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Continued Work On Job Creation

MARCH 28TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

Continued Work On Job Creation

By Rob Mayer

One of the Senate's top priorities this session is to help put Missourians back to work. We believe we can no longer continue to do business in our state using the same policies we have relied on and expect a different result. There are far too many Missourians without a job and it is important we improve Missouri's business environment so businesses can grow and hire more employees.

In an effort to ease the pain Missouri workers are going through, we worked quickly this session to pass Senate Bill 572 and House Bill 1219 to help employers put Missourians back to work in good-paying jobs with benefits.

SB 572 restored protections for co-employees from personal lawsuits for their role in honest accidents at work and ended lawsuit abuses. It is difficult for businesses to hire employees if they are going to need to spend money for additional insurance to cover these honest accidents. Passage of the bill rejected a 2010 appeals court decision that opened up co-employees to this risk. It also returned Workers' Compensation as the exclusive remedy for workplace accidents. This bill gave a level of certainty to the risk employers take when hiring employees.

HB 1219 simply harmonized our state employment law with federal Civil Rights Act. Missouri's employment law originally resembled federal law, but differences have surfaced through case law. Over the past few years, Missouri courts have drastically

changed Missouri employment law so that it no longer matches federal law. Employers are slow to invest in jobs in Missouri when faced with different employment law standards creating lawsuit abuses. Passage of HB 1219 made Missouri's standards meet the provisions set out in the historic Civil Rights Act, giving employers and workers more certainty.

Unfortunately, for as quick as we moved both bills to the governor's desk for signing, he just as quickly vetoed them. Had the governor signed SB 572 and HB 1219, businesses could spend less money on expansive legal fees and instead invest those dollars towards expanding their businesses, putting Missourians to work. Instead, because of the veto, business growth will continue to be strangled with the same failed policies these bills were aimed to fix.

Luckily for Missouri, the legislative session is not over and we will continue to work on the Senate's priority of putting people back to work. For businesses to grow or consider moving to Missouri, we must change both Missouri's employment law and Workers' Compensation system. There are a number of different options we will consider to do this, including a veto override or passage of new legislation the governor finds acceptable. We invite him to join us for discussions on passing legislation that put Missourians back to work.

Rob Mayer of Dexter represents the 25th Senatorial District in the Missouri State Senate and is the Senate President Pro Tem.

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Providing Assistance To Storm Victims

MARCH 21ST 2012 BY UNKNOWN

Providing Assistance To Storm Victims

By Rob Mayer

After a string of devastating storms rolled through the southern and northern portions of Missouri in late February, federal disaster aid was immediately requested to assist the 18 Missouri counties that were affected by this violent weather. To my shock and complete disappointment, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) denied Missouri's request to provide our state's residents with the help they need to get them back on their feet and return to a sense of normalcy during this chaotic time.

Stoddard County is one of the many counties currently working to pick up the pieces after these storms. As this county's voice in the Missouri Senate, I was disheartened to hear aid from FEMA would not be available to these citizens. With this federal aid, Missourians would have been eligible for grants to help with home repairs, temporary housing, replacing personal and household items, as well as crisis counseling and legal services. Citizens also need assistance with clearing and dispensing debris on the roads and private property throughout the affected areas.

While Missouri will continue to provide critical resources, aid and personnel to the affected comm After a string of devastating storms rolled through the southern and northern portions of Missouri in late February, federal disaster aid was immediately requested to assist the 18 Missouri counties that were affected by this violent weather. To my shock and complete disappointment, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) denied Missouri's request to provide our state's residents with the help they need to get them back on their feet and return to a sense of normalcy during this chaotic time.

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While Missouri will continue to provide critical resources, aid and personnel to the affected communities, residents whose homes, businesses and farmland were damaged and destroyed have been told they will not be eligible for much-needed federal grants. In addition, many Missourians' insurance does not cover the immediate assistance they need at this time. As if this mass destruction is not enough, a number of people were injured and an innocent soul lost his life in Stoddard County during the tornadic storm that ripped through my county.

Missouri is doing what it can to help its citizens – it was my hope that FEMA would have stepped up and provided our state's citizens with additional assistance and resources.

