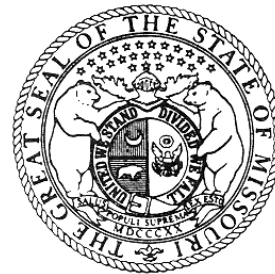


PRESS RELEASE

STATE SENATOR DAN CLEMENS – 20TH DISTRICT



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Missouri Senate

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Weekly Capitol Report

JEFFERSON CITY- Last Friday the governor released \$127 million lawmakers approved for schools and universities that he had withheld from public schools and universities last year to balance the state budget. I am pleased to see that Missouri schools and universities will finally get the funds that have been so desperately needed.

We here are the legislature have been asking for release of these funds for months. Education may have won a small victory last week, and I guess the old saying is true, better late than never. Sadly, many educators and administrators have been worried all year about whether or not they would have a job if the state continued its refusal to pay the school appropriations.

In July, the governor withheld \$210 million from education, saying the Republican-led legislature failed to provide revenue sufficient to cover approved expenditures. After some extra federal money came the state's way, Holden released \$83 million for education in December.

The governor, who used lower revenue estimates than lawmakers, said that he would release the state's withholding to education when it is fiscally responsible to do so. Last Friday, Holden also said the funds became available due to a delay in court action on a lawsuit that could cost the state \$50 million in tax refunds to Southwestern Bell, streamlining by state agencies that yielded \$40 million in savings, the redemption of \$36 million less in tax credits than previously anticipated and an \$8 million boost in the amount Missouri is receiving in this year's payment from the national tobacco settlement.

It is also worth noting that state revenues have exceeded the projections, which really made the delay caused by Holden's withholdings unnecessary.

I just wish that the funding would have been available at the beginning of the school year as it was appropriated instead of the beginning of summer vacation.

The governor made teachers, administrators and students worry for no reason, and honestly it's another attempt by the governor to make up for what was clearly a mistake in the first place.

Realistically speaking, since last spring, we in the legislature have maintained that the state had ample revenue to cover education appropriations and that the governor's withholding action was unnecessary. And with an upswing in state revenue collections, we have shown that the promises we make - we keep.

Releasing the withholdings is truly a boost for our schoolchildren and education. Holden said he would release \$115 million for local schools and \$12 million for universities and community colleges.

This is a start in providing our schools and our children the resources to improve our education system in this state.

As always, I appreciate your opinion on any legislative matter. If you have any questions or concerns to share, please call me at 1-866-242-0810, or email me at dan_clemens@senate.state.mo.us.

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