



Lair's Legislative Log...



REPRESENTATIVE MIKE LAIR—DISTRICT 7

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VISIT MY
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ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION

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There you can view video clips, read legislation and hear the House Floor debate live.

Last week, the official calendar entry of summer was ushered in by a period of cool weather that I truly enjoyed. The “man-made” flooding of the Missouri River bottoms continue and a full interim schedule of House committees met statewide.

As the Missouri River levees in Northwest Missouri fail one-by-one and town after town is evacuated, the cry has gone out from our nationally elected officials to rethink the Missouri River Basin flood plan. Senator Roy Blunt stated, “The priority should be first flood control, and then navigation, and then power generation, water supply, irrigation, wildlife and recreation.” Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer added, “Too much emphasis has been placed on recreation, habitat restoration, and compliance with the Endangered Species Act.” The first attempt to legislate the rationale of the Corps of Engineers’ involvement with the Missouri River was in the 1940’s. The dam system and the flood prevention plan were created in the 1960’s. The plan was reworked in the 1980’s and again in 1994 with pressure from the environmentalist groups. I cannot believe that the flooding will last all summer as the Corps has predicted. I only hope that this debacle will open a new chapter in flood prevention by all segments of our federal government.

A new interim committee was created by the House to study all of the natural and man-made disasters that have befallen Missouri this year. The com-

mittee is chaired by Speaker Pro Tem Shane Schoeller and is tasked with assessing the total damage and trying to figure a way for the state to help citizens rebuild their lives. The committee has several meetings scheduled around the state and will take testimony from governmental agencies and interested citizens.

Another interim committee is informal in nature and meets in an attempt to help ease budgetary concerns that are already surfacing for the FY 2013 Budget; the FY 2012 Budget does not even begin until the end of this week. Several members of my class and this session’s freshman class have been meeting with a number of state department representatives to continue our quest to make your tax dollars as effective as possible. We are questioning the core funding issues that are not usually addressed in budget hearings. Last Monday and Tuesday were focused on education. The first day, internal House staff and Dr. Ron Langford, Deputy Commissioner of DESE, testified and fielded questions related to K-12 Missouri education. The Core Standards, MSIP 5, administrator preparation, the foundation formula, transportation funding, and other related subjects were discussed. The following day, the Department of Higher Education testified and was questioned about the effects of the Governor’s withholding of funds from the FY 2012 as well as possible cuts in the years to come.

COMMITTEES:**CHAIR:**APPROPRIATIONS—
EDUCATION,**MEMBER:**

BUDGET

RETIREMENT

RULES

JOINT COMMITTEE
ON EDUCATION

There is a sizable group of representatives who feel the constitutional mandate of 25% spending on education should be our guide. We currently spend almost 40% of our \$23B yearly budget on education. Gone are the days of throwing tax money at the educational institutions and expecting results. We are trying to get all the stakeholders to cooperate in revamping our K-16 system and anyone who does not come to the discussion will not have a voice in the final solution. We need DESE, Higher ED, the teacher unions, the administrators groups, the educational think tanks, and any other entity with expertise to be present at every discussion.

years is through some great advice I was given by an old coach many years ago, *"If you are worried about what they are saying in the stands... that is where you oughta be."*

I have had several constituent calls about state income tax refunds that have not been received as of yet. For assistance call 573-751-7200 and follow prompts 2 and then 1 to find out the status of your return.

Thank you for the privilege of representing the citizens of the 7th District. 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.

Mike Lair

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One question that I find vital to any discussion is accountability. We have a huge percentage (20-40%) of Missouri high school graduates who must complete remedial classes before they can fully become successful college students. That means that the taxpayers of Missouri are paying twice for the same students to be educated. Several scenarios come to mind. First, maybe these students do not belong in college, or secondly, maybe the school district that sent them unprepared to college should bear the cost of the remedial courses? There is a disconnect somewhere that needs to be addressed.

SERVING:

CALDWELL

CARROLL

LIVINGSTON

CLINTON (PART)

I have found myself, once again, in an area that has a tremendous number of experts. My working life has revolved around football, education, and now politics with seemingly many authorities in all three areas; everyone in the stands knows more than the coach, everyone has been to school, and everyone has a political point of view. The only way I have survived all these