

State Senator

Mike Parson



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PROTECTING AGRICULTURE

The success of the agriculture industry drives our state's economy and puts food on the table for Missourians, Americans and people across the globe. The industry was strengthened this year with the passage of Senate Bill 12. The measure increases weight limits for trucks hauling livestock and grains during harvest, adds livestock to the equine liability waiver, and allows Missouri beef producers more control of the state's Beef Checkoff program.

The governor also signed House Bill 259, a measure known as the "Dairy Revitalization Act." The legislation aids dairy producers with Federal Margin Insurance Premium payments; gives eighty \$5,000 scholarships for students who want to return to the dairy industry; and requires an annual report by the University of Missouri on innovations in the dairy industry.

Embracing Technology

This year the General Assembly passed vital legislation that is aimed at moving our state forward in hopes of attracting new businesses to Missouri. My colleagues and I passed one of my sponsored bills, Senate Bill 149, legislation that offers sales and use tax exemptions to data storage centers looking to establish, expand or relocate to the Show-Me State.

Data storage centers house computer servers storing digital information for credit card providers, online retailers, vital health records and Internet search engines. The advent of cloud computing and storage has made data storage centers a billion-dollar industry. Nationwide, the demand for such facilities is far greater than the data storage centers' capacity can accommodate. Through this incentive, Missouri will be able to attract data storage centers as the industry attempts to meet the large demand.

To receive the sales and use tax exemption, a new data storage center must show the project will result in at least \$5 million of new facility investment and create at least 10 new jobs with wages of at least 150 percent of the county average wage over a two year period. The Missouri Department of Economic Development and Department of Revenue are authorized to conduct random audits to ensure compliance with the requirements for state and local sales and use tax exemptions authorized under the act.

Due to our climate, geography, central location and a relatively inexpensive cost of energy, our state is a great location for these centers. Our neighboring states, including Kansas, Illinois, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Iowa, already offer these types of incentives to lure data storage companies to their areas. It's time Missouri acts before we get left behind in the new digital age. The governor signed Senate Bill 149 into law. The legislation took effect on Aug. 28, 2015.

Mizzou's 2015 Henry S. Geyer Award



This year, I was honored to receive the Henry S. Geyer Award from the Mizzou Alumni Association. The MAA's Legislative Network Committee (MLN) annually presents the award to one state-elected official and one citizen who exemplify the dedication and spirit of Henry S. Geyer. As a former state representative, Geyer believed education was the key to progress and prosperity in Missouri and introduced a bill to establish the University of Missouri in 1839.

Ten years ago, when I first came to the State Capitol, I really was not in tune with the education needs of our state. I mostly focused on issues relating to agriculture and government waste. Since my time in office, I have had a chance to see the state institutions across Missouri and understand the important role they play in educating our children and grandchildren so they will be able to meet the future demands of our workforce. I am thankful for this prestigious award, and will continue to help build upon the successes of advocating for strong public policy when it comes to education in our state.

CRIME VICTIMS & PUBLIC SAFETY

One of my sponsored bills that was signed into law will help those who have sustained physical or psychological injury as a result of a violent crime. In Missouri, we have the Crime Victims' Compensation Program, which assists crime victims with funding for medical and counseling expenses, as well as lost wages if the victim was gainfully employed on the date of the crime. If the victim was killed during a crime, the program can also help family members with the costs of funeral and burial expenses, as well as any out-of-pocket expenses not covered through collateral sources. Under current law, the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund can pay eligible victims up to \$200 per week for the loss of employment and for injury or death. Senate Bill 141 raises this amount to \$400 per week, giving victims and their families a little more money to make up for lost wages or the loss of support. In addition, the bill allows the Department of Public Safety to negotiate with providers of medical care and other services on behalf of the victim. The Crime Victims' Compensation Program is funded through fines paid by the criminals who commit these horrible acts.

Senate Bill 426 is legislation I sponsored this session designed to help our public safety officials, community mental health liaisons, courts and citizens communicate with each other during crisis situations. The goal is to form better community partnerships and save valuable resources that might otherwise be expended on unnecessary jail, prison and hospital stays for individuals with behavioral or mental health issues. The bill allows community mental health liaisons to access specific records from mental health facilities and files maintained by courts regarding people with behavioral health issues who have frequent interaction with law enforcement. Senate Bill 426 will help improve the treatment of people with behavioral issues by allowing our mental health liaisons to communicate faster with public safety officials. The new provisions went into effect on Aug. 28, 2015.

