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Jason Smith's Capitol Report: Friday, January 29, 2016

FEBRUARY 01ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report: Friday, January 29, 2016

Congressman Jason Smith Capitol Report: Overriding a Presidential Veto Friday, January 29, 2016

Next week the U.S. House will take the historic action of attempting to override a Presidential Veto. In early January, for the first time since Obamacare was signed into law without a single Republican vote, Congress sent a bill repealing the President's namesake law to his desk. I voted in support of that repeal, a vote which would have dismantled Obamacare, fully defunded Planned Parenthood, and reduced the deficit by \$516 billion.

With that vote, the U.S. House and Senate stood with the American people and delivered Obamacare its biggest blow yet. The bipartisan repeal bill would have ended the catastrophic and costly individual and employer mandates, eliminated a host of associated taxes, and reduced the government intrusion between you and your doctor. Unfortunately, as soon as that bill hit President Obama's desk, he promptly vetoed it.

Next week I will be supporting Congress's first veto override attempt of this President. Simply put, the American people deserve a patient-centered health care system which is free of government intrusion. I will vote to override the President's veto because repealing Obamacare is the right thing to do in order to restore the doctor-patient

relationship and get our country on track to create a market based, competitive health care system that's actually affordable.

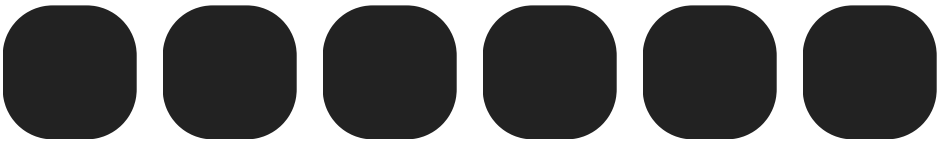
Obamacare is a failure, even by the government's own standards. The Congressional Budget Office recently reported that by 2025 Obamacare will cost the economy an equivalent of 2 million full-time jobs. Consumers have been left with fewer choices and health care remains un-affordable.

You elected me to put a major repeal of Obamacare on the president's desk and to force him to answer the question, "Whose best interest do you have at heart?" When President Obama vetoed this bill he answered loud and clear, "I've chosen my own legacy and my own interests, over those of hardworking Americans." He cares more about protecting his signature namesake law, than improving the healthcare system in this country. Individuals should have the ability to choose their own doctor. They should be able to purchase affordable, high-quality health care insurance that offers the best healthcare safety net option for their family. Competition without government intrusion should help drive down prices and businesses should not be hampered by confusing and conflicting healthcare regulatory paperwork. Unfortunately, even bipartisan agreement in Congress isn't enough to get this President to accept changes to his namesake healthcare law. I know many will join me next week in attempting to override his veto and I can only hope it's enough. When it comes to affordable and accessible healthcare, we all deserve better.

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Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - January 22, 2016

JANUARY 25TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - January 22, 2016

House Speaker Delivers Response to Governor's State of the State Address

Governor Jay Nixon delivered his final State of the State Address this week as he called on legislators to work with him to advance several issues including ethics reform. Immediately after he finished his speech, House Speaker Todd Richardson delivered his response to the governor's call to action. It was during his response that Richardson noted that the governor has too often been someone who pledges to work with the General Assembly, but then fails to live up to his promise.

"The hallmark of this governor is talk and not action," said Richardson in his response. "Each January he comes to the General Assembly and promises to meaningfully engage on the challenges facing Missouri. With few exceptions, he has failed to deliver on that promise."

Richardson went on to say, "This Republican legislature has pledged to lead even in the governor's absence. Because of his lack of leadership, Governor Nixon has been overridden more times than every other governor in the history of this state combined."

Richardson used his response to highlight the many accomplishments the legislature has made in recent years. He focused on the tax cut approved by the legislature and then put into effect as law over the governor's veto. As Richardson said, "Because of these actions, and despite the governor's objections, this year Missouri families will see their first income tax cut in nearly a century."

The Speaker also mentioned the legislature's efforts to protect the Second Amendment rights of Missourians. "Just last year this General Assembly defeated

a proposal to enact a massive tax on guns and ammunition, and we will continue to defeat similar proposals going forward,” said Richardson.

The House Speaker also noted that the legislature has made great strides in protecting the lives of the unborn. He said because of legislative efforts there are now thirty percent fewer abortions in Missouri than there were a decade ago.

In his State of the State Address, the governor again called for Medicaid expansion, and the Speaker responded by saying the legislature will continue to stand firmly opposed to the federal health care plan. Speaker Richardson noted that even without expansion, Medicaid enrollment has increased 15 percent in the last 18 months, and spending has increased 26 percent since Governor Nixon took office.

