

CAPITOL REPORT

Representative
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District 141
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House Whirls Through First Half of Legislative Session with Great Accomplishments

It seems like just last week we were all lining the halls of the Capitol and preparing for this year's session. We began filing bills, conducting committee meetings and before we knew it, we were passing legislation on the floor. I am extremely happy to report on the work we have completed in our first half of session. We hit the ground running and we will do the same when we return for the remainder of session after spring break.

In two months, the House has passed legislation that improves the lives of children with Autism, we opposed a tax increase on farmers, we passed a bill that requires health providers be paid on time by insurance companies and we have worked to create manufacturing and supplier jobs in our state.

The House voted to pass legislation requiring drug testing for those applying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as well as drug testing for those who are currently receiving TANF through the Department of Social Services. We hope that this bill will be signed into law and inspire those who receive welfare and use drugs to end that abuse.

The Missouri House of Representatives passed House concurrent Resolution 34 & 35 urging the Federal Government to balance their budget each year through a constitutional change. This piece of legislation passed with overwhelming support on both sides of the aisle.

Ethics reform in state government has also been a large focus for House members this session. The ethics package we are working to create will focus on ensuring that those of us in public office will hold strong to our core values.

When the House of Representatives returns after spring break, we will begin the process to balance the state budget for fiscal year 2011. The budget that the Governor presented to us in January, relies on 'funny money' from the federal government that we likely won't see and doesn't include the tough cuts needed to keep our state financially stable. This is extremely concerning because we are fully aware of the economic situation that we are facing.

The Governor has revised the revenue estimate for this year from 3.6 percent down to 2.6 percent growth which means we must find another \$80 million in cuts. Seventy-five percent of the general revenue is spent on Medicaid and education. There is no doubt that cuts will be made in both of these areas when it is all said and done.

It is with the utmost importance that our Governor act in a bi-partisan fashion to make these tough decisions and provide a plan for the most vital parts of what makes our state work smoothly on a day to day basis. The House took the lead in an effort to get him started by introducing \$50 million in cutbacks of the state budget. We did this while fully funding the Foundation Formula for K-12 Education.

It is my hope that the House, the Senate and Governor Nixon can sit down at the same table and create a realistic budget that makes sense. As this process continues, I will keep you up to date on the decisions made and the Governor's plan when he shares it with the House.

The House of Representatives will convene on Monday, March 15th for the remainder of the 2010 Legislative Session.

Thank you for your continued support. Call 725-0619 or email: jay.wasson@house.mo.gov.

Jay Wasson