

State Senator Jay Wasson Legislative Report



Dear Friends,

This marked my second year as your state senator. It has been an honor to represent you in the Missouri Capitol, and I remain committed to doing what is best for the people of Southwest Missouri and citizens all across the state.

Crafting a fiscally responsible state budget was one of our biggest priorities this year. It was not easy. We faced a shortfall of around \$500 million. The one-time funds we had been receiving from the federal government—which many of us were against in the first place—have dried up. That left us with having to make some very hard decisions. However, we came together and created a budget that lives within our state's means while funding the most critical functions of our government.

We tackled a number of important issues this year. As part of the budget process, we passed legislation that creates a dedicated funding source for our state's seven veterans' homes by tapping a portion of Missouri's casino fees. This move will ensure those homes can continue to provide quality care for our veterans. We also approved a handful of measures to increase protections for Missouri children, including a bill identical to legislation I sponsored that changes how the Children's Division carries out child abuse and neglect investigations.

In this Legislative Report, you will find information on the legislation passed out of the General Assembly this year, a breakdown of our state budget for Fiscal Year 2013, the new 20th Senate District map and my contact information. My office is available to answer any questions you might have about your state government. And once again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you in Jefferson City.

Sincerely,



«« Shown left, Sen. Jay Wasson speaks on the floor of the Missouri Senate during the 2012 legislative session.

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PROTECTING THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED

There is a blind spot in current law that does not account for someone who uses indirect methods to commit the crime of financial exploitation. Prosecutors have encountered many cases when a person uses his or her influence to steal from an elderly or disabled person. If the perpetrator does not cross the line into outright deception or intimidation, there is not much law enforcement can do to stop these crimes. To address this, we passed Senate Bill 689, which adds undue influence, defined as a person who uses his or her authority over an elderly or disabled person to take unfair advantage of that person, to the types of acts that constitute a crime of financial exploitation. This measure will go far in helping to stop these heinous crimes.



SENATOR WASSON'S LEGISLATION

Below are bills I helped successfully pass through the Missouri Legislature in 2012.

Consistent Standards for Local Taxes

I sponsored a provision included in a bill that requires municipalities adhere to state standards when it comes to audits, penalties and interest on back taxes.

"Missouri Fox Trotting Highway"

An omnibus transportation bill contained a provision I sponsored that designates a portion of Highway 5 between Ava and Mansfield as the "Missouri Fox Trotting Highway," named after the famous horse-breed created here in the Show-Me State and still widely used today.

Fighting Insurance Fraud

I carried a bill through the Senate this session that expands the civil immunity provided to insurers for furnishing information related to insurance fraud investigations.

Child Abuse Investigations

Legislation I filed this year was passed as a provision in another bill. The act makes a number of critical changes to how child abuse and neglect investigations are conducted.

Salvage Certificates

A bill approved by the General Assembly this year contained language identical to a measure I sponsored that allows insurers who purchase vehicles through the claims adjustment process to obtain salvage certificate of titles or junking certificates under certain conditions.

Improving Missouri Buildings

Another version of a bill I sponsored this year establishes a peer review process for architects and engineers. This will help make Missouri's bridges and structures safer by allowing these professionals to consult on one another's work.

Interim County Officials

I handled legislation in the Senate this session that requires county commissions to appoint an interim county clerk, collector or assessor until the governor appoints a successor to fill the vacancy.

Investing Public Funds

A measure I ushered through the upper chamber changes the law regarding the investment of certain public funds, perfection of security interests, Division of Finance examinations and residential mortgage loan brokers.

Increasing Access to Autism Therapy

The Legislature approved a bill this year that makes a number of changes to state law regarding health care services, including authorizing the creation of a school social worker program and adding behavioral analysts to the list of professions that can be provisionally licensed, among other acts.

CELL PHONES ADDED TO NO-CALL LIST

This year we passed House Bill 1549, which allows cell phones on the state No-Call list that protects citizens from unwanted phone solicitations. To add your phone number to the list, complete the online registration form at www.ago.mo.gov/nocallaw or call 866-BUZZOFF (866-289-9633).



GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS

Some of the citizens from the 20th District appointed to state boards this year include Robert Helm (shown left with his family), Missouri State Board of Accountancy; Michael Pfander, Missouri Veterinary Medical Board; and Melissa Turner, Missouri Workforce Investment Board.

