



Lair's Legislative Log...



REPRESENTATIVE MIKE LAIR—DISTRICT 7

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We each have a set of conditions that influence our state of mind. These circumstances are a part of who we are and how we live our lives. People, or happenings, or even sounds and aromas affect us in different ways. I spent much of my adult life on the Great Plains and the change of seasons has always been a trigger of wellbeing for me. The crisp mornings and the warm afternoons of fall have always been harbingers of football games, hunting trips, and the riot of color that paints our landscape. I truly cherish this transformation in our universe.

On Wednesday of this week, I was called back into the classroom to discuss lobbyists and special interest groups with several high school classes. The term lobbyist brings to mind negative connotations of corrupt politics and shady backroom deals, but in reality, they serve a positive function in government. With the eight-year term limits imposed on members of the Missouri House, it is impossible to become an expert on all issues that come before the body. We seek expertise in many areas from fellow legislators, House staffers, constituents, lobbyists and special interest groups that are well versed on a given issue. That being said, like all propaganda, we must be aware that we are being offered only one side of the issue and seek the opposing view to create a complete picture. Lobbyists never lie, but they usually only present the "truth" from their perspective.

Special interest groups function the same way as lobbyists, by trying to educate legislators on specific issues important to their members. The Missouri Farm Bureau, Missouri State Teachers Association, Missouri Right-to Life, and Missouri Retired Teachers Association are examples of groups that have a real presence in the Capitol. There are scores of these organizations that are watching proposed legislation. As soon as a bill is filed, the research begins by many of these lobbyists and groups to ascertain the possible effect of the legislation on their membership or clients. Many times this research is followed by a personal office visit or a call for a membership mass email blitz to support or defeat an issue. The volume of this communication is sometimes so massive that it becomes counterproductive. Prop B generated a huge amount of communication on both sides, but the "horse slaughter bill" of last session was the hands-down winner for sheer numbers. I received over 1500 (we quit counting) emails from around the world, many of them truly entertaining, condemning us for trying to provide a humane method of equine death. In my office, the most influential contact comes from one of my constituents expressing their viewpoint, in their own words.

One of my favorite communications this week came from Emily Smith, a fourth grader from Mirabile C-1 school. She invited me to come "teach us about your job in state government." When her teacher and I are

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able to get together on a date, I will be pleased to do so. There are parts of this job that I sincerely enjoy.

This week, Gregg and/or I have dealt with MODOT, the Department of Corrections, the Secretary of State, a county prosecutor, the United States Postal Service, the Governor's office, and the Department of Natural Resources on behalf of the people of the 7th District.

I want to alert you to the fact that all cell phone numbers will go public at the end of this month. You will begin to receive telemarketing calls, including political calls, and depending on your plan, even charged for them. If you wish to be added to a National No-Call List sponsored by the Federal Trade Commission, call 888-382-1222. The call must be made from the number that you wish to have blocked and takes less than a minute.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is asking for public comment on its fourth update of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP5). The new accountability standards are used to guide school improvement and accredit the 522 Missouri school districts. You can read the proposed rule at the DESE website dese.mo.gov. You may make your comments directly on that site or by phone (573-751-3469) or mail (DESE, Office of Quality Schools, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102). If you are interested in education, the few moments reading and commenting will be well spent.

Thank you for the privilege of representing the citizens of the 7th District. As always, Gregg and I are at your

service at (573) 751-2917, or mike.lair@house.mo.gov or State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Avenue, Room 400, Jefferson City, MO 65101. My website is www.RepMikeLair.com

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