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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, September 25, 2015

SEPTEMBER 28TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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8th Congressional District - Missouri - History was made this week when Pope Francis addressed a joint session of Congress and was the first Pontiff ever to do so. Some of the most poignant remarks from Pope Francis focused on the importance of religious liberty. His observations come during a time when the religious rights of millions across the world and here in America are being trampled.

For centuries the United States of America has led the way on tolerance and religious freedom. More than 350 years ago, the first religious liberty law was established when Maryland was just a colony. In 1791, freedom of religion officially became part of the Bill of Rights. As the pope said in his address, “It is important today, as in the past, the voice of faith continue to be heard.”

Today though, our government has become intolerant of religion in any form. Right here in Missouri’s Eighth Congressional District, I had to stand up to the National Park Service when it began requiring a permit and a 48-hour notice before baptisms could occur within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. These conditions were not required for fishing or boating. Under Obamacare, employers are forced to provide health insurances that cover services and medications that violate their religious beliefs. Additionally, Christian business owners across the country are being fined and hauled to court for choosing not to use their artistic abilities for events that are contrary to their religious beliefs.

Our Constitution says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” It is my hope that the pope’s words reach all corners of our country reminding Americans that we need to return to the guiding principles upon which our nation was founded, including free expression of religion and religious tolerance.

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Medicare Prescription Drug Sign-Up

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Age Spots by Ruth Dockins

Medicare Prescription Drug Sign-Up Begins October 15th

Finally, the crisp, cool weather of fall is here (or nearly here)! We can start looking at football games, bon-fires and new Medicare D choices.

As most of you know the Medicare D (prescription drug) sign-up for 2016 starts Oct. 15 and runs through Dec. 7. You have received, or will soon receive (depending on when this article is printed) a letter from your Medicare Prescription Drug plan the “Plan Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) and Evidence of Coverage”. This letter will be a notice from your current plan outlining their 2016 formulary, benefit design and/or premium changes. They must send this to you by September 30.

Be sure to read this information carefully because many times there are significant changes in the premium, formulary and/or tier levels of the medication. If you are not satisfied with the new plan information please make a list of your medications, the size and how often you take them, and what pharmacy you use. Then contact Jackie, Liz, Meagan or me at 573-335-3331 or 1-800-392-8771, between October 15 and Dec. 7 so that we can assist you in finding the best plan for you for 2016. We will also need your Medicare number, effective dates for part a & b and your address. (By the way, never give this information to someone who calls you.)

We will have a form on our website that you can complete if you choose, it will be under Information and Assistance, Medicare D enrollment. You can print it and complete it and send it to us at the address on the bottom of the form. Our website is www.agingmatters2u.com We can then enter the information and will contact you with the best plans for you so that you can make an informed decision.

If you want to do this yourself you can go to www.medicare.gov click on “find health and drug plans” and follow the prompts.

Late in the month of September you will receive your new Medicare & You handbook. This is a very handy book to have; it answers many questions and has lots of good information in it. You can also download a copy online at www.Medicare.gov.

By October 16 employer/union and other group health plans must tell all Medicare eligible enrollees whether or not their drug coverage is creditable. Hang on to this notice! If you ever enroll in Medicare Part D you will need the letter to prove that you did have creditable coverage before you enrolled.

We will be having enrollment events at the following locations:

Oct. 15 – Aging Matters office (call for location 335-3331) 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Nov. 4 – Twin Towers, 302 N. E St., Poplar Bluff 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Nov. 4 – Altenburg Library, 66 Poplar St. Altenburg noon – 6 p.m.

Nov. 5 – Perryville Library, 800 City Park Dr. 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Nov. 5 – Caruthersville RSVP office, 1105 Carlton 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Nov. 10 – OAKS Sr Center, 305 Cresap, Sikeston 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Nov. 18 – Oaks Sr. Center, 900 Kennett Sr., Kennett 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

If you have questions please call 573-335-3331 or 1-800-392-8771.

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Democratic Committee Members Across MO Endorse Pat Contreras for State Treasurer

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Democratic Committee Members Across MO Endorse Pat Contreras for State Treasurer

Missouri - Pat Contreras today announced that over forty Democratic Party Chairs and Missouri Democratic Party Committee members from across the state have so far endorsed his campaign for State Treasurer campaign. These supporters show the broad base of support that Pat is receiving from all corners of the state.

“I’m proud to have the support from local leaders from so many diverse parts of Missouri,” Contreras said. “Folks across Missouri are excited about keeping a strong voice for all Missourians in the treasurer’s office. I look forward to continuing to travel the state and to talk to Missourians about how we can make our state stronger.”

Contreras continues a trend of showing strong support. In his first quarter in the race he received financial contributions from over 400 individuals. The broad base of fundraising and endorsements show the fast start his campaign is off to.

