



# Lair's Legislative Log...



REPRESENTATIVE MIKE LAIR—DISTRICT 7

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Just like teaching, my new avocation offers me time during the “off-season” to read what I want to, not just what is required by my responsibility. During my busy times, I stockpile books and then assault them with a vengeance as the requirements of session recede. In the month since the session ended, I have read six full books, two partials, and numerous periodicals. I would like to discuss two of those articles that, though seemingly unrelated, touch on an issue that has come up often during the last three legislative sessions.

Many single-issue groups contact me during the legislative session. Some of the contacts are in person, some by email, and some by written publications. Genetic engineering of our food supplies has shown up often in all three variances in communication. It is vilified as *unnatural, unsafe, and unsustainable*. The sources always provide statistics that seem to prove their point of view. I have read the other side of this issue in the journals of the grain and animal production publications, but until now, I was unable to come to terms with the “rest of the story.”

*National Geographic*, June 2011, has an article entitled “*The Dawn of Civilization*,” that seeks to overturn conventional wisdom on the Neolithic Revolution and its effect on the establishment of religion. As with all offerings by NG, it is well researched and presented and the author contends that

a hunter-gathering society that existed 9600 BCE created the first substantial communal worship site in Southern Turkey. For hundreds of years, historians have theorized that humans created religion after they were able to guarantee a stable food supply by the Agricultural (Neolithic) Revolution and thusly, live in large communities. The author makes a great case and this is well worth the time to read, but I realized this revolution in food production was the first genetic engineering of mankind’s food supply and it happened thousands of years before the birth of Christ.

The first wheat had heads the size of a grass seed, and then gradually, through selective planting, the quality (size) of the grain was increased. As I was mentally digesting this piece of writing, I came across a June 4, 2011 New York Times piece entitled, *A Warming Planet Struggles to Feed Itself*. The piece detailed the scientific progress that has been made in increasing the yield and hardiness of the world’s four major staples of human calories – wheat, corn, soybeans, and rice. Again, genetic engineering and the increased yield it allows have proven necessary for the increased demands on the food supply. We have liberal groups that attack the progress that agriculture has made on one hand and seek to feed the world’s third world countries on the other. There are many factors involved in the world’s food supply, but we must allow agriculture to keep pace on the production

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side. Another striking point that both of these articles shared was how many times over the last several millennia that the climate of the earth has vacillated between warmer and colder. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Last Friday, I was privileged to attend and speak at the opening of the Highway 65 and WW intersection. This piece of safety engineering by MoDOT is an example of how the system is supposed to work. Last year a constituent, Larry Walker of Tina, approached Dave Garber, the superintendent of Tina-Avalon Schools with a safety concern about the Tina Junction on Highway 65 south of Chillicothe. Mr. Garber arraigned a meeting at T-A School between Mr. Walker and me to discuss the issue. I contacted the Macon office of MoDOT with the concerns and they called back agreeing with us that the intersection was dangerous and that they have made arraignments to let the contract. First, a public meeting was held at the Tina Community Center to educate the residents and ask for feedback. I am so pleased to be able to be a part of a system that can identify a constituent problem and within a relatively short period of time create a safer driving environment for all of us. Mr. Walker, Mr. Garber, all three Carroll County Commoners, Nelson Heil, David Martin, Jim Stewart, and Carroll County Clerk Peggy McGaugh attended the opening.

Today, I am attending a MSIP5 Regional Advisory Meeting representing the Legislature in Kansas City. MSIP5 is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's revi-

sion to the Missouri Improvement Plan. The plan has come under attack from several diverse groups including a group from the Secondary Principals Association, which held an informal briefing at the Capitol this spring. I am truly interested to gain a deeper understanding of both sides of this issue and I will report to you next week.

Gregg and I dealt with the departments of Education, Transportation, Corrections, Conservation, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services on behalf of 7th District constituents.

Thank you for the privilege of representing the citizens of the 7<sup>th</sup> District. Gregg and I are at your service at (573) 751-2917, or [mike.lair@house.mo.gov](mailto:mike.lair@house.mo.gov) or State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Avenue, Room 400, Jefferson City, MO 65101. My website is [www.RepMikeLair.com](http://www.RepMikeLair.com).

*Mike Lair*

