



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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18<sup>th</sup> Senate District

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of February 8, 2010**

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# Ethics

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JEFFERSON CITY – One of the major issues of the 2010 legislative session is ethics reform. Part of the push comes in response to the unethical transgressions of four former lawmakers, and part of it comes from a desire to clean up the legislative process that causes a lot of frustration for the folks back home. Of course, the best ethics reform is an educated electorate that is engaged in the process and holds members of both parties accountable. Nothing we can do in the General Assembly will automatically make people act ethically, but we can put some common sense guidelines in place in an attempt to make everyone play by the rules.

The ethics bill proposed this year by the Senate President Pro Tem would strengthen the Missouri Ethics Commission by giving it the ability to investigate ethics complaints, if the four-member commission unanimously agrees to move forward on a particular complaint. Senate Bill 577 also requires more disclosure of donations made during the legislative session, it redefines who is considered a lobbyist to make sure that everyone who advocates for or against legislation abides by lobbying regulations, and it makes it illegal for legislators to work as political consultants for other lawmakers.

I also think it would be wise to try to limit the amount of money that flows into political campaigns, but we've been told by the majority that donation limits are off the table. Missouri voters overwhelmingly approved campaign donation limits in 1994, but former Governor Blunt signed a bill repealing those limits in 2008.

This week I introduced a bill to make sure your state Capitol building is more accessible and respects all citizens. Senate Bill 932 requires all members of the General Assembly to notify his/her constituents through the member's website and newsletter whether or not their

Capitol office is accessible by wheelchair. The notification would include directions on how a constituent who uses a wheelchair or has mobility issues could arrange a private meeting with the member. The bill sets up procedures in the House and Senate to respond to requests from wheelchair users and those with limited mobility for meetings and to designate certain areas in the Capitol for private meetings. Ultimately, I wish our beautiful Capitol could be made accessible to all, but our state simply does not have the money to retrofit the entire building. I think my solution is a positive step forward in ensuring respect for all citizens, and making sure they have the ability to meet and talk to their representative face to face.

The Missouri Department of Economic Development announced it has awarded several Community Development Block grants for the 18<sup>th</sup> Senate District. Scotland County has received \$450,000 in CDBG funding to replace County Bridge 375, and \$150,000 to replace five small bridges in the county. Schuyler County has received \$100,000 to help replace seven small bridges.

This week we welcomed a number of visitors to our capitol office, including a group of athletic trainers from Truman State University in Kirksville, in-home care folks from the district, Mark Twain FCCLA students led by Linda Stinson, Mark Twain Behavioral Health representatives, and members of the Salvation Army.

If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issues give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at [wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.