Bonding Legislation

This year, lawmakers approved House Bills 17, 18 and 19, appropriations bills that contain provisions for our state to move forward on some much needed maintenance and repair projects that have lapsed for over a decade. The maintenance and repair of these buildings will implement energy efficiencies, thereby reducing the cost to operate these buildings and address safety concerns. The General Assembly appropriated \$150 million for repairs of state-owned buildings, \$160 million for universities and community college facilities, \$40 million will go towards repairs to the deteriorating State Capitol building, and \$10 million for upgrades to state parks, which generate revenue from tourism.

SMALL BUSINESS, INSURANCE AND INDUSTRY

The General Assembly made history in May by advancing legislation that would make Missouri a Right-to-Work state. House Bills 116 & 569 would have barred employers from requiring employees to engage in or cease engaging in certain labor practices. The governor, however, chose to veto the measure, and when lawmakers met for our annual veto session in September, the veto was upheld.

One of my duties as chairman of the Senate Small Business, Insurance and Industry Committee is to make sure every bill that is heard receives a fair and public hearing. This year my committee heard various pieces of legislation dealing with unions and certain labor practices. Even though the vote was close, I'm proud the bill was vetted by my committee and heard on the floor before we voted in the Senate.

Budget Breakdown

Highlights from the Fiscal Year 2016 \$26.028 billion budget:

- Record levels of funding for K-12 education, including a \$84.2 million increase;
- A \$12 million increase to higher education through performance based funding;
- \$18.4 million for the Missouri Technology Corporation;
- A \$2 million increase for the A+ Schools program;
- \$28 million for Missouri's Victim of Crime Act;
- An additional \$5 million for Early Child Special Education;
- \$150 million for repairs and renovations to state-owned buildings;
- Rejected \$500,000 in salary increase for judges and \$900 in salary increases for legislators.

DISTRIBUTION OF EACH TAX DOLLAR FISCAL YEAR 2016 TRULY AGREED AND FINALLY PASSED OPERATING BUDGET All Funds: \$26.028 Billion



Senator Parson's Legislative Successes

Senate Bill 141 - Raises the amount the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund can pay to eligible victims and provides that the Public Safety Department can negotiate costs on behalf of victims. **(Signed by the governor)**

Senate Bill 149 - Creates state and local sales and use tax exemptions for data storage centers and allows municipalities to enter into loan agreements, or sell, lease, or mortgage municipal property for a technology business facility project. **(Signed by the governor)**

Senate Bill 426 - Allows community mental health liaisons to access specified confidential records maintained by specified institutions. **(Signed by the governor)**

House Bill 50 - Handled by Senator Parson in the Senate, this legislation changes the requirements for disclosure of information regarding insurance holding companies. **(Signed by the governor)**

House Bill 391 - Handled by Senator Parson in the Senate, this legislation changes the notice requirements for automobile insurance cancellations or refusals. **(Signed by the governor)**

House Bill 613 - Handled by Senator Parson in the Senate, this legislation would change the laws regarding the collection of property taxes. **(Signed by the governor)**

House Bill 709 - Handled by Senator Parson in the Senate, this legislation changes the laws regarding entities regulated by the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration. **(Signed by the governor)**

SOME OF OUR VISITORS TO THE CAPITOL THIS YEAR



Junior R.O.T.C. students from Smith-Cotton High School in Sedalia. The Raider Team has won the National title five out of the last six years.



Members of the American Legion Post 305 from Cole Camp stopped by to visit.



FFA students, teachers and guests from Dallas County attended the Farm Bureau's Youth Leadership Academy.



Public Administrators-Barbara Davolt, Carol Johnson, Charlie Ackerman, Nancy Wingate, Debbie Gwin, & Rhonda Noe visited my office.



Students from Weaubleau 8th grade stopped by to visit during session in the Missouri Senate.



Youth from Polk & Hickory County 4-H U.M. Extension visited the state capitol.