

Political Blogs



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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, March 24, 2017

MARCH 27TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, March 24, 2017

Under Construction: Jobs & Energy Independence
March 24, 2017

The number one responsibility of your government is to keep you and your loved ones safe. Energy security – knowing we can put gas in our cars and heat our homes – is a major part of that safety and security. But for too long, the government has been dependent on Middle Eastern countries supplying us with oil, sitting back and waiting for them to provide our energy resources – leaving us with a hefty price tag.

This week, President Trump took major action to move forward with the Keystone XL pipeline project. A project which will make us less reliant on countries who don't have our best interests at heart and will secure our energy independence while adding jobs and growing the economy.

The request to begin construction on the Keystone XL pipeline was first submitted to President Obama in 2008. But Barack Obama spent all eight years of his presidency prioritizing and championing the radical environmental cause. Even after Obama's State Department determined the pipeline project would not contribute to climate change, Obama put politics ahead of the American people and refused to approve the pipeline.

From eight years of obstruction to eight weeks of action, President Trump has worked

quickly to move the Keystone XL pipeline project forward. During his first week in office, President Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum to clear roadblocks and speed up the approval process for the pipeline. And this week, he signed the final permit to approve construction of the pipeline.

The construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline will lower energy costs for Missouri families and infuse our country's economy with the kind of infrastructure investment that creates and supports jobs.

This pipeline is an \$8 billion investment that will create more than 42,000 construction jobs. The project will use American steel and direct roughly \$3.4 billion into the pockets of hardworking Americans who desperately need it. These dollars will go to cash-strapped communities in rural America, supporting local grocery stores, local car dealerships, local restaurants, local housing markets - the list goes on and on.

I have been pushing for construction of the pipeline since joining Congress forty months ago. In 2015, I voted for the Keystone XL Pipeline Approval Act. This bill had bipartisan support from over 300 members of Congress, would have put thousands of Americans back to work and reduced the burden of high energy costs. This legislation advanced through both Chambers of Congress and made it all the way to President Obama's desk, only to be ignored.

The Keystone XL Pipeline will carry nearly 800,000 barrels of North American oil per day. It makes zero sense to rely on foreign countries for our energy when we have access to a wealth of energy resources right here in America.

Between lower gas prices and less money on your energy bills, Missourians are set to benefit from the Keystone XL pipeline project. Calling this a "new era for American energy," President Trump promised his administration would follow through with more infrastructure projects that put a paycheck directly in the hands of hardworking Americans. I am glad President Trump approved construction of the pipeline, and am thankful to see our government prioritizing the nation's security - finally making it possible to stop relying on Middle Eastern nations to meet America's energy needs.

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Hubrecht Supports Charter School Compromise

MARCH 20TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Hubrecht Supports Charter School Compromise

State Rep. Tila Hubrecht Supports Charter School Compromise, Includes Full Funding for Missouri's Public Schools

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Missouri's public schools will receive full funding for the first time under a charter school bill supported by state Rep. Tila Hubrecht. Hubrecht had been opposed to charter school expansion but said a compromise put forward by House Speaker Todd Richardson included the funding and accountability measures that made the bill more palatable.

“I am a strong defender of our public school system and believe we have amazing schools providing a world class education to our young people. I don't want to do anything to jeopardize that, and I firmly believe the bill the House passed has protections in place to ensure our public schools will be able to continue to succeed,” said Hubrecht, R-Dexter. “As part of the compromise on the bill, public schools will now receive record funding levels as our foundation formula will be fully funded for the first time. This is great news for our young people and for our educators who will have access to the resources they need to provide a quality education.”

The language included in the charter school bill (HB 634) would limit charter school expansion only to areas where schools are failing. The bill is meant to provide additional options to students who would otherwise have nowhere else to turn to receive a quality education.

“Some have accused me of being dishonest on this issue because I supported the bill after being opposed to charter school expansion in the past. The truth is that Speaker Richardson listened to my concerns and worked with me and other members of our caucus make this bill one we all could live with,” said Hubrecht. “This bill isn’t perfect but it does strengthen our support for public schools, while also allowing for the doors of opportunity to be opened for young people who would otherwise be left behind.”

Hubrecht noted that the legislation would increase the accountability and academic requirements for not only new charter schools, but existing ones as well. The bill would limit charter school expansion to districts that have a school building with an Annual Performance Report (APR) score of 60 or lower in two of the last three years. If a charter underperforms in comparison to similar schools in their district for two of the past three years, they will be limited to a three-year charter renewal. The bill provides that charter schools will have a three year probationary period, and if a charter performs poorly during two of the three years, that charter school will be ineligible for renewal and will be forced to close.

