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Senate Advances Bill to Spur Job Creation

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Senate Advances Bill to Spur Job Creation

Just six weeks into the 2011 Legislative Session we have passed a measure to help spur job creation in our state. The Missouri Senate passed Senate Bill 19 last week sending the measure to the House for similar consideration. This bill would first freeze and then phase out Missouri's corporate franchise tax over a five year period.

By limiting and then ending this double taxation on employers we eliminate a disincentive that penalized companies for investing more in our state. Now, companies can invest in hiring new employees instead of growing government through higher taxes.

The corporate franchise tax is based on a percentage of a company's assets. Corporations also pay income taxes on their earned income as well as sales and property taxes in Missouri. The bill caps corporate franchise tax liabilities at the amount of each corporation's tax liability for the 2010 tax year. New businesses would be capped at the amount of their corporation's franchise tax liability for its first full year of existence. Then, beginning January 1, 2012, the tax would be phased out over a five-year period.

Missouri is one of a few states that still charge businesses a tax just to expand or invest in our state. Kansas has been phasing out its franchise tax since 2007, and beginning in tax year 2011, it will be repealed altogether. The bottom line is that the corporate franchise tax is an outdated tax that is only still imposed in a handful of states. While other states raise taxes on business in an attempt to close their budget gaps, we can set Missouri apart and make it clear that this is a place where businesses can expand and create jobs without being penalized.

This bill is the first step to help put the more than 280,000 Missourians who have been out of work for the past year and a half back to work in good-paying jobs with benefits. By ending this double tax, we are making sure Missouri is competitive when it comes to bringing new investments and jobs to our state.

Putting Missourians back to work tops the Senate's priority list for the 2011 Legislative Session. That is why I am glad we were able to pass this bill so quickly, while also advancing several other pro-job bills through the legislative process. Those other measures include protecting workers from being personally sued for their role in honest accidents at work, restoring balance and creating certainty in Missouri's employment laws, and protecting a workers' liberty by making sure joining a union or paying dues can no longer be a condition of getting or keeping a job.

In local news, you may have heard I have introduced a measure to protect Southeast Missouri's water supply for local farmers and residents. Southeast Missouri is home to a rich aquifer. In order to preserve and protect this valuable resource, I have filed legislation that would give the state authority to block non-local, major water producers and users from tapping into our aquifer and pumping the water elsewhere if it is to the detriment of resident agriculture, business and industry. This new authority can better preserve our water supply, especially during times of drought. To ensure compliance, the bill would allow the Attorney General to seek an injunction on behalf of residents if a disruption of water use occurs. The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources heard the bill last week. I anticipate the committee will recommend the measure move to the full Senate for debate.

Please feel free to contact me throughout the year with any comments, questions, or issues using the information listed below and on my website at www.senate.mo.gov/mayer.

Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, represents the 25th State Senatorial District in the Missouri State Senate and serves the state as the President Pro Tem of the State Senate.

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Focus On Putting Missourians To Work

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Focus On Putting Missourians To Work

By Rob Mayer

During the Senate General Laws Committee last week, panel members heard testimony on a bill designed to give Missouri workers the freedom to choose whether or not to join a union as a condition of getting or keeping a job. More specifically, Senate Bill 1, also known as “Right-to-Work” legislation, would bar employers from requiring their employees to become or refrain from becoming a member of a labor organization or pay dues or other charges required of labor organization members as a condition of employment. According to the bill, employers who would do so would be charged with a Class C misdemeanor. In addition, prosecuting attorneys and the Missouri Attorney General would be charged with investigating these complaints.

Currently, Missouri is missing out on new jobs because companies are drawn to other states with better worker-protection laws. Testimony presented before lawmakers in the General Laws Committee revealed that 50 percent of manufacturers refuse to consider our state as a place to locate new jobs because we don’t have adequate laws on the books to protect against workers who are forced into unions.

Recent census data shows that businesses with jobs and the workers who take them are fleeing to states with worker-protection laws. The outcome of the 2010 decennial census

resulted in our state losing a congressional seat. There is a direct correlation between states that lost a congressional seat and those that are “Right-to-Work” states: those states without worker-protection laws lost a total of nine congressional seats, while those with “Right-to-Work” laws gained 11 congressional seats. This session we have the opportunity to correct this wrong, and not only bring beneficial jobs to Missouri, but keep hard-working citizens in our state.

In addition, data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that unemployment is lower in the 22 states that have adopted “Right-to-Work” laws. In the last 10 years, those same states have added 1.5 million private-sector jobs, while other states without worker-protection laws have lost 1.8 million jobs. With more than 100,000 jobs lost in our state since June 2008, we cannot afford to stand by and not take action.

