

2017 Summer Newsletter



State Senator JASON HOLSMAN District 7

Dear Constituents,

Serving as your state senator is a great honor, and I'm proud to represent a diverse district. I have been hard at work standing firmly against employment discrimination, supporting efforts to combat substance abuse and expressing to my colleagues the values and will of the people of Kansas City.

Despite passing many unsound bills, including those that weaken the workforce protections Missouri employees have enjoyed for decades, the Legislature had a historic session, making significant progress in the areas of K-12 education funding and REAL ID.

Along with representing you, another part of my duty is keeping you informed about what we're doing in the Missouri Senate.

This newsletter is a recap of some important issues we covered during the First Regular Session of the 99th General Assembly.

You are more than welcome to contact me and my office at any time, and if you're ever at the State Capitol, feel free to stop by.

Sincerely,

Jason R. Holsman
7th Senatorial District

201 W. Capitol Ave., Rm. 421
Jefferson City, MO 65101
(573) 751-6607

Jason.Holsman@senate.mo.gov



FUNDING OUR SCHOOLS

According to the Missouri Constitution, a chief responsibility of the Missouri General Assembly is to pass a balanced budget. The budgetary process can be long, tiring and contentious. Once the House of Representatives finishes its budget process, the Senate receives the appropriations bills. The Senate Appropriations Committee spends numerous hours listening to Missourians express their support or opposition to proposed appropriations as it considers the needs of our state departments and agencies.

To meet its constitutional obligation, the Legislature has to weigh the state's priorities and its budgetary realities during the appropriations process. Education is one of those priorities, and the Foundation Formula determines the level of funding K-12 school districts in the state will receive. For the first time since the formula's enactment in 2005, the Legislature fully funded the current Foundation Formula, providing elementary and secondary schools in the Kansas City area more than \$1.2 billion. Moreover, fully funding the formula may trigger a 2014 law that mandates additional funds for early childhood education.

As we move forward, I hope my colleagues in both the House and the Senate see fully funding our public schools as the rule — not the exception to the rule — and continue to give our students the educational resources they deserve.

Appropriation highlights for the Kansas City area include:

- More than \$1.2 billion to K-12 education as a result of fully funding the Foundation Formula;
- Approximately \$419 million to the University of Missouri System;
- \$33 million to the Metropolitan Community College; and
- \$100,000 to the Buck O'Neil Community Center, named after the first black coach in Major League Baseball, who also played for and managed the Kansas City Monarchs.



GOVERNOR'S ACTIONS

During the summer interim the governor is required to take action on legislation passed by the General Assembly during regular session. He can sign, veto or take no action and allow a bill to become law without his signature. This past session, the Legislature sent a total of 74 bills to the governor's desk. To date, he has signed 68, vetoed 5 and allowed one to become law without his signature.

Senate Bill 43 will make it more difficult for employees to prove illegal discrimination has occurred in the workplace. With the change to the Missouri Human Rights Act, employees must now prove that adverse action, such as termination or discrimination, was taken against them because of their protected class and that their protected class was the motivating factor for the action. Since it is virtually impossible to provide evidence of intent, workers now have little protection from being fired based on race, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation. The governor endorsed this legislation with his signature.

House Concurrent Bill 3 demonstrated the power of bipartisanship. Faced with potential devastating cuts to health care services, lawmakers worked together to find alternative funding for these services that support some of Missouri's most vulnerable citizens. The bill would have directed the state treasurer to put unused dollars into the Senior Services Protection Fund. The governor vetoed HCB 3 on June 30, which caused the State of Missouri to begin eliminating nursing home and in-home care services for approximately 8,000 Missourians on July 15. According to the governor, the common-sense, bipartisan measure was not a permanent fix.

Awaiting its Aug. 28 effective date is House Bill 1194, which will prohibit political subdivisions, such as Kansas City and Saint Louis, from increasing their minimum wages above the state minimum. The state's \$7.70 minimum wage has a different value in different parts of the state based on costs of living, leading municipalities to enact their own minimum wage ordinances. In response, lawmakers who have been reluctant to increase the state's minimum wage passed HB 1194, pre-empting local voter decisions and reducing worker wages.

EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS

The Missouri Constitution allows the governor to convene the Legislature for only “extraordinary occasions.” For the first extra session, the governor requested that the General Assembly pass legislation intended to lure saw and steel mill jobs to communities in southeast Missouri. Before the governor signed this legislation, he called for another extra session. This call was a direct response to his disapproval of efforts by local governments to protect citizens from discrimination based on their reproductive choices and of a court ruling that blocked a law that would further infringe on women’s access to medical care.

To date, the people of Missouri have not approved a full-time Legislature. So their lawmakers must do the business of the state within the constitutionally allotted time — January to May of each year. Summoning legislators to the Capitol to pass previously discussed legislation or to restrict the self-governing principles of local municipalities has cost taxpayers almost \$20,000 per day during the sessions. Calling extra sessions to extend the legislative clock does not fit within the traditional understanding of “extraordinary occasions” and is an inefficient use of state resources.

UMKC DOWNTOWN ARTS CAMPUS

During the regular session, the General Assembly passed legislation in support of a major effort here in the district. It passed House Concurrent Resolution 19 to authorize the issuance of bonds that would match funding for construction of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Downtown Arts Campus, a project that would replace the university’s Conservatory for Music and Dance. Unfortunately, despite broad support for the bill, the governor vetoed the 50/50 private-public funding match, simultaneously pulling state support and undermining contributions of the arts community to the state’s economy and culture.

Understanding the critical roles performing arts play in the state, University of Missouri Board of Curators and System President Mun Choi announced the project remains a priority and the university system will seek alternative funding. The needed alternative funding will match existing pledges that amount to \$48 million for the project.



To be located in the heart of the city, the new campus will be an investment in UMKC’s arts students and the city’s art community. A few years ago, the university started its initiative to construct a Downtown Campus for the Arts to replace the current conservatory building. The downtown campus will provide students with modern resources, more space and closer proximity to the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, home of the Kansas City Symphony.

Crescendo: Dream Within Reach, November 2016, showing the Conservatory Orchestra, Conservatory Choirs and Conservatory Dancers.
CREDIT: JAMES ALLISON

Perhaps most interesting about this project is the amount of support it has from the academic and business communities. We have seen businesses and hardworking Missourians devote their time and money to help fund the

project. Those faithful supporters needed to see that their Legislature also recognized the greatness and importance of the conservatory to the region. I believe the overwhelming support from members of both chambers, who represent every corner of Missouri — rural and urban, in Kansas City and hundreds of miles away — shows that having this new, state-of-the-art campus is not just a benefit to the people of Kansas City but also to the state and country as a whole.

**SENATOR
JASON HOLSMAN**
201 W Capitol Ave Rm 421
Jefferson City MO 65101

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Jefferson City, MO
65101
Permit No. 220

REAL ID

Facing a January 2018 deadline, the Legislature passed a REAL ID measure to bring the state into compliance with federal license regulations. Enacted by Congress in 2005, the REAL ID Act requires state IDs to meet certain standards in order to be valid proofs of identification for boarding a commercial flight or entering a federal courthouse or military base. Opposition to the federal law claimed it would violate Missourians' personal privacy. With the deadline approaching, the state sought a compromise.

Instead of forcing compliance, the state's REAL ID measure offers Missouri residents a choice. A person may choose a compliant state ID or elect not to get a compliant state ID. The measure will become effective on Aug. 28, and the Department of Revenue will have 18 months to make Missouri's IDs fully compliant. Once the department receives certification, it will notify the public that Missouri residents can request a compliant ID if they choose to do so. Until the department notifies the public, residents should continue to treat renewals and new license requests as they have in the past. Those with a non-compliant ID can still use their passport as a substitute.



THE REAL ID FIX RUMOR VS. FACT

RUMOR

Homeland Security and the REAL ID Act are trying to create a national ID card and build a federal database with your private information, which is a violation of your privacy.

FACT

Each state has control of documents and who gets access to records. The purpose of REAL ID is to make our state ID more consistent and secure, not to create a national ID card.