GAVIN'S BILL

In 2005, Debra Davis called the child abuse hotline multiple times to report her grandson, Gavin, was being abused by his mother's boyfriend. A caseworker visited the home, but no one was there at the time. The caseworker left a business card and later returned to investigate the allegations. The card, however, had tipped off the boyfriend that he was being investigated and gave him time to cover up the abuse. After another visit, it was determined there was no evidence of abuse.

Gavin was killed shortly thereafter. The mother's ex-boyfriend was convicted in his death.

Since that tragic incident, Debra has worked tirelessly to see changes implemented in how the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services handles hotline abuse calls. This session, we passed House Bill 1323, which contains provisions identical to a bill I sponsored that will enact those critical changes, including requiring the Children's Division to review cases of repeated hotline calls in a 72-hour period to see if they meet the criteria to begin a child abuse and neglect report.

To the Children's Division's credit, many of these changes have already been implemented. It's important that we put these into statute, however. I was honored to support the measure, and sincerely thank Debra and her husband Timothy for their dedication in pursuing this issue.



ENCOURAGING JOB CREATION

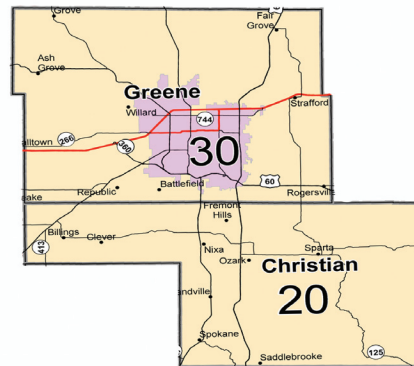
This year, we passed a number of bills to help get citizens back to work. Senate Bill 469 requires state agencies to review and reconsider their regulations on a timely basis to determine if those rules are outdated, duplicative or conflict with other rules. This measure will go far in eliminating some of the red tape that hinders job growth. We also passed House Bill 1661, which clarifies the types of small businesses that can qualify for the income tax deduction for job creation by a small business, and allows certain businesses to pass the tax deduction on to their partners, members or shareholders. These measures passed by the General Assembly will help foster job creation in our state. I will continue to make economic development one of my highest priorities.

SUPPORTING MISSOURI'S HEROES

We enacted a number of measures to help our military servicemen and women this session. House Bill 1731 creates a dedicated funding source for our state's seven veterans' homes, ensuring they receive the money they need to continue caring for our elderly and disabled veterans. We also passed House Bill 1680, which renames the Heroes at Home program the Show-Me Heroes program, and expands eligibility to include spouses of active duty military personnel. This program, created in 2010, assists veterans and their spouses in finding employment through a number of resources and provides financial assistance, such as payment of daycare and transportation costs during employment searches and overdue bills.

NEW 20TH DISTRICT SENATE MAP

Earlier this year, the Missouri Supreme Court threw out the Senate district maps that were drawn to reflect population changes according to the 2010 census. Since the new maps were deemed unconstitutional, the governor appointed a new bipartisan redistricting commission to redraw the maps. In February, the commission released the new Senate district maps, which were approved in March. Webster and Douglas counties, formerly part of the 20th District, will now be part of the 33rd District. It was an honor and a privilege to represent the constituents of these two counties in the Missouri Senate.



««« The map shown left is the new 20th Senatorial District.

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SENATOR WASSON'S CAPITOL VISITORS



Senator Wasson with the Nixa High School bowling team, which won the state championship in 2011.

It is a pleasure to welcome groups from the district when they come to Jefferson City. I'm always happy to meet with people from back home. If you're coming to the Capitol, contact my office at (573) 751-1503.



Senator Wasson with the Billings High School basketball team, which won the state championship in 2012.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

The General Assembly finalized the budget for Fiscal Year 2013 a day ahead of our constitutional deadline. The final budget totaled more than \$24 billion, and included:

- \$5 million increase to the K-12 school foundation formula
- Held funding level for higher education (governor is withholding \$8.9 million in general revenue funds)
- \$33 million for the A+ Schools program
- \$99.8 million for K-12 transportation

Distribution of Each Tax Dollar

FY 2013 Missouri Operating Budget
 General Revenue: \$24.032 Billion



*Revenue, Office of Administration, Elected Officials, General Assembly, Real Estate