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Kent Hampton's Capitol Report May 6, 2013

MAY 06TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Submitted by

Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer

Jefferson City, Missouri - In the Missouri House we strive to be good stewards of the public interest and the people's money. When times got tough several years ago, we tightened our belts and made difficult and often painful cuts. Today, an opportunity has arisen to invest in Missouri's future through rebuilding the infrastructure of our state facilities.

The House recently perfected House Joint Resolution (HJR) 14, which will create the Fifth State Building Fund. Last October, we made our final payment on the 30-year, \$600 million Third State Building Bond. That bond was approved by the people of Missouri in 1982, when interest rates were between eight and nine percent.

Today, the need for a public works program is great. So is the opportunity for implementing this program at the lowest possible rates. Interest rates are historically low. At 3.3%, they are one-third of what they were in 1982. In fact, these are the best rates this country has seen since the mid-1800s.

Upon voter approval, HJR 14 would allow Missouri to raise up to \$1.2 billion to be used for various construction, renovation, and rebuilding projects at state

facilities. Up to \$600 million would be invested in our higher education facilities. It would allow community colleges and universities to acquire new land on which to build facilities, such as medical training clinics and energy research centers, areas where we anticipate growth in the coming years.

At least \$40 million will go toward preserving and maintaining our 85 state parks. New funds will help the parks system build new public facilities, upgraded campgrounds, and boardwalks, which will in turn bring about new and increased tourism. Up to \$100 million will be reserved for improvements to the Missouri State Capitol. This building is not only the workplace of the Missouri Legislature—it is a state treasure, a museum of magnificent art and architecture, and an inspiration to the thousands of schoolchildren who come here each year.

The building bond will also provide up to \$20 million for renovating the public elementary and secondary schools our children attend every day. Two-hundred million dollars will be set aside for a new mental health facility in Callaway County. The current Fulton State Hospital facility is dilapidated, an unsafe place to work, and an impossible place to heal. HJR 14 would finally provide the funds for not just improvements, but a whole new building at which to treat the criminally mentally ill individuals in our state.

The remaining portion of the \$1.2 billion bond will go toward various building and infrastructure projects, from other state buildings to rural water districts. To give an idea of the many projects that can be aided by a new building fund, we look at the 1982 bond. It provided money for soil and water conservation projects, group homes in Jackson County, storm water control grants, and the construction of the Western Missouri Correction Center, along with the myriad improvements and expansion to higher education facilities.

The Great Seal of the State of Missouri depicts a crescent moon. When the seal was designed in 1822, the crescent moon symbolized the hope that our state – small at the time, but with a wealth of natural resources – would continue to grow. Today we have an opportunity to fulfill our forebears' hopes. The Fifth State Building Fund will create jobs, invest in education and health, and move to preserve and grow Missouri.

With the end of Session approaching, the House is putting the finishing touches on several important pieces of legislation. One of these Senate bills, SB 28, modifies eligibility requirements for unemployment benefits.

Current law states that in order to qualify for benefits, an individual must lose their job through no fault of their own, or they must quit for a good cause related to their work or their employer. If a person is fired because of misconduct, they do not receive unemployment. The trouble is that the current definition doesn't specify what offenses constitute misconduct. This results in abuse of the system. Senate Bill 28 simply puts into statute what is already common sense: there are certain behaviors that reasonably result in termination, and the state should not pick up the tab for these individuals.

Under the revised law, misconduct occurs when an employee knowingly violates the standards of behavior expected by the employer. The clarified definition of misconduct also includes chronic absenteeism or tardiness. This is an essential provision of the bill, because chronic absenteeism hurts a company's productivity, and makes the worker a liability, not an asset, to the workplace environment. We should not be rewarding such behavior with unemployment benefits.

If an individual is working for a state-licensed entity, misconduct also includes knowingly violating state laws or regulations. These kinds of violations not only harm the employer's interests, but could result in the workplace having its license or certification revoked. Again, these actions should not be rewarded.

Reform of our unemployment benefits system is a necessity in the present economy. Missouri's unemployment insurance system is currently more than \$500 million in debt. By reasonably tightening the eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance, Senate Bill 28 will allow this program to become financially sound more quickly.

Unemployment insurance, like other state benefits, was created as a safety net. This particular safety net is for those employees who are terminated because of company-wide cuts, for unjust cause, and for other reasons that aren't the fault of the employee. By preventing just anyone from falling into the net, we are strengthening the system for those who need it.