“Republicans have stood adamantly opposed to an ever encroaching federal government and this is especially true with our health care,” said Richardson. “We will continue to oppose this president, this governor, and the Democrat party in their efforts to expand the failed and flawed Obamacare system.”

House Speaker Calls for New Investment in Missouri’s Transportation System

One of the major issues discussed by House Speaker Richardson in his response is the need to increase investment in the state’s transportation infrastructure. Richardson noted that, “investing in our state’s transportation funding isn’t just a convenience issue; it’s one of economic necessity and public safety.”

The Speaker said he is proposing, along with his fellow House and Senate leaders, that the state reinstitute the Missouri Department of Transportation cost-sharing program. Richardson said the once popular program among Missouri cities and counties will allow local governments to work with the state to meet the infrastructure needs of their communities.

“While this proposal won’t solve all our transportation problems, this investment will send a clear signal to job creators and industry that our state is making the necessary investments and improvements to our infrastructure to allow business to capitalize, expand, and grow,” said Richardson. “And we can do it without asking Missouri families for a single penny.”

House Moves to Reject Tax Increase on Agricultural Land (HCR 58)

As it has done several times over the years, the Missouri House of Representatives took action this week to reject a proposed tax increase on Missouri's agricultural land. The House gave bipartisan support to HCR 58, which would reject a recommendation made by the Missouri Tax Commission for a five percent tax increase on farm and ranch properties.

A five percent increase went into effect in 2015 after the Tax Commission made a similar recommendation in 2014. Proponents of rejecting the new proposed increase said now is not the time for yet another tax increase on farmers and ranchers who are struggling in the current economy. They also noted that many of Missouri's agricultural lands have been adversely impacted by flooding, which is something the commission doesn't take into account when making its recommendation.

With House approval, the measure now moves to the Senate where it is expected to move quickly through the process.

Voter ID Legislation Receives House Approval (HJR 53 and HB 1631)

The House approved and sent to the Senate this week two pieces of legislation designed to require a valid form of photo identification in order to vote.

One piece of legislation would change the Missouri Constitution to allow a system of voter identification. If approved by the legislature, the change would then need to be approved by Missouri voters. The constitutional change is necessary because a voter identification requirement put into law in 2006 was ultimately struck down as unconstitutional by the Missouri Supreme Court. Lawmakers hope to avoid a similar challenge in the future by amending the constitution to allow voter identification.

The second piece of legislation would implement the system of voter identification if the constitutional amendment is approved by voters. The bill would require voters to present a specified form of identification in order to vote in a public election. Valid forms of identification would include photo IDs issued by the state, the federal government or the military. The bill also would require the state to pay for individuals to obtain a valid ID if they do not have one, or to obtain documents

necessary for an ID. The bill also states that individuals without a photo ID could still vote by casting a provisional ballot.

Supporters called the measures a necessary step to protect the integrity of the elections process. They said providing a valid photo ID is the best way to ensure voters are who they say they are when they cast their vote. They also deflected criticism that the bill would disenfranchise Missourians without an ID by pointing to the provisions that would require the state to help such individuals obtain state-issued photo identification.

Both measures now move to the Senate for discussion.

House Continues Discussion on Ethics Reform (HB 2166, HB 2203, HB 2226)

The members of the Missouri House recently approved four pieces of legislation meant to improve the culture at the Capitol, and several more bills are now set to make their way to the House floor for discussion. The House Committee on Government Oversight and Accountability this week gave its stamp of approval to three more reform bills.

One piece of legislation (HB 2166) is meant to alleviate the undue influence of lobbyists in Jefferson City by banning gifts and meals provided by lobbyists to elected officials. Under current law, no limit exists on the amount of gifts a lobbyist can provide to a legislator or other state elected official. The bill approved in committee would impose a strict gift ban for members of the General Assembly and other statewide officials. The legislation is modeled after law in Arizona and contains some common sense exceptions that would allow a legislator to, for example, receive an award without breaking the law. However, the intent of the bill is to prohibit all gifts that could create an appearance of impropriety.

The committee also approved HB 2203 to limit how long campaign funds can be invested and how they can be used, and HB 2226 to prohibit task force and commission appointees from profiting from the recommendations they make.

All three bills now move to the House floor for discussion.