If the previous statistics weren’t alarming enough, per household income is also higher in “Right-to-Work” states. A study published in 2000 by Dr. James T. Bennett from George Mason University cited that the mean two-income household in a “Right-to-Work” state has nearly \$2,000 more in after-tax purchasing power than those same households in forced-union states. Another study conducted in 2005 by Dr. Barry Poulson from the University of Colorado found that real disposable income in metropolitan areas in “Right-to-Work” states is \$4,300 higher in after-tax purchasing power than those same metropolitan households in non-“Right-to-Work” states.

In no way would this bill stop workers from joining a union or prevent employers from entering into collective bargaining agreements and hire union labor. This legislation simply removes a barrier that’s stopping our state from competing with six of our eight neighboring states that have “Right-to-Work” laws and the many more in the country that are beating Missouri when it comes to gaining good jobs, especially in manufacturing.

Senate Bill 1 must receive a passing vote by the General Laws Committee before it can reach the Senate floor for debate. Similarly, Senate Bill 197, also considered by the committee, still needs the committee’s approval. This bill would send the “Right-to-Work” measure to the vote of the people.

I will continue to push for legislation designed to help get Missourians back to work, including measures that would ensure an employee’s liberty when it comes to joining or leaving a union. As I said to my colleagues on the first day of session, “it’s time to end the animosity between business and labor, and instead, work together to do what’s best for the employer and the employee.”

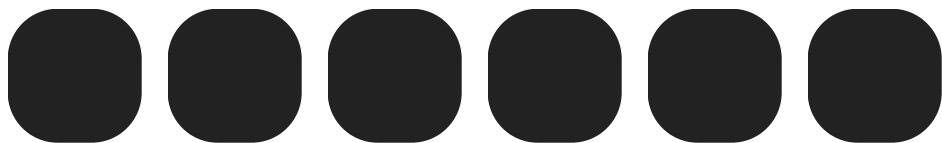
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Historic Winter Storm Makes Its Mark

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[Historic Winter Storm Makes Its Mark](#)

By Rob Mayer

It's been more than five years since our state has experienced the same winter-weather conditions that blanketed much of Missouri this past week. I want to commend the hard work and dedication of the many crews and organizations that came together to prepare for and react to this dangerous storm.

Before the blizzard made its severe impact on Jefferson City, my colleagues and I in the Senate gave first-round approval to a bill that would ban texting while driving for all Missourians. In 2009, the Legislature passed House Bill 62 – an omnibus crime bill that made it illegal for those 21 and younger to text while driving. The bill we voted on this week would ban texting while driving for everyone. However, Senate Bill 11 would exempt drivers using hand-held mobile phones and voice-operated or hands-free devices to send texts. A final vote in the Senate would send the measure to the House for similar consideration.

The Senate Jobs, Economic Development and Local Government Committee also met before lawmakers adjourned for the week to give its approval to two measures that would help get Missourians back to work in lasting and growing industries that offer good pay and much-needed benefits. In my opening day address to the Senate, I stressed how important it is for lawmakers to pass legislation that would allow employers in our state to invest in hiring new workers instead of growing government through higher taxes.

Legislation passed out of the Senate Jobs Committee will do just that. Senate Bill 18 would freeze the amount of franchise taxes a corporation pays to the amount paid in 2010. Senate Bill 19 goes one step further by phasing out the franchise tax over a five-year period. Businesses should not have to pay a tax just to be in business. Corporations already pay taxes on income earned by the corporation, sales taxes on some business inputs, and property taxes on land, structures, and personal property. The franchise tax just taxes these activities and property again. Most states do not have both a corporate franchise tax and corporate income tax. That is why we should stop this double taxation on employers so they can invest in hiring new workers in our state. Both SB 18 and 19 received first round approval on the Senate floor – coming one step closer to making the Senate's plan to spur job creation and help Missouri families thrive a reality.

We are also still working to make sure your voice is heard by adopting a resolution urging Missouri's attorney general to join a lawsuit challenging the federal health care reform act. Last November, 71 percent of Missourians who voted in support of Proposition C made a clear and firm stand – they do not want to be penalized for refusing to purchase private health insurance nor have their rights infringed upon in regard to offering or accepting direct payment for lawful health care.

A recent U.S. District Court ruling in Florida, which struck down the entire federal health care law because its requirement that Americans buy health insurance is unconstitutional, further enforces the need for our state to join the lawsuit filed by more than 25 states. These states recognize the violation of our federal government because “the Constitution nowhere authorizes the United States to mandate, either directly or under threat of penalty, that all citizens and legal residents have qualifying health care coverage.”

