



Lair's Legislative Log...



REPRESENTATIVE MIKE LAIR—DISTRICT 7

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WEB-SITE FOR
ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION

www.RepMikeLair.com

Room 400
State Capitol
201 West Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, MO
65101

PH: 573-751-2917

Fax: 573-566-9775

Email:

Mike.Lair@house.mo.gov



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We may have seen the last brutal days of heat and humidity as the late summer warm afternoons and cool evenings supplant the August doldrums. The battle lines are forming for the Special and Veto Sessions and legislative activity is peaking for a non-regular session meeting of the General Assembly.

The Interim Budget Transparently Committee met last Wednesday for our second out of a scheduled seven hearings. The two areas of focus were a state Medicare contract and veterans homes funding. The testimony on the \$5.5M contract with SynCare LLC, an Indiana based firm, that was to perform home and community based assessments for Medicare recipients, was lengthy and contentious. The contract was awarded in January of this year and its first day of service was May 19. The service that SynCare was to provide is innovative in state government and was projected to save Missouri several millions of dollars each year. In reality, there were service problems experienced to clients and providers almost from day one. These problems have been expressed in communications to my office as well as to the Office of Administration and the Governor's budget director and culminated in a August 19th letter sent to the Executive Branch from provider and advocacy groups asking for the termination of this contract.

Our committee sought to expose the depth of the problems being experi-

enced by the state and the providers. During testimony, officials from the Department of Health and Senior Services detailed their efforts to keep service at high level while working with the firm. With a speed rarely seen in state government, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Director Margaret Donnelly announced the day following the hearing, *"Effective immediately DHSS will begin to transition the duties previously performed by SynCare to DHSS. It is clear that the company is unable to meet the terms and conditions of their contract. The Department remains committed to ensuring that Missourians receive the services they need in a timely and efficient manner."* I am pleased to be able to point to a specific function of government that we (the committee) have influenced in a positive and timely manner.

The second topic of discussion was the state of funding of the Missouri veterans homes. There were no surprises here. If the current funding stays level, the vets' homes would run into fiscal difficulties by mid-2013. We have been assured that funding will be available for their continued operation. It seems to me that rather than facing this issue on a fairly regular basis that we in the General Assembly need to find a dedicated funding stream for the homes so that there are no doubts as to their continued existence. We owe our veterans a solid future into their retirement years.

COMMITTEES:**CHAIR:**APPROPRIATIONS—
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ON EDUCATION

The first Special Session of the 96th Legislature begins today. All of the issues to be introduced were in last week's Log and along with the Governor's official Declaration may be viewed on my website www.RepMikeLair.com. The China Hub (Aerotropolis) is the linchpin of the economic development portion of the proposed legislation. It has drawn fire from some because of its \$360M price tag and from others because of fiscal discretion it gives local St. Louis officials over state tax dollars. This is a huge issue and needs proper time to be debated before a vote is taken. It should be an interesting week. We need the jobs, but at what cost?

by the featured core subjects, but needs to be resurrected as a pillar of a solid education. Our nation needs citizens that are knowledgeable about our governmental system and its history. Seemingly, educated adults that are unaware of simple aspects of the American political system constantly amaze me. Children need to be taught the principles that made this nation great. The history of the United States is unrivaled as a story of courage and sacrifice. We see some today snicker at and pander to patriotism, while our young people are in harm's way across the world to protect their freedoms.

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Along with the Special Session, the Veto Session will be held September 14 and 15. We have discussed several of last session's bills that the Governor vetoed as possible overrides. I will keep you informed as to progress in that direction in the next week. We overrode the Congressional Redistricting Map at the end of the regular session.

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.

Mike Lair

Last Friday, I taught a full day of classes at Chillicothe High School. I relived my former avocation by sharing Lakota Culture with students in four classes and I spoke of public service to a leadership class. My expertise in Native American Culture was honed over years of study, the creation of a Plains History Class, and several years on the Rosebud Reservation as a teacher/coach. I enjoy sharing the history of a great people that are many times slighted by our need to teach a curriculum that is geared to pass a standardized test. Social Studies is many times pushed to the background

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