The bill would also limit the public dollars sent to charter schools to more than 90 percent of the sending district’s tuition. Additionally, the bill is contingent on the school foundation formula being fully funded. If the K-12 formula is not fully funded, then no charter school changes go into effect.

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Congressman Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, March 17, 2017

MARCH 20TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, March 17, 2017

Check Your Tackle Box & Keep an Eye on Your Gun Case March 17, 2017

Did you know that on his way out of office, President Obama tried to regulate the ammo in your gun and the fishing sinkers in your tackle box?

Before he jetted off to the Caribbean, President Obama managed to take a final swipe at Missourians' way of life with "Director's Order No. 219," a last-minute regulation that banned lead ammunition and fishing tackle on federal lands. In other words, President Obama's rule would not have allowed you to take shotgun shells or fishing sinkers with you to hunt in Mark Twain National Forest or fish at Clearwater Lake.

Printed out, the current Code of Federal Regulations would physically cover more than 2.5 acres of land. That is 175,268 pages of burdens weighing down Missourians. Fortunately, I was able to stop them from adding another page to that stack and defend our right to decide what we do with our weekends.

After hearing the concerns of hunters and fishermen in southern Missouri, I led the effort

to have 60 Members of Congress send a letter to President Trump asking him to overturn the ban. You see, in Missouri, we know how to be good stewards of the land God has given us, and we do not need the federal government monitoring our movements while we enjoy creation. At the beginning of this month, my letter to President Trump resulted in the Obama-era lead ban being overturned by my friend and former colleague Ryan Zinke in one of his first acts as U.S. Department of Interior Secretary.

This rule had no basis in science and was written without any input from those most affected by its enactment. Sportsmen and fishermen are some of our country's greatest conservationists. Obama's order only served to hinder them from participating in the recreational use of federal lands they've enjoyed for decades. The regulatory red tape thrown up by unelected bureaucrats over the last eight years is exactly what the American people soundly rejected when they elected Donald Trump in November.

It was a complete overreach by the Obama administration to decide what type of ammunition or fishing tackle you carry while exploring the great outdoors of Missouri. In typical Washington, D.C. fashion, President Obama wanted to show Missourians that he knew what was best for us. Fortunately, we have a new president who understands and trusts us to tell him what we need, not the other way around.

We have all seen President Trump's work thus far, undoing the damage of President Obama's executive actions and appointing the right people like Secretary Zinke to do the same thing. After eight years of Obama's overreach, whether it is something as big as Obamacare or as small as the fishing tackle you pack on a weekend trip with your family, I am committed to defending southern Missouri's way of life.

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Services Offered by the Missouri State Representative's Office

MARCH 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Services Offered by the Missouri State Representative's Office

Services Offered by the Representative's Office

Courtesy Resolutions

Courtesy resolutions can be requested for many reasons including, but not limited to, an Anniversary, Birth, Eagle Scout Award, Marriage, Birthday, Business Opening, Special Award, Retirement, or Sports. Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you like to request a Courtesy Resolution. If you would like to have me personally present the Courtesy Resolution, please call my office and my assistant will be happy to work with you to schedule for this. My office number is 573/751-1494.

Scheduling a Visit with Me Back in the District

I always enjoy visiting with my constituents in the 151st District. Some of my favorite groups are school aged children but I also enjoy meeting with every age group! If you would like to schedule a visit with me, please call my office at 573/751-1494, my assistant will be happy to work with you to arrange a time for us to visit. Visits can include reading and talking with school children, visiting retirement centers, visiting non-profit groups, businesses, coffee talks, and more.

Visiting the Jefferson City and the Capitol

Even though we are out of session from June to December, any time of the year is a great time to visit the Capitol. The building is a beautiful place to visit and my assistant will be happy to arrange a tour for you while you are in Jefferson City. There are many interesting places to visit during your visit to our state Capitol. A great way to get to Jefferson City is via Amtrak if driving is not possible or challenging. Visitors can tour the Missouri Supreme Court, Old Missouri State Penitentiary, the Missouri Military History Museum, the Missouri State Highway Patrol Museum, and more.

Missouri and United States Flags

If you know of a school, retirement center, non-profit group, or someone else that is in need of a flag, please contact my office at 573/751-1494 and we will arrange to have a new flag sent or delivered to them.