I recently signed onto a letter with Lieutenant Governor Kinder and House Speaker Tilley addressed to our state’s attorney general calling on him to participate in this historic lawsuit in order to defend Missourians’ right to choose whether or not they want to purchase health care as well as protect their personal liberties if they decide to opt out of this purchase. Unfortunately, Attorney General Koster has remained silent on this issue rather than taking action to protect our state’s citizens from being forced to buy health insurance. Would he rather have a one-size-fits-all policy rather than allowing states, including Missouri, to find the best health care solutions for its citizens? It’s my hope that we take action on this now in order to defend the majority of Missourians who count on us here in Jefferson City to serve as their voice in state government.

I would also like to highlight many of the new features on my official Senate website. By visiting www.senate.mo.gov/mayer, citizens can share their ideas on how to “reboot” state government, listen to and watch my opening day address to the Missouri Senate, request a courtesy resolution honoring a special event, and sign up to receive the latest news coming out of my office using my RSS feed. When you subscribe to this feed, updated information from the feed, including my weekly columns, press releases, and multimedia advisories, is automatically downloaded to your specified electronic device and can be viewed using most web browser programs.

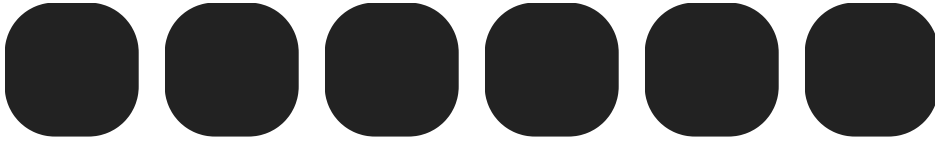
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The 'State of Our State'

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[The 'State of Our State'](#)

By **Rob Mayer**

It was an address heard throughout the state, but the reality of Missouri's dire budget situation for me, hits close to home. In the governor's annual state of the state address last week, he laid out his priorities for the Fiscal Year 2012 state budget. With a \$300-\$500 deficit, many difficult decisions have to be made this year, and I do not take the task of balancing our state's budget lightly.

For the third year in a row, our state is going into the budget process with a shortfall. With more than 280,000 Missourians out of work, it's time our state was presented a balanced and accountable budget – not one that relies on special legislation to pass in order for it to be balanced nor one that is dependent on hundreds of millions of dollars in federal budget stabilization extensions. Put simply, our state's constitution requires us not to spend more than we take in.

In my opening day address, I presented my colleagues with several solutions to our state's budget problems: put Missourians back to work, invest in educating our future workforce,

and shrink the size and scope of state government. We need to look to long-term solutions, NOT propping up our state's budget with one-time federal bailout dollars that come to an end this year.

As Senate leader, I'm dedicated to protecting taxpayers while focusing on K-12 education, higher education and health care. Spurring job creation in our state is another main focus, and in the Senate we have a comprehensive plan that will make it easier to do business in our state — allowing current companies to expand and attracting new businesses to the Show-Me State. We can do this by capping the corporate franchise tax, restoring balance to employment law in regard to the Missouri Human Rights Act, addressing our state's "whistleblower" provisions, fixing a judicial decision in Missouri that had a negative effect on our workers' compensation system, and making Missouri a "Right to Work" state.

I've made it my top priority to help get Missourians back to work. With much legislative effort during the 2010 regular session, and again during the 2010 special session, lawmakers passed House Bill 2 — better known as the Manufacturing Jobs Act. The legislation provides tax incentives for qualified auto suppliers or manufacturing facilities that create or retain Missouri jobs. Though it can apply to several companies in our state, this act was aimed at enticing the Ford Motor Company to manufacture a new product line at its existing automotive assembly plant in Claycomo, a suburb of Kansas City.

On Jan. 18, the Ford Motor Company signed a memorandum of understanding with our state, committing to invest at least \$400 million to bring a next-generation production line to the Kansas City facility. This action will retain 3,750 jobs — jobs that will remain in our state, help boost our economy, and invest in Missourians who can now compete with other states regarding production jobs for the future.

However, this is far from where we need to be in our state in terms of promoting job growth and offering incentives to expand and attract new businesses to our state. We need to do more. Since June 2008, our state has lost nearly 104,000 jobs, one out of every six Missourians are currently receiving food stamps, and the number of citizens settling for part-time jobs has doubled in the past two years to approximately 150,000 Missourians — hard-working Missourians who need full-time jobs.

As the Senate and House work through their respective budget plans for 2012, I will keep you informed on how my colleagues and I allocate your hard-earned taxpayer dollars for vital functions of our state government. It's crucial to get your input on how Missouri can best utilize these dollars and reduce the scope of state government, so keep your ideas

coming through the Senate's "Rebooting Government" website (www.senate.mo.gov/RebootMO). On this site, you can also listen to various members of the Senate present their recommendations for their respective work groups. You can also view a PowerPoint listing many of the work groups' suggestions.

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