in an 18-month 20/20 leadership program and traveled to Jefferson City in late January to learn about the State Legislature.

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Increasing Pay for KC Police Department

My bill, Senate Bill 224, was included in House Bill 336, which was signed by the governor in June. It increases the maximum salary that may be paid to officers of the Kansas City Police Department. I'm proud of the work we accomplished in the Legislature on behalf of our hard-working law enforcement. These men and women deserve our support as they uphold the law and protect the citizens of our great city.



Senator Curls with 9th District students who are members of the Engage KC Leadership Board, which strives to mobilize and encourage people to become engaged in the civic arena and promote positive initiatives in the community.

Kansas City Public School Retirement System

The Legislature also delivered to the governor this session a bill that modifies the Kansas City Public School Retirement System to ensure teachers' and educational professionals' long-term sustainability and security. This was done through Senate Bill 23, which included language I sponsored Senate Bill 223. Many individuals rely on their pensions as their primary source of retirement income. This legislation continues Missouri's commitment to sound fiscal principles in sustaining retirement security for our teachers and education officials in the Kansas City area. The bill received the governor's signature in July and took effect in August.

“Clifton J. Scott Memorial Highway”

I sponsored legislation this session that names a portion of I-70 beginning at Noland Road and continuing eastward to Lee's Summit Road in Jackson County as the “Clifton J. Scott Memorial Highway.” Scott was a motorist assist operator for the Department of Transportation who was killed while working a vehicle accident in Independence.

My bill, Senate Bill 442, was included in House Bill 303 & 304, which were signed by the governor in July. It is my hope this memorial highway, which honors this dedicated public servant who lost his life while working to protect others on our roadways, will remind motorists to take immediate action, slow down and pay attention to their surroundings when they see highway workers and law enforcement officers at the scene of roadside accidents or work zones.

Senator Curls' Legislative Committees

- Agriculture, Food Production & Outdoor Resources
- Appropriations
- Education
- Progress and Development, Vice Chairwoman
- Small Business, Insurance & Industry
- Blue Ribbon Panel on Immigration
- Joint Committee on Capital Improvements and Leases Oversight
- Joint Committee on Corrections
- Joint Committee on MO HealthNet
- Joint Committee on Tax Policy
- Senate Interim Committee on Capital Improvement Assessment and Planning
- Missouri Oral Chemotherapy Parity Interim Committee
- Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children
- Missouri Women's Council