Assistance was recently made available to qualified homeowners, renters and businesses from the federal Small Business Administration (SBA) in the form of low-interest disaster loans. However, of the 14 counties eligible for SBA assistance, not one falls within the 25th District.

Missourians are resilient, but we all need a helping hand when life deals us circumstances such as the cards dealt to many of the citizens of the Show-Me State, including those who live within my district, on that stormy day in February.unities, residents whose homes, businesses and farmland were damaged and destroyed have been told they will not be eligible for much-needed federal grants. In addition, many Missourians' insurance does not cover the immediate assistance they need at this time. As if

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Quick Action To Spur Job Creation

FEBRUARY 21ST 2012 BY UNKNOWN

[Quick Action To Spur Job Creation](#)

By Rob Mayer

Three weeks before the midway point of the 2012 Legislative Session, I am proud to report the Senate has advanced the three priority bills I outlined in my opening day speech to help improve Missouri's business climate. I appreciate my colleagues swift work that culminated with the Senate now passing and sending all three measures to the Missouri House for similar consideration.

It was important we move quickly because, unfortunately, joblessness remains high here in Missouri and across the nation. While Missouri's unemployment rate has improved, it is still too high as 8% or more than 245,000 citizens are still out of work. In fact, since January of 2008, Missouri has lost more than 90,000 jobs – that's equivalent to the population of Lee's Summit, Missouri's sixth largest city. The number of Missourians who want to work full-time, but have settled for part-time work, has doubled in the past two years and is now at 5% or more than 150,000. Plus, one of every six Missourians is currently receiving food stamps.

This is unacceptable. I believe we can no longer continue to do business in our state using the same policies we have relied on and expect things to change. That is why we proposed several ideas that are part of the equation to help employers put Missourians back to work in good-paying jobs with benefits.

The Senate's plan to improve Missouri's business climate started with the three priority bills we have already passed. They include [Senate Bill 469](#) that moves Missouri business owners a step closer to greater freedom from excessive and burdensome state rules and regulations, [Senate Bill 592](#) that would change state laws to mirror federal employment laws when it comes to discrimination bringing certainty to these laws, and [Senate Bill 572](#) that would restore protections for co-employees from personal lawsuits for their role in honest accidents at work and return Workers' Compensation as the exclusive remedy for workplace accidents.

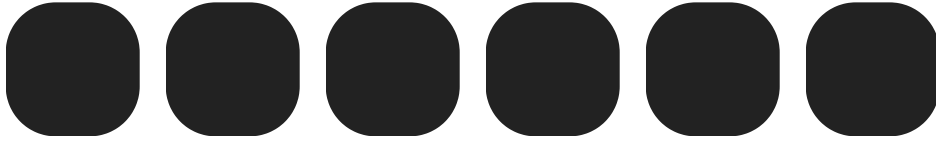
In the coming weeks, we will examine other legislation as part of a comprehensive package of bills aimed at helping spur job creation. Those include [Senate Bill 439](#) that would go a long way to making sure taxpayers aren't being fleeced when it comes to the rates they have to pay contractors on public building projects and [Senate Bill 438](#) that would establish worker protections so Missouri will no longer miss out on manufacturing opportunities.

The alarm is sounding, and we should all hear the wake-up call that now is the time to put these pieces in place so Missouri can truly compete for jobs. The bottom line is that our unwillingness to change is costing Missouri jobs. We want Missouri's businesses, big and small, to succeed and be able to create jobs. With these changes, I believe that reality is on the horizon.

Rob Mayer of Dexter represents the 25th Senatorial District in the Missouri State Senate and is the Senate President Pro Tem.

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Senate Adopts Employment Law Changes

FEBRUARY 07TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

Senate Adopts Employment Law Changes

By Rob Mayer

Last week we set out to break a lengthy debate in order to advance a bill that would change state laws to mirror federal employment laws when it comes to discrimination. Just before 2 a.m. Thursday morning, the Senate perfected [Senate Bill 592](#) that would do just that.

