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Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe Signs Bill Establishing Senior Growth and Development Program

JULY 31ST 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Springfield, Missouri - Missouri Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe today signed legislation that establishes the Senior Growth and Development Program, a program designed to fund important services for Missouri's senior population. The official bill signing ceremony took place at the South Side Senior Center in Springfield, Missouri and was attended by more than one-hundred area senior citizens, legislators and representatives of senior advocacy groups.

The new legislation, part of SB 275 dealing with provisions of state law relating to health care, establishes the "Senior Services Growth and Development Program" in the Department of Health and Senior Services and creates a dedicated fund within the State Treasurer's Office that will be used to fund senior programs and services throughout the state. Programs eligible for such funding will be coordinated and implemented by Missouri's Area Agencies on Aging. SB 275 was sponsored by Senator David Sater of Cassville and was amended during the legislative session with provisions relating to the Senior Growth and Development Fund by Senator Wayne Wallingford and Representative Kathryn Swan, both of Cape Girardeau.

Lt. Governor Kehoe signed the legislation in his capacity as Acting Governor due to the fact that Governor Mike Parson is currently out of the country, but noted the fact he had

discussed this specific legislation with the Governor prior to his departure. During those discussions Kehoe indicated that this was one of the pieces of legislation approved by the legislature this year that he was most passionate about, and both agreed that it would be appropriate for signing by the Lieutenant Governor.

Kehoe also noted that the passage of this law reflected a strong team effort, not only by key legislators such as Senator Sater, Senator Wallingford and Representative Swan, but also by the professional staff in his office and the Missouri Legislature, as well as the countless advocates for seniors at the grassroots level who have worked on this legislation for more than four years.

Kehoe also said that it was appropriate that the official bill signing occurred in Springfield, MO rather than in Jefferson City, noting that sometimes it is “good to get out of the capitol. This is where the real work gets done.”

“Southwest Missouri is pleased to host this important bill signing. It represents years of dedicated work on behalf of seniors throughout this state,” said Starr Kohler, CEO of the SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging in Springfield. “This bill is dedicated to recognizing the value of seniors in the State of Missouri. This legislation shows that the Missouri Legislature does value Missouri seniors,” Kohler added.

Kohler noted that it was just one year ago that Mike Kehoe had been appointed as Missouri’s Lieutenant Governor, and that within that year he had upheld his pledge to advocate for senior Missourians by helping to pass this important program.

Missouri’s Area Agencies on Aging, who will be responsible for providing services through the Senior Growth and Development Program, were represented at the ceremony by Starr Kohler, CEO – SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging; Diana Hoemann, Executive Director of Care Connection for Aging Services; Rebecca Nowlin, CEO – Central Missouri Area Agency on Aging; and Catherine Edwards, Executive Director of the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

The Missouri Silver Haired Legislature, which had made this legislation a priority during the past legislative session, was also represented by Barb Ittner, Ron Clark and Mary Chronister and Dorothy Knowles.

For additional information relating to this event and to the programs and services administered by Missouri’s Area Agencies on Aging, contact Catherine Edwards, Executive Director of the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging at: cedwards@ma4web.org, or by phone at: 573-619-6185.

Photo Attached: (Photo Credit – Juli Jordan, Senior Age Area Agency on Aging)

Pictured in photo: (Seated – Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe; Standing (left to right) – Dorothy Knowles, Kit Brewer, Ron Clark, Senator David Sater, Catherine Edwards, Diana Hoemann, Rebecca Nowlin)

LAST UPDATED ON JULY 31ST 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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