Throughout this session, the House of Representatives has stood firm against reckless proposals to drastically expand Medicaid - a system already fraught with waste, fraud, and abuse. While I am committed to providing the truly needy with access to medical care, blindly throwing money into a broken system will not solve the underlying problems that plague our healthcare system. Simply enlarging Medicaid will not lower climbing prices, improve the quality of care, or

stop people from taking advantage of a program meant only for the most vulnerable in our society. Transforming Medicaid is the only way to make the system more efficient and effective, so this is the task we in the House have dedicated ourselves to.

This week, the House passed HB 986, which creates the Joint Committee on Medicaid Transformation to investigate needed reforms. This bipartisan group of Representatives and Senators will meet with organizations and citizens from around the state to explore ways to limit skyrocketing medical costs, encourage preventative care, comply with federal mandates, and help able-bodied adults transition to private coverage. I have asked to be a part of this committee since our district is so strongly affected.

This past week our district lost one of their public servants with the passing of Mayor Diane Sayre of Caruthersville. For the many years she served through tornadoes and floods, her resolve was always about the betterment of the community.

[/images/Kent Hampton Report.png](#)

As always, it is an honor to serve you in the Missouri House. If you would like to discuss any issue, please call 573-751-3629. You can also email me at Kent.Hampton@house.mo.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

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Juror Appreciation Week Begins Monday

APRIL 28TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Juror Appreciation Week Begins Monday

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

Jefferson City, Missouri – Missouri’s Juror Appreciation Week will be observed this year Monday, April 29 through Friday, May 3, 2013. During the week, judges, lawyers and court clerks let jurors know the importance of their contribution to the courts and to their communities.

According to court records, more than 88,000 Missourians reported for jury duty in state courts in 2012.

More than 50 courthouses throughout the state will observe the week in different ways. Many will display a Missouri Bar poster that thanks jurors for doing their part. Judges also may take additional time to thank jurors and to acknowledge the significance of their service.

Missouri Bar President Patrick B. Starke said the right to trial by a jury is one of the fundamental guarantees included in the Bill of Rights. He noted Thomas Jefferson’s quote on the importance of this right: "I consider trial by jury as the only anchor yet imagined by man by which a government can be held to the principles of its constitution."

“This year, thousands of Missourians will be called to report for jury duty,” Starke said. “We understand that to serve means rearranging schedules, canceling appointments, and often times missing work. This week is dedicated to recognizing those sacrifices and thanking Missourians who report for jury duty because they are doing their part to protect this core right which is as fundamental to our country’s democracy as the right to vote.”

Missouri is one of only a few states that hold a statewide Juror Appreciation Week. The observance began in 2000 by order of the Supreme Court of Missouri. The order states, “Each year thousands of Missourians perform one of the most significant civic duties granted to citizens -- they serve as fair and impartial jurors in communities throughout the state. To honor those citizens who have performed their civic duty, all Missouri courts are directed to observe Juror Appreciation Week...”

To learn more about Juror Appreciation Week, visit The Missouri Bar’s website on the event at <http://www.mobar.org/jurorappreciationweek/>.

The Missouri Bar is a statewide organization that is dedicated to improving the legal profession, the law and the administration of justice for all Missourians. Created in 1944 by order of the Supreme Court of Missouri, it serves all 30,000 of Missouri’s practicing attorneys. To achieve its mission, The Missouri Bar provides a wide range of services and resources to its members, as well as the media, educators and the citizens of Missouri. To learn more about The Missouri Bar, visit www.mobar.org.

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Kander Celebrates First 100 Days in Office

APRIL 25TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Kander Celebrates First 100 Days in Office

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

Jefferson City, Missouri - Missouri Secretary of State Jason Kander today issued a report on his first 100 days in office. From his first day in office, Kander hit the ground running as Missouri's 39th Secretary of State.

"I'm grateful to Missourians for granting me the opportunity to serve as Secretary of State," Kander said. "These first 100 days were just the beginning. I am committed to working for Missourians every day of my term, and improving this state and this office during that time."

Kander's accomplishments have been outlined in "The first 100 days: A report on early accomplishments of Missouri's 39th Secretary of State." This report highlights efforts made by the Secretary of State's office to help Missourians since Kander was sworn in on January 14.

A few of the accomplishments highlighted include the return of thousands of dollars for Missouri investors, and the disbursement of more than \$1 million in grants to public libraries. Kander was instrumental in the introduction of several pieces of legislation, including one that would assist veterans starting a business and another to allow early voting in Missouri. Kander has also upgraded office policy to protect employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The report which is available on the Secretary of State's website:
www.sos.mo.gov/100DayReport.pdf.

