

State Senator Kevin Engler
Room 428, State Capitol Bldg.
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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I want to know what you think!!!

Dear Friends,

State legislators will be faced with many important and controversial issues directly affecting all of our lives as the Missouri General Assembly's 2006 session begins in early January. I believe our government functions best when it is responsive to the concerns of its citizens. With this in mind, I'd appreciate you taking a few moments to express your views on the issues listed in this survey.

I value your comments and your involvement in the operation of our state government. Should you ever have a question, comment or concern, feel free to contact me at 573-751-3455, kevin.engler@senate.mo.gov or come talk to me at a 'Listening Post' in your area.

It is an honor and privilege to represent your interests in the Missouri Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Engler".

You can take this survey online!!!

www.senate.mo.gov/engler

1 TAX INCREASES

A. Increasing taxes has been suggested as a way to jump start declining state revenues. Proponents argue that tax increases are needed to prevent cuts to social services and provide additional funds to local schools. Opponents believe taxpayers already pay enough in taxes and government needs to be more responsible with taxpayer money.

Please mark the box next to the response that best expresses your views.

- I do not want any additional taxes.
- I would support additional statewide taxes in order to maintain current levels of state services.

B. If the Legislature were to place a tax increase on the ballot, please rank (1-6) your level of support for the following types of taxes, with 1 being the tax you would most likely support.

Please rank your support for the following type of taxes, even if you do not support additional taxation:

___ Sales Taxes ___ Property Taxes ___ Income Taxes ___ Corporate Income Taxes ___ Gasoline Taxes ___ Cigarette/Alcohol Taxes

2 STATE BUDGET

Recent state budgets have suffered from difficult economic times. Short-term state revenues will likely not keep pace with current levels of state spending, requiring further cuts in the state budget.

Please rank (1-10) the service areas listed below in the order you would most like to see them protected from state budget cuts, with 1 being your highest priority:

___ Corrections	___ Health	___ Public Safety
___ Economic Development	___ Higher Education	___ Social Services
___ Elementary & Secondary Education	___ Mental Health	___ Transportation
___ Environmental Protection		

3 EMISSIONS TESTING

To reduce air pollution in the St. Louis region and to meet federal standards for ozone reductions, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources launched a vehicle emissions testing program in April 2000. Proponents of the program say it has significantly reduced hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and oxides in nitrogen in the first four years of its existence. Ending the program before the contract is up in August 2007 will cost the state tens of millions of dollars in fees and penalties and could mean a cut in state services. Some believe the program is a financial burden and an inconvenience to those living in the St. Louis area. Others have proposed modifying the program by exempting from the emission tests certain vehicles, such as those that have a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating in excess of 8,000 pounds within four years of the specific model year.

Please mark the box next to the response that best expresses your views.

- I support ending the vehicle emissions program immediately, even if this means a cut in state services.
- I support modifying the vehicle emissions program to lessen the financial burden and inconvenience of the program.
- I oppose ending the vehicle emissions program.

4 TOLL ROADS

In 2004, voters approved Amendment 3, meaning motor vehicle fuel taxes and vehicle sales taxes must go directly toward constructing and improving highways, roads and bridges. However, more funding is needed to complete highway improvement projects across the state, such as adding a third lane to each side of I-70. Some contend that charging tolls for I-70 travelers is the only way to ensure that out-of-state motorists help pay for the wear their vehicles cause to the interstate. Opponents argue that Missourians should not have to pay a toll for what they have already paid through taxes.

Please mark the box next to the response that best expresses your views.

- I support the use of toll roads to fund only the building of new highways and bridges.
- I support the use of toll roads to fund building new highways and bridges and improving existing roads and bridges.
- I oppose the use of toll roads in Missouri.
- I support the use of toll roads only if some of the funds were used locally (i.e. to make Hwy. 21 and Hwy. 67 four lanes to Desoto and Arkansas, respectively).

5 EMINENT DOMAIN

Eminent domain laws allow local governments to buy out private property for public use, which traditionally has been defined as improving public infrastructure. But the definition of “public use” has become contentious in light of a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling giving private developers the right to seize property from private-property owners in the name of overall economic development. Some say eminent domain laws spur urban renewal, such as turning an old building into a public library. Opponents of the laws contend that the rights of private property owners are being exploited by projects lacking a significant public need.

Please mark the box next to the response that best expresses your views.

- Eminent domain laws should enable any private or public entity to take private property if the public would benefit in any way.
- Eminent domain laws should enable private developers to seize private property for use in commercial projects (i.e. grocery store, shopping mall, etc.) if the public would benefit from an increase in tax dollars received.
- Eminent domain laws should allow only a government entity to take private property for such things as a highway, bridge, public library or government building, which would benefit all citizens.
- Eminent domain laws should not allow anyone to take private property for any reason, even if the public would benefit.

6 STEM CELL RESEARCH

Research involving human embryonic stem cells is a complicated and controversial issue involving medical, political and religious considerations. Embryonic stem cells are made through somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), a process in which the nucleus of an unfertilized egg is removed and replaced with the nucleus of another cell from a human body. The egg is then stimulated to divide, just as it would if fertilized by a sperm, and the embryo’s stem cells are then harvested. Some contend that this process could someday lead to cures for many diseases, but so far, there are no promising results. Many believe that life begins at conception and that the embryo is indeed a human life, so therefore tampering with the embryos is killing an unborn human being.

Do you support human embryonic stem cell research?

- Yes. No. I need more information before I decide.

7 GAMING REVENUE

Excursion gaming boats in Missouri have generally been quite profitable. Some believe that they should pay a larger share of their revenues to the state through increased boarding fees or higher tax rates. Another possible way to increase revenue for Missouri would be to repeal the \$500 loss limit, which was intended to protect chronic gamblers, but has discouraged out-of-state high rollers from traveling to Missouri. At this time, Missouri is the only state with a loss limit.

Please mark the box next to the response that best expresses your views.

- I support increasing the tax rate or boarding fees for excursion gaming boats and repealing the \$500 loss limit.
- I oppose increasing the tax rate or boarding fees and repealing the \$500 loss limit.

8 INSURANCE REFORM

The medical malpractice insurance premiums our doctors must pay have increased significantly over the past few years. This has been particularly harmful to rural doctors, forcing many of them to stop practicing or move their practices to St. Louis or another state. Insurance companies can double or triple medical malpractice premiums without providing a reason or seeking authorization. Insurance companies may even increase rates on doctors who have never had a claim filed against them.

Should Missouri lawmakers pass laws preventing insurance providers from imposing drastic rate increases on Missouri physicians?

- Yes No

9 PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Property taxes increase every two years. Many have suggested property tax relief for senior citizens who are on fixed incomes. The current “Homestead Act” provides for limited property tax relief for senior citizens.

Do you support or oppose the following:

Expansion and extension of the “Homestead Act”

- Support
 Oppose

A “freeze” of property tax rates for senior citizens over the age of 62.

- Support
 Oppose

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

If you have additional comments you would like to share with me on ANY issue, please feel free to do so on the lines provided.

O P T I O N A L
Please take a moment to let us know a little about you:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

Check this box (and include your e-mail address above) if you would like to receive my Capitol Report each week during the legislative session.

**CONTACT
SENATOR ENGLER**

By Mail: Room 428, State Capitol Bldg.
Jefferson City, MO 65101

By Phone: (573) 751-3455

By E-mail: kevin.engler@senate.mo.gov

On the Web: www.senate.mo.gov/engler

Please fold survey in thirds, tape closed, place 37-cent postage stamp on it and mail. Thanks!

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