The Democratic Party Chairs that have so far endorsed Pat Contreras for State Treasurer are:

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Pat Contreras is a Kansas City native, a diplomat who served two Presidents, and a leader who knows how to get things done. Pat grew up in Kansas City where he learned to work hard, fight for what you believe in, and serve others.

A graduate of St. Louis University and Columbia University in New York, Pat began his career at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City where he helped guide community banking strategies, and now is working on the Jackson County Veterans Task Force to help those who have served find jobs, housing, and services.

Pat felt a calling to serve his country and worked in both the Obama and Bush administrations as a diplomat at the U.S. Department of State. His overseas deployments included Pakistan and Mexico where he helped strengthen national security and foreign policy objectives, led public diplomacy initiatives in Europe, and promoted business investment in America. He is a Partner with the Truman National Security Project.

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Senator Blunt's Statement on 9/11 Anniversary

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Senator Blunt's Statement on 9/11 Anniversary

As our nation marks the 14th anniversary of the tragic terrorist attacks and the three-year anniversary of the attack on the American consulate in Benghazi, U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (Mo.) released the following statement today remembering those devastating events:

“Fourteen years ago today, America witnessed the most horrific terrorist attack ever to take place on our nation’s soil,” said Blunt. “We will never forget the innocent victims and their families who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

“We continue to face real threats from terrorists today, and we were reminded of this just three years ago with the loss of four Americans who were killed during a deadly and senseless terrorist attack in Benghazi. I will continue working to ensure those who work and fight for our freedoms have the resources they need to protect our country. We will always be forever grateful for our country’s brave service members, intelligence professionals, and first responders who tirelessly work to keep us safe.”

Blunt currently serves as a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. He previously served as a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

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Ed Gargas Appointed to SEMO Board of Regents

SEPTEMBER 09TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Ed Gargas Appointed to SEMO Board of Regents

Jefferson City, Missouri - Gov. Jay Nixon today announced his appointments to the **Southeast Missouri State University Board of Regents**, the **Missouri Health Facilities Review Committee** and the **State Soil and Water Districts Commission**. The appointments will be subject to approval by the Missouri Senate.

The Governor has appointed **Phillip M. Britt** (D), of **Kennett**; and **Edward P. Gargas** (D), of **Dexter** to the Southeast Missouri State University Board of Regents. The six-member Board of Regents appoints the President of the University, employs faculty and staff, and makes budgetary and policy decisions necessary to implement the University's mission.

Britt has served as the Drug Court Commissioner for the 35th Judicial Circuit since 2002. Prior to that, he was the elected state representative for the 163rd District in the Missouri House. Britt also served as an assistant prosecuting attorney in Dunklin and Pemiscot counties. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Southeast Missouri State University and his law degree from the University of Missouri. The Governor has appointed Britt for a term ending Jan. 1, 2022.

Gargas is the director of operations and sales for Bagby Wealth Management and has been in financial management and insurance positions since 1991. He is a commissioned officer in the Missouri Army National Guard and a combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Southeast Missouri State University, his masters in business administration from William Woods University and a masters in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College. The Governor has

appointed Gargas for a term ending Jan. 1, 2022.

The Governor has appointed **Derek B. Hunter (R)**, of **Springfield**, to the Missouri Health Facilities Review Committee. The committee's mission is cost containment through health cost management, assurance of community need and the prevention of unnecessary duplication of health care services. Certificate of Need is based on a goal of public accountability through review of proposed health care services, value promotion, and negotiation among competing interests.

Hunter is a retired CPA who was with the accounting firm of BKD, LLP from 1979 to 2007, when he retired as a partner. He primarily served long-term care facilities and retirement villages while at BKD. Hunter obtained his undergraduate degree in accounting from Missouri State University. The Governor has appointed him for a term ending Jan. 1, 2016.

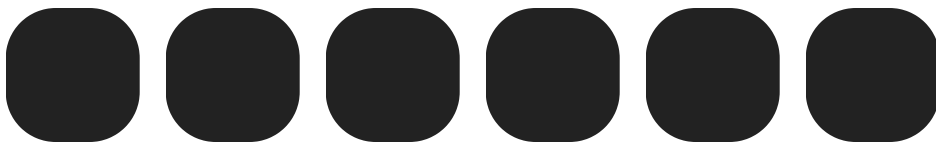
The Governor also has appointed **Timothy W. Martin (I)**, of **Bernie**, to the State Soil and Water Districts Commission. The Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission formulates policies and general programs for the saving of Missouri soil and water by the soil and water conservation districts.

Martin is the president of Martin Rice Company, Martin Grain Company and Marco Inc. With his brothers, he farms and manages more than 7,000 acres of rice-growing and row crop land in southeast Missouri. In 2010, Martin Rice Company received the Governor's Award for Agricultural Achievement. Martin is a member of the Elk Township Board in Stoddard County and a member of the Little River Drainage District Board of Supervisors. The Governor has appointed him for a term ending Aug. 15, 2018.

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