LAST UPDATED ON APRIL 25TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

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Senator Blunt's Staff Hosts Listening Post

APRIL 20TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Senator Blunt's Staff Hosts Listening Post

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

U.S. Senator Roy Blunt's staff will host a Listening Post Meeting on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission.

Listening Posts are intended for Missourians to share their questions and concerns during meetings with members of Senator Blunt's staff.

Senator Blunt's Jefferson City office also extends one-on-one service to all Missourians who have an issue with a federal agency or need additional assistance.

To reach the Senator's Office of Constituent Services, please call at (573) 634-2488 or send a letter at 308 E. High Street, Suite 202, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101.

What: Senator Blunt's Staff Hosts Listening Post Meeting

When: Wednesday, April 24, 2013 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. CT

Where: Bootheel Regional Planning Commission

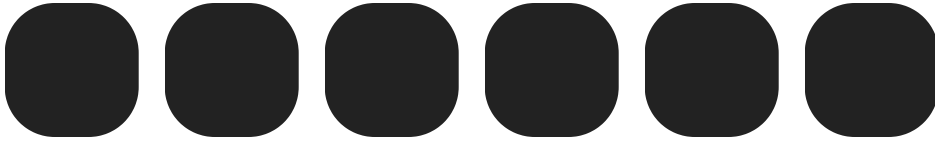
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Kent Hampton's Capitol Report

APRIL 15TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

[Kent Hampton's Capitol Report](#)

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

As we approach the final 5 weeks of session, there are issues that you may or may not be aware of that should be of importance to you as a citizen of the state of Missouri. Listed below are two such issues.

[House Urges Koster to Protect Missourian's Religious Liberties](#)

The Missouri House took action this week to encourage Attorney General Chris Koster to act in the best interest of Missourians by protecting their religious and conscience rights. House Concurrent Resolution 35 was filed in the wake of the errant US District Court's decision that sections of Senate Bill 749 – overwhelmingly passed by the General Assembly after being vetoed by the Governor – was unconstitutional.

What was SB 749?

Senate Bill 749 provided employers the protections needed after the congress and the president moved to violate the rights of millions of Americans in requiring them to provide insurance coverage for anti-life forms of “healthcare” for their employees regardless of their religious objections.

If you've been minding the state news wires, you've no doubt heard the accusations that the Missouri Department of Revenue, which operates the Division of Motor Vehicles, has been scanning, storing, and sharing private information with the federal government regarding our citizens who can carry concealed weapons. The original complaint came from a Stoddard County resident who did not wish for their information to be scanned at the local DMV. On April 10, the Missouri State Highway Patrol admitted that in fact they had requested on two occasions the complete list of Missouri CCW holders and they had forwarded that information on to the federal government.

There are a variety of reasons why this issue is premier. First, it's against the law. The Missouri General Assembly, in 2009, passed HB 361 which specifically states “no citizen of this state shall have his or her privacy compromised by the state or agents of the state.”

Second, while the government might have good interest in certain data at the group level (this helps when they are tracking and mitigating disease, for example), I can think of no good reason the government should be pinpointing CCW holders individually. Having a CCW is not a crime or grounds for an investigation.

What Are We Doing to Help?

The House has responded with House Bill 787, which would further prohibit the Department of Revenue from retaining copies of source documents used to obtain driver's licenses and nondriver's licenses. On the Senate side, Senator Kurt Schaefer (R-Columbia) has led the investigative charge and continues to garner information from the Nixon Administration regarding this apparent breach of privacy and trust.

My office continues to receive a variety of concerns from constituents regarding this evolving issue. I'm committed to ensuring your government is responsible in protecting

your privacy. Let me reaffirm that your local fee office has not done anything wrong. They were only following instructions from the Department of Revenue in this new process of scanning documents.

I was honored to host the nine </images/Beth's Pictures/Kent Hampton side pic.jpg> students who attended the Sophomore Pilgrimage (photo at right). Those attending were Bailey Burton, South Pemiscot High School; Kirsten Flowers, Cooter High School; Maegan Jones, Southland High School; Sarah Beth Prater, Caruthersville High School; Matthew Campbell, Campbell High School; Zachary Provance, Clarkton High School; Dalton Whitfield, Delta C-7 High School; Abigail McMullan, Kennett High School; and Katie Jones, Senath-Hornersville High School.

As always, it is an honor to serve you in the Missouri House. If you would like to discuss any issue, please call 573-751-3629. You can also email me at Kent.Hampton@house.mo.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

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