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State Representative Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report

JANUARY 05TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Lessons Learned from New Member Orientation

151st House District of Missouri - As someone who began my service in the House after a special election, I had to hit the ground running with very little knowledge of the process. That was extremely hectic as my first days in office occurred during a Veto Session that was historic in nature. Thankfully, I now have been able to become more acclimated with the legislative process, and the duties and responsibilities of my office. Something that has been an enormous help is a week-long orientation program I recently participated in that was conducted by current members and staff of the Missouri House of Representatives.

It was an eye-opening experience for me, and for my 32 freshmen colleagues, as we learned about everything from how to file a bill to how to properly engage in debate on the House floor. While I feel like I have a strong grasp on the responsibilities I will have while serving as your voice in the halls of government, the orientation gave me an opportunity to really see behind the scenes to get a better idea of the nuts and bolts of the legislative process. I know there is still a great deal to learn, but the intensive training sessions that took place in the State Capitol have now given me a much better idea of how I can be more effective more quickly as I try to represent the best interests of your family, and all families in our district.

In the next step of our orientation we are hitting the road to visit as many parts of the state as possible, and to see many of the facilities and institutions that will be impacted by the decisions we make in Jefferson City. The two-week tour will take us to almost every part of the state – from St. Joseph to St. Louis, Cape Girardeau to Kirksville, Joplin to Jefferson City. Along the way we will tour institutions of higher learning, military installations, correctional facilities, community health centers, and many other establishments that receive state funding or are impacted by legislative decisions. Again, this is a great way to gain firsthand knowledge of the impact the decisions we make as legislators will have on Missourians in all parts of our great state.

As always, I am so incredibly thankful that you have given me the opportunity to serve as your state representative. During the next two years I will do all I can to be an effective voice for you, and for everyone in our district. To help me do my job well, I encourage you to contact with me any ideas or concerns you may have. I want the lines of communication to be open at all times, and I am always ready and interested to hear what you have to say. For the next two years my office will be located in Room 407C in the State Capitol. We are currently in the process of moving and getting situated in the new space, but I encourage you stop by for a visit if you find yourself in Jefferson City in the coming months.

Forming My Legislative Agenda

The legislative session is still several weeks from beginning, but already the State Capitol is alive with activity as members have begun filing the bills they will seek to pass next year. I have already signed on a co-sponsor on three pieces of legislation that I will work tirelessly in the coming months to pass into law. Below are brief descriptions and thoughts on each of the bills:

HB 81 – This is a piece of legislation sponsored by my friend and colleague, Rep. Sonya Murray Anderson, that would strengthen and expand Missouri's parental consent provisions in an effort to better protect the health and wellbeing of pregnant minors. Specifically, the bill requires notarized written consent from both the minor and a parent or legal guardian to be obtained by a physician before an abortion can be performed. As someone who is strongly pro-life, I believe this is an important change that will make abortions even rarer and safer here in Missouri.

HB 104 – The men and women who came to the new world did so in large part in search of religious freedom. Our founding fathers then made this idea of freedom of religion a cornerstone of the nation they created that is today the greatest in the world. As a public servant, I think it is important that we continue to protect this vitally important freedom. This year I have worked with state Rep. Elijah Haahr to co-sponsor what is known as the Student Freedom of Association Act. The bill focuses on protecting the rights of student religious organizations on Missouri college campuses. In effect it says that the institution of higher learning cannot take action or enforce a policy to discriminate against these associations.

HB 130 – The third piece of legislation I am proud to co-sponsor this year is commonly referred to as the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Act. During my time in the nursing profession I have seen far too many cases where an elderly Missourian has conflicting or duplicative prescriptions simply because they have been written by several different doctors who have no knowledge regarding what other physicians are prescribing. I think some people are shocked when they realize there is no central system tracking these items so that alarm bells are raised the second an individual is prescribed something he or she doesn't need, or that could conflict with existing medications. However, the truth is that we do not have such a system, and Missouri is in fact the only state in the nation that does not. That's why implementing a prescription drug monitoring program is extremely important.

A Look Ahead at the 2015 Legislative Session

It was during the November general election that the people of Missouri said they believe in the pro-growth, pro-jobs, fiscally conservative, family-oriented values that Republican legislators have fought to defend for more than a decade now as they have controlled the legislature.

Following that election, my colleagues and I met in Jefferson City to select our leadership team and discuss our agenda for the upcoming session. While we don't have our agenda set in stone at this time, we do know that a few key areas will receive our attention:

- Economic development incentives that invest in small business
- Education initiatives that keep decisions on the local level while also improving job readiness;
- Developing new ways to bolster our vital agriculture industry; and
- Continuing our efforts to move our state toward energy independence.

These are just a few of the goals mentioned by the new members of House leadership. You can be certain that the list will grow and change in the coming weeks as the Republican caucus continues to discuss its priorities, and we continue to take input from the people who have entrusted us to serve as their voice in the halls of government.

To contact State Representative Tila Rowland Hubrecht send her a letter to 151st House District of Missouri, 201 W. Capitol Avenue, Jefferson City, MO 65101 or P.O. Box 955, Dexter, MO 63841.

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