The measure makes sure Missouri employees will be protected from employers who break the law by having our standards meet the provisions set out in the historic Civil Rights Act. This gives employers and workers better certainty across the board when it comes to their day in court.

The bill changes Missouri law to state that discrimination must be “a motivating factor” rather than “a contributing factor” in wrongful termination lawsuits, which is identical to language in the federal Civil Rights Act. It would also allow for summary judgments, allow any party to demand a jury trial, limit awards for certain damages as outlined in federal law, and exclude managers and supervisors from being held individually liable.

Missouri’s employment law originally resembled federal law, but unfortunately, Missouri courts have drastically changed Missouri employment law over the years. It’s important the people of Missouri, through their elected representatives, ultimately

shape our laws.

I believe this is an important step in helping put Missourians back to work. Missouri businesses tell us that by harmonizing our state employment law with federal employment law, they can invest more in hiring new employees rather than expansive legal fees to navigate a current system riddled with uncertainty.

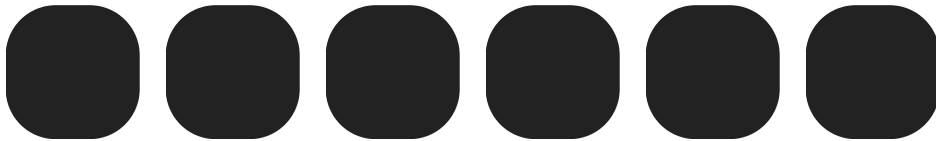
Also this week, the [Senate Governmental Accountability Committee](#) will hold another hearing on the failed Mamtek economic development project. After several hearings where the state economic development department was questioned about their role in marketing this poorly vetted project to Missouri communities, the committee will now hear from a national organization on the best practices in other states that could be applied to Missouri. I have charged the committee with recommending any legislative reforms they find necessary to prevent another failed economic development project of this size from happening again.

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Senate Advances Bills To The House

FEBRUARY 01ST 2012 BY UNKNOWN

[Senate Advances Bills To The House](#)

By Rob Mayer

The Senate has been hard at work and last week advanced the first two bills of the year to the House of Representatives. We have also continued work on our priority bills that we believe will improve Missouri's business climate.

The first bill we tackled would bring more transparency to tracking how your taxpayer dollars are spent. [Senate Bill 467](#), sponsored by Sen. Brian Munzlinger, R-Williamstown, would require state entities accepting grants more than \$1 million to post information regarding the grants on the [Missouri Accountability Portal](#). The portal is an online resource for the public to search Missouri's government financial records.

With the bill, the portal would show you the amounts, origins, and usage of federal grant funds awarded to state departments and agencies. Plus, you would be able to track distribution, as well as repayment of bonds issued by public higher education institutions and tax increment financing obligations. The bill would also require the governor to submit daily reports to the portal of the amounts withheld from the state operating budget. Taxpayers deserve to know where the governor is holding back spending the Legislature has approved and this step will make his actions public, and therefore, more accountable.

The second measure we sent to the House brings state law in line with federal transportation regulations, keeping millions of transportation dollars in our state. [Senate Bill 443](#), sponsored by Sen. Bill Stouffer, R-Napton, allows the issuance of limited driving privileges to repeat offenders in order to drive to work, school, rehabilitation services, or when seeking services to install a device that measures a driver's blood alcohol content. The bill also addresses several issues pertaining to the Uniform Commercial Driver's License Act, as well as other provisions regarding failure to appear in court for commercial driver's license holders, and implements federal guidelines concerning medical certification requirements for commercial drivers.

Making sure we meet federal transportation guidelines in these areas means Missouri can keep \$30 million of federal transportation funding in our state in the first year. These changes could lead up to Missouri annually keeping an additional \$60 million in highway safety funding.

As these two bills advance to the House for similar consideration, we are also hard at work on the priority bills I outlined at the start of session that will help put Missourians back to work. This week, we hope to conclude debate and pass [Senate Bill 592](#) that would change state laws to mirror federal employment laws when it comes to discrimination.

Rob Mayer of Dexter represents the 25th Senatorial District in the Missouri State Senate and is the Senate President Pro Tem.

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