**This Week in the Missouri Senate:
Digital Audio File Script on Start of Session**

This week in the Missouri Senate, we review the first week of the 2016 legislative session…

**Nat Snd / Runs :05 / OC: able please rise?**

*“Missouri Senate will now come to order. Will everyone present, who is able, please rise…?”*

The lieutenant governor, who also serves as president of the Missouri Senate, started things on Wednesday.

Senate Majority Floor Leader Mike Kehoe of Jefferson City spoke to reporters Wednesday afternoon, along with the Senate president pro tem and House speaker…

**Kehoe 1 / Runs :08 / OC: a good way.**

*“Speaker and the majority leader and I have talked many, many times over the last couple of months. I think the communication between the House and Senate is going to be historic, in a good way.”*

Senate Minority Floor Leader Joseph Keaveny of St. Louis did the same with his House counterpart…

**Keaveny 2 / Runs :09 / OC: to health care.**

*“Both me and my caucus were anxious to get back to work. There’s a lot of things that we need to focus on, from education funding, to the flooding, to health care.”*

Part of this year’s agenda includes another attempt at ethics reform.

Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard of Joplin says there are some people who are worried lawmakers may have lost some respect, without changes made in ethics laws…

**Richard 3 / Runs :15 / OC: the right thing.**

*“Well, I’m not sure they ever lost it, but I think having a reasonable amount of reform would probably be in the best interest of the taxpayer, and let them know elected officials do the right thing.”*

Senator Keaveny adds he does not believe there is a “culture of corruption” at the Capitol…

**Keaveny 4 / Runs :11 / OC: the General Assembly.**

*“You know, people like to say that. I don’t think we do. No matter what business you’re in, you have people that do the right thing. By and large, most people do the right thing, and that’s the same kind of thing that we have here in the General Assembly.”*

Transportation has returned as one of the big issues for 2016.

More specifically, Sen. Richard says toll roads usually enter the transportation discussion at some point…

**Richard 5 / Runs :09 / OC: conversations about that.**

*“I suspect — at some point in time — a hot lane, a third lane that’s tolled for people who want to volunteer to get on that might be an option. I know there’s some conversations about that.”*

Senator Keaveny adds no one has been able to come up with a transportation funding solution on which a majority of people can agree…

**Keaveny 6 / Runs :07 / OC: talk about it.**

*“Anything should be on the table. We can talk about toll roads. They came up a little bit last year. There are pros and cons for toll roads. I’m willing to talk about it.”*

Senator Richard says his biggest concern is getting things done for Missouri…

**Richard 7 / Runs :11 / OC: and the House.***“I’m here for a reason. That’s to try to make the state better, try to create jobs, have our state grow. I’m not here to make friends. People criticize me as being kind of a grouch. Well, I’m pretty serious about the state of Missouri, about the Senate and the House.”*

Senator Keaveny says he would not be surprised to see social issues become part of the debate this year…

**Keaveny 8 / Runs :10 / OC: people riled up.**

*“There’ll be issues that come up, social issues, that come up. Some of these issues, we debated year and year and year and, they make good soundbites and they get people riled up. Yes, I’m sure we’ll have those discussions”*

Lawmakers will return to Jefferson City on Monday.

And, remember, you can follow these and other issues facing the Missouri Senate by visiting our website: [senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov).

Reporting for the Missouri Senate, I’m Dean Morgan.