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## Kent Hampton's Capitol Report May 13, 2013

MAY 14TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

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*Submitted by*

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**Jefferson City, Missouri** - Before Session draws to a close, the Legislature must truly agree to and finally pass the budget. The Missouri Constitution requires us to pass a balanced, on-time budget. Once again, the House and Senate worked together to deliver a responsible fiscal plan that puts the priorities of Missourians first.

The biggest appropriations are those allocating money to Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education—and with good reason. Education is crucial for economic growth and, more importantly, for individual success. We in the Missouri Legislature are dedicated to providing the highest-quality education to all Missourians at all levels. The budget reflects this commitment.

The 2014 Budget contains the largest level of funding for K-12 education in the history of the state, including a \$66 million increase in funding for the Foundation Formula.

Today's working world often requires an advanced degree or technical training. That's why we are working harder than ever to provide funds for higher education. The budget this year includes increases in scholarship opportunities—including a \$2.4 million increase for Bright Flight and a \$1 million increase for Access Missouri—and in funding for colleges and career programs.

Besides the general \$25 million increase for four-year state universities, we also allocated money to establish or build programs that will train students for highly in-demand careers. Among these items are: \$1.3 million for an Occupational Therapy Program at Missouri State University and \$150,000 for Three Rivers to establish a trade school in Willow Springs. Another \$10 million will go to the medical school at the University of Missouri to build a cooperative program with Springfield hospitals.

The people of Missouri have made it clear health and public safety are top concerns. One of our goals this session has been improving mental health in order to fight crime. We know that health and safety go hand-in-hand. The 2014 budget reflects this goal. We budgeted \$8.9 million for developmentally disabled provider rate restricting in the Department of Mental Health, while also arranging the first provider rate increases in years for nursing homes, mental health services, and home and community-based services.

While we focus on the basic functions of state government, like education, safety, and growth, the arts are not neglected. We take

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pride in the culture and landmarks of our state, and as economic growth continues, we turn our eyes towards cultural growth. To this end, this year’s budget provides new funding for the Missouri Arts Council and a smaller than hoped for increase in Tourism Funding.

The budget isn’t all increases, though. There are times when programs outlive their use and when government services can be performed more effectively at the local level. This year, we moved the issuance of CCW permits from the Department of Revenue to the county sheriff’s offices. This resulted in less funding for the Department of Revenue, additional funding for counties, and more privacy for Missourians.

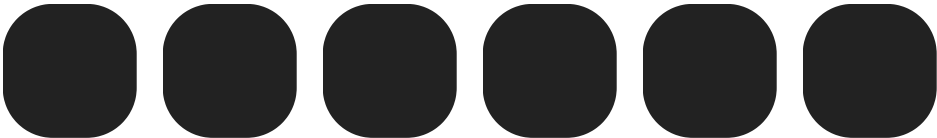
I was happy to welcome Sheriff Bob Holder of Dunklin County and Sheriff Tommy Greenwell of Pemiscot County to the House chamber recently (above) as well as the Clarkton 4thgrade class.

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.

LAST UPDATED ON MAY 14TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

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