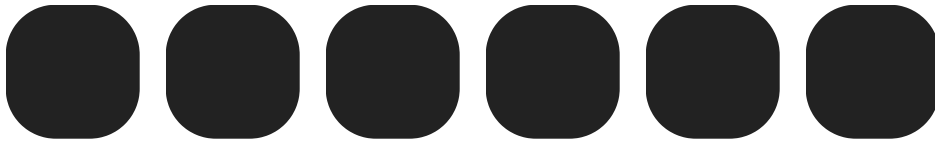
Shown in the photo: Tila Hubrecht, Matt Bain, Zachary Bell and Rep. Holly Rehder. Mr. Bell is a farmer from our area who was visiting the Capitol this week.

Mr. Bain is also from Southeast Missouri and works in the Lt. Governor's office.

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Tila Hubrecht Introduces House Bill 1366

JANUARY 25TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Tila Hubrecht Introduces House Bill 1366

From the desk of Tila Hubrecht, 151st State Representative - Missouri

I presented HB 1366 this week to the Committee on Emerging Issues. This bill will allow a pathway for the substitution of Biosimilar Medications for Biologic medications.

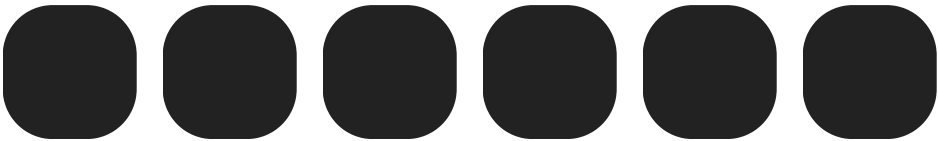
These medications are very expensive medications and most commonly found in oncology, arthritis and other types of disease processes. If this bill passes and makes it across the Governor's desk it will result in a significant savings for patients as well as for the state of Missouri.

I was very pleased with the hearing this week, there was no opposition voiced to the bill and many groups voiced supported the bill. This bill will be voted in committee next week and if it passes this committee will go to the second level of committee for review. If the bill passes the second committee level it will be heard on the House Floor.

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Senator Doug Libla Statement on Noranda Aluminum

JANUARY 16TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Senator Doug Libla Statement on Noranda Aluminum Press Release

?Statement on Noranda Aluminum Workforce Reduction

Jefferson City, Missouri - It's a sad day in Southeast Missouri with the recent announcement by Noranda Aluminum in New Madrid that two of their three potlines have gone offline due to a catastrophic loss of electrical supply. Therefore, in the upcoming weeks Noranda announced reduction of employees at the New Madrid Smelter to adjust for operating only a single potline instead of three. This is a tragedy for all of the workers and their families who depend on Noranda and their good paying jobs. The local communities and subsidiary companies that supply Noranda will also be affected.

Manufacturing companies across the United States have been struggling due to burdensome regulations and unfair trade laws passed by the federal government. The reluctance of USA custom agents and other government officials to enforce our country's trade laws has resulted in foreign countries like China to continue dumping cheap, inferior products, and manipulating currency exchange rates.

Coal-fired power plants over the past several years have also come under attack by the federal government, making it harder for families and businesses to pay their electric bills, especially in the Midwest. Affordable and reliable electric rates are vital to businesses remaining open and providing jobs

We need Washington D.C. to quit passing burdensome regulations and defend our homegrown manufacturers from unfair government subsidized trade practices by foreign competitors. The combination of rising electrical costs, lack of enforcement of our trade laws, and job killing regulations is destroying manufacturing and businesses across our country. Many of Noranda's domestic competitors have been going out of business in recent years because of these very same issues. It is very difficult to remain in business without affordable electrical rates. USA manufacturers cannot afford to continue producing products and selling below manufacturing cost.

Until our federal and state governments change their ways, we will continue to see more American companies struggle or close. I will continue to do everything I can in Jefferson City to assist Noranda and its employees through this stormy period. My prayers and sympathy goes out to the workers and families of Noranda already affected by the layoffs, and those who may be in the future.

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2016 Legislative Session Begins with Call to Action

JANUARY 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

2016 Legislative Session Begins with Call to Action

2016 Legislative Session Begins with Call to Action from House Speaker Richardson

The opening day of the 2016 legislative session was marked by a speech from House Speaker Todd Richardson in which he called upon members to work together to, “find answers to the seminal challenges of our time and make tough decisions.” Richardson reminded members that the Missouri House of Representatives, “cannot be a place where inaction, infighting and indifference define us. This must be a place where we tackle and solve real problems.”

In his speech, Richardson highlighted many of the recent accomplishments of the legislature. He emphasized the General Assembly’s work to end the practice of taxation by citation in the municipal court system; passage of the first income tax cut in a century; reforms to the state’s welfare system to help get people out of poverty rather than trap them in it; and efforts to reduce the numbers of abortions in the state by 30 percent over the last 10 years.

Richardson also cited several accomplishments that have not received as much attention including efforts to make oral chemotherapy medications more affordable for Missourians battling cancer; work to ensure Missourians with eating disorders have access to the help and care they need; and proactive steps taken by the legislature to protect children from the ever-growing dangers of human trafficking. As Richardson said in his speech, “By doing so, we’ve made our state

a better, more compassionate place.”

In setting the tone for the upcoming session, Richardson reminded his colleagues that while much had been accomplished, the legislature still has much to do. Richardson noted that, “We live in a state where wages are stagnant. Consider this; the spending power of a Missouri family is \$5000 – less than it was at the start of this century. We live in a state where a devastating cycle of dependency traps too many of our fellow Missourians in poverty. More people are on government assistance than ever before. Spending on welfare and entitlement programs is growing at a rate faster than our economy.”

Richardson called on his colleagues to work together to help find solutions to the problems facing Missouri families, and to develop ideas that will allow Missourians to pursue the American Dream rather than be trapped in poverty. Richardson ended his speech by asking members if they will use their, “time and the unique power we all hold to make this state a better place and to be an advocate for those who sent us here? The answer to that question is the one that will define us.”

Opening Day of Session Highlighted by Emphasis on Ethics Reform

During his Opening Day Address, House Speaker Richardson also made it clear that the top legislative priority for the House in the first days of session will be substantive ethics reform. Richardson said he plans to immediately assign every ethics bill filed in the House to committee so that members can begin a thorough discussion on the proposals designed to improve the culture at the Missouri State Capitol.

Richardson said he is asking the committee to, “act with haste to send us a set of substantive, meaningful, single subject ethics bills so that they may be the very first matter that this General Assembly tackles. In doing so we will improve the environment in Jefferson City, and begin the process of restoring the public’s confidence in this institution. There is no rule or law that can make our imperfect process perfect, but we can, and we must, work to improve the culture here in the people’s Capitol.”

Richardson has already stated he supports implementing a ban on all gifts from lobbyists to legislators and an end to the revolving door that allows elected officials to immediately become lobbyists after leaving office. Legislators also will discuss improvements to the personal financial disclosure requirements, and prohibiting members from also serving as paid political consultants. Richardson said he expects several bills to make it to the floor next week and for the House to approve and send the bills on to the Senate.

Lawmakers to Consider Transportation Funding Issue

Another pressing issue lawmakers will try to tackle in 2016 deals with the finding a much-needed funding solution for Missouri’s transportation system. While increasing revenues have made the situation less dire than it was a year ago, the state’s transportation department still needs an additional \$160 million in new revenues to adequately maintain and improve the existing highway system. During the opening day of the legislative session, lawmakers had differing views

on how to address the funding shortfall.

Some lawmakers support a small fuel tax increase – 1.5 cents for gasoline and 3.5 cents for diesel fuel – to generate additional dollars for the state’s roads. They noted that at with the current low gas prices, a minimal fuel tax increase would have minimal impact on the pocket books of Missourians. The Senate gave first-round approval to legislation to raise the tax last year, but the bill never made it to the other side of the building. This year, versions of the bill have been filed in both the House and Senate.

However, many in the legislature are opposed to any sort of tax increase. They note that voters rejected a proposed increase in 2014 that would have increased the state sales tax by ¾ cent to raise an additional \$540 million. House Speaker Todd Richardson pointed out that the proposed small fuel tax increase would generate only a portion of the new funding needed by the transportation department. The proposed increase would generate only \$56 million of the \$160 million needed for Missouri’s roads. Richardson also said, “We’re going to be focused in the House on finding some ways to improve the transportation system and the amount of money we’re spending on transportation through the budget – and trying to find some ways that we can prioritize that spending as we have revenue growth.”

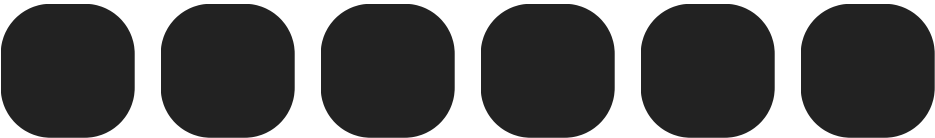
In the coming weeks, lawmakers will spend time discussing the possible solutions for Missouri’s road funding crisis.

Tila Hubrecht
151st State Representative

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