Scheduling Class or Large Group Visits at the Capitol

If your school is planning on traveling to the Capitol between January and May, contact my Capitol office as soon as you know a date to set up the tour, things become busy very quickly during the session. Tours of the Governor's Mansion and Capitol fill up rapidly with schools from all over Missouri, so, the sooner, the better. It is best to set up your school visits or large group visits at least 6 months out if possible. If this is not possible, contact my office and we will try very hard to see what we can arrange for you, rest assured, not all will be lost though, there are plenty of self-guided tours and other sites to visit. If you are planning a visit during the Interim Period, June through December, please call my office, if I am in Jefferson City during your visit, I would enjoy scheduling a visit with you and showing you the Capitol!

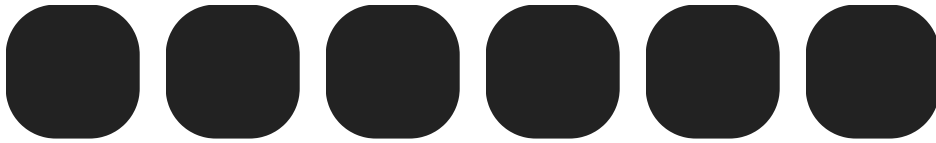
Service Member and Veterans Services

Enough cannot be said of the sacrifices our brave men and women of the Armed Forces make for our freedoms every day, both at home and abroad. The Missouri Veterans Commission has put together a guide for Missouri resources for military service members and their families with contacts for local VA Hospitals and Centers, the American Legion, the VFW, the other resources for our veterans. To request one, please contact my office at 573/751-1494 and we will be more than happy to provide you with a copy of this helpful guide.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, March 3, 2017

MARCH 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, March 3, 2017

A Unifying Speech
March 3, 2017

My grandmother once told me, “God gave you two ears and one mouth so that you would listen more than you speak”. On Tuesday night I listened and followed along as President Trump delivered the most important speech of his new Presidency. What I heard was a message of strength, of unity, and of determination from a President committed to using his time in office to put the needs of the American worker, family, and farmer first above all else.

Laid out were plans to rebuild our military, invest in our nation’s infrastructure, and to take care of our veterans. I heard about investment in students, in those underemployed and unemployed as well as a plan to make life easier for working parents. Our President talked about his desire to work with Republicans and Democrats alike to remove the government intrusion between you and the doctor of your choice and to lower the costs of sky rocketing healthcare premiums for millions of Americans. He talked about reducing

the regulatory and taxation burden which is suffocating so many middle class families, farmers, and small businesses. He laid out a vision for securing our border, properly vetting those trying to enter our country, and enhancing the safety and security of American families.

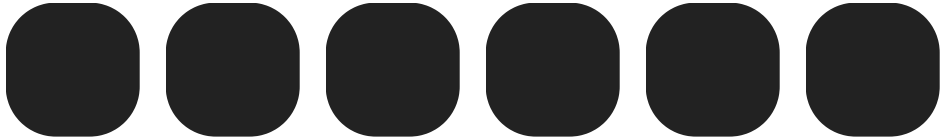
Maybe what struck me the most was the stark contrast of this speech compared to the empty rhetoric of the last eight years. Instead of a glorified vision of what 'change' may one day come, I heard a man determined to actually take the steps now to improve the lives of American's tomorrow. Just this week the President finally put an end to the dreaded "Waters of the United States" Rule which would have allowed the EPA to regulate every lake, pond, stream or flow of water on a farmer's land. This is something I have authored language to defund and that over my last two annual farm tours I have heard consistent concerns, complaints and criticisms about – Washington regulators who have never step foot inside Missouri writing rules and orders impacting the very families and farmers back home who are charged with feeding the world.

The President was spot on, "In 2016, the earth shifted beneath our feet...the chorus became an earthquake." He was speaking to you, to me, and to all of us who have had enough of the government knows best mentality. To us who want to shrink the size of a bloated federal government, who believe in personal liberties and freedoms and who believe our founders knew what they were doing when they wrote the United States Constitution.

For me, one of the most memorable moments occurred when the President was speaking about his role as Commander in Chief and a return of the United States to its rightful place as a world leader who stands with its allies and deters its enemies. The President recognized Carryn Owens, the widow of Senior Chief William "Ryan" Owens of the U.S. Navy. Ryan died giving his life to secure America's place in the world. He went to those countries few will ever visit - those areas where coward terrorist networks live, plan, and hide. Ryan's job was to gather intelligence on and help root out these hate filled individuals in order to keep American families safe thousands of miles away. Ryan gave his life so that your family, my family and our friends and families around Missouri are secure each and every day.

When I think about people like Ryan, it is easy for me to answer back – "Yes, Mr. President, we are ready to lead again".

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