



TOP

Floods, Redistricting, “Solution” & Incentives

MAY 02ND 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

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As severe storms, tornadoes, and massive flooding blanketed parts of the southeast Missouri, many of our families and neighbors have been devastated. Our communities have gone above and beyond to help their friends and neighbors in need during this difficult and unpredictable time. Area residents of Poplar Bluff and now farmers across the Bootheel have been evacuated from their homes to emergency shelters.

Local and national agencies, including the State Highway Patrol, State Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross, are working to help Missourians affected by flooding. Plus, approximately 200 National Guard members are on the ground to assist in continued evacuation and patrol of evacuated areas. I praise the members of these agencies and others who have been working with local officials to help Missourians with the most basic necessities — food, clean water, shelter, and clothing — which we often take for granted. As I toured these areas and keep mindful watch on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ decision of whether or not to breach Missouri River levies, I pray families receive the help they need and find the strength to recover from this recent string of storms and flooding.

If you need assistance, or want to help those in need, please contact the **Southeast Missouri Chapter of the American Red Cross** at (573) 335-9471.

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We also completed our constitutional duty and crafted a map that is fair and equitable to Missouri citizens when it comes to their representation in the U.S. Congress. Last

Wednesday we gave final approval to the Conference Committee Report for House Bill 193. The new map of congressional districts is based on data from the most recent census. While Missouri's population grew 7 percent, other states grew at faster rates, meaning Missouri is losing a congressional seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, resulting in a drop from nine to eight seats.

The map we adopted reflects the best interests of all Missourians. We crafted a map that both Republicans and Democrats voted yes for because it appropriately and fairly represents Missouri's citizens. Unfortunately, the governor vetoed the map this weekend. But we expect an attempt to override his veto of a map that has bipartisan support.

An update to last week's efforts by the animal agriculture community is that we heard and passed Senate Bill 161. The bill is often referred to as the "Missouri Solution" to the debate on laws regulating the dog breeding industry in our state. Following its passage in the House and Senate, the governor quickly signed the measure into law thereby codifying new laws going after unlicensed breeders and putting in place common sense regulations for licensed dog breeders to follow when caring for their animals.

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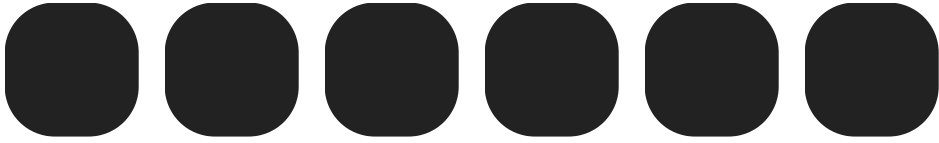
In the Senate, we also gave initial approval to House Bill 116. The measure would overhaul the state's tax incentive programs for an estimated \$1.5 billion in taxpayer savings over the next 15 years. The bill also includes new business tax incentives, such as "Compete Missouri" and encourages foreign trade in Missouri by establishing the "Aerotropolis Trade Incentive and Tax Credit Act." That particular tax credit is designed to turn Lambert - St. Louis International Airport into an international trade hub with exports and imports moving through our state. This trade hub would open up many new markets for Missouri's agricultural producers. In addition, the bill also includes a proposal authorizing a new state fund offering incentives to invest in science and technology research and companies throughout Missouri.

I will continue to keep you apprised of issues important to the people of the 25th Senatorial District and all Missourians. Please feel free to contact me throughout the year with any comments or questions using the information listed below and on my website at www.senate.mo